

Mercyhurst University: Government and Foundation Relations Newsletter

Inaugural Issue - Spring 2024



MERCYHURST
UNIVERSITY



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As the spring semester wraps up, the Division of Advancement is excited to introduce the new Department of Government and Foundations Relations (GFR). GFR can assist you with all aspects of grant activity, such as identifying potential funders, developing and submitting proposals, and post-award management. In this inaugural issue, we are happy to share an overview of the recent grant activities at Mercyhurst, including newly awarded and active grants, proposals in progress, and pending applications. These grants range from classroom renovations to campuswide mental health initiatives. The diversity of these grant applications speaks to the commitment of Mercyhurst's faculty and staff to the university's advancement.

We hope that these grant happenings motivate you. We invite you to find inspiration within these pages to enhance a place that we all call home—Hurst.

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SPOTLIGHT: NATIONAL HISTORIC REGISTER with Chris Magoc, Ph.D.



Thanks to the efforts of Mercyhurst University's history professor Chris Magoc, Ph.D., the university's campus may soon earn a spot on the National Register of Historic Places. Dr. Magoc has been a driving force behind the promotion of the university's rich history, which dates back to its founding in 1926. As he approaches his retirement, Dr. Magoc is determined to make a meaningful contribution to Mercyhurst.

"This is something I wanted to do before I retired. Mercyhurst has meant so much to me, my wife, and our children," said Dr. Magoc.

Two years ago, Dr. Magoc recruited senior history major Madelyn Dill to aid him in resuming a process that was initiated nearly 25 years ago by former Vice President of Advancement Gary Bukowski and Dr. William Garvey. Dill and Dr. Magoc reached out to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to discuss Mercyhurst as a historic place and explained the university's history and the upcoming centennial. Following a very encouraging site visit from a representative of the SHPO, they were urged to include not only Old Main and Egan Hall, which had been the focus of the initial effort in 2002, but Christ the King Chapel and the Mercyhurst Grotto. After revising what is known as the "Determination of Eligibility" request, the SHPO returned with a recommendation that Mercyhurst consider including in the Mercyhurst National Historic District every building that was built before 1974. It was decided that they would keep Old Main, Egan Hall, Christ the King Chapel, and the Grotto as "the heart" of the district, while potentially including residence halls and other academic buildings as well.

Dr. Magoc and former Director of Grant Relations Amy Danzer then applied for the Keystone Historic Preservation grant, a funding program administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission that supports non-profit organizations in documenting and protecting eligible historic places. The proposal requested \$25,000 to hire a professional preservation firm to collaborate with Mercyhurst in completing the final nomination of the Mercyhurst National Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places. Support for the application came from several key local

preservation champions, led by Tom Hagen, CEO of Erie Insurance and past Secretary of Community and Economic Development for Pennsylvania.

Following an extensive search, the Historic Preservation Group (HPG) from Cleveland was selected to complete the nomination. Their initial visit to campus included extensive photography of the campus and a meeting with Dr. Magoc and university Archivist Bryan Colvin, whose superb processing and organization of our archival materials impressed the HPG team. Also working on the Mercyhurst team is Public History senior Jenna Brugger, who was awarded a Roy and Rosanna Fellowship to assist with the research and documentation of buildings.

Once added to the National Register, Mercyhurst will become one of only three universities in the Commonwealth with a significant Historic District, joining the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Pittsburgh. It will also become one of the largest historic districts in Erie, joining places like West 6th Street and West 21st Street. Earning Historic District status will open additional funding opportunities for the restoration and preservation of Mercyhurst's historic built environment, including additional potential funding from the Keystone program.

Many people in the Erie community already view Mercyhurst as a historical place due to the campus's castle-like appearance and legendary gates. Not only does it look historical, but the heart of the Mercy Sisters' founding mission for Mercyhurst College—the education of young women—has allowed the university to pursue the more expansive historic district that will encompass buildings from the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s. This rich and inspiring social history of educating women, coupled with the university's transition to a coeducational institution in 1969, contributes to making Mercyhurst a great candidate for historic status.

The exciting work now underway in establishing the Mercyhurst National Historic District will help ensure not only the preservation of the first century of Mercyhurst history embodied in our buildings and landscape, but also that our story will continue in perpetuity.

"Mercyhurst has meant so much to me, my wife, and our children." - Dr. Magoc

NEW AWARDS AND ACTIVE GRANTS

The Edith Trees Charitable Trust, which supports young people with disabilities, awarded the Autism Initiative at Mercyhurst (AIM) program grants in both 2022 and 2023. The most recent grant totaled \$281,268. With this award, the AIM program intends to provide specialized training for AIM program staff in areas crucial to students on the spectrum and provide training to the students in skills needed to become self-sufficient and independent. This project is led by Ryan Palm, executive director of the Brad McGarry Center for Neurodiversity.

Mercyhurst University received a \$150,000 award from the Non-profit Security Grant Program administered across Pennsylvania through the Department of Homeland Security/ Federal Emergency Management Agency (DHS/FEMA). Funding is used to support security projects designed to enhance the safety of students and staff. This project is led by John Patterson, director of protective services.

The George I. Alden Trust recently awarded Mercyhurst a grant of \$130,000. The funds are being used to upgrade several classrooms and improve the technology infrastructure. The upgrades include new desks that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, installation of whiteboards, installation of new projection screens, and digital podiums. John Olszowka, vice president of strategic initiatives, and Hannah Cox, assistant vice president for technology, are leading this project.

Prep2Practice, a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, awarded Mercyhurst \$100,000 in 2023 for the NextGen814 project. For this project, Mercyhurst recruits seven exceptional seniors from Erie High School to enroll in the B.A. Early Childhood Education program. Students participate in six credits of teacher preparation work and are advised by Mercyhurst faculty. This grant is led by Susan Johnson, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Education.

It's On Us, a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, awarded Mercyhurst with \$40,000 last year. Funds from this grant support the continued education on sexual assault at Mercyhurst and the surrounding Erie Community. It also funds curriculum development, speakers, and events. This program is led by Ann Miller, Title IX coordinator and compliance officer.

21st Century Community Learning Centers, awarded Mercyhurst with \$2,998,800 for MELIA (Mercyhurst Early Learning Innovation Academy) and **\$2,998,800 for Compass Academy** which will support afterschool and summer programs at Compass Wiley Community Charter School and MELIA at Northwestern Elementary and Springfield Elementary. Susan Johnson, Ph.D., and Kortnie Fisher, M.S., LBS, BCBA, will serve as project directors on the grants.

The Erie Community Foundation awarded Mercyhurst with \$25,000 for a well-being initiative. The well-being initiative aids students in going back to social activities after the global pandemic. Sue Sweeney, MA, LAT, ATC, CES, campus health and well-being director, is the program director.

The Keystone Historic Preservation Grant, administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, awarded Mercyhurst \$25,000. This award is due to the work of history professor Chris Magoc, Ph.D., and student Madeline Dill. Funds have been used for a scope of campus which confirmed that Mercyhurst is eligible to be added to the National Register of Historic Places.

Hunger-Free Campus, an initiative from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, awarded Mercyhurst \$20,000. The initiative revolves around students focusing on their education instead of finding their next meal. This grant is led by Bethany Woods, director of academic community engagement.

Mercyhurst was awarded \$13,000 from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Organizations and Arts Programs in 2023. This award was given to the Mercyhurst Institute for Arts and Culture

(MIAC) to support operations. Brett Johnson, Ph.D., artistic director of the MIAC, is leading this project.

In 2023, Mercyhurst was granted \$10,000 by the Stackpole-Hall Foundation to implement the Men Building Men of Mercyhurst project. This project aims to teach men how to build character and work together for social change. Participants lead a project on one of the critical concerns of the Sisters of Mercy, which are immigration, anti-racism, women, and non-violence. This grant is led by Greg Baker, vice president of mission.

The Partners for Campus Community Engagement awarded Mercyhurst a grant of \$3,000 in January 2024. The grant aims to support community-based organizations and higher education institutions in strengthening regional communities and fostering civic imagination. With the grant funds, Mercyhurst plans to collaborate with the Lake Erie Arboretum, The Script Project, and the Multicultural Community Resource Center to organize a mini conference on promoting cultural responsibility and achieving UN Sustainable Development Goals. This project is led by Bethany Woods, director of academic community engagement.

The Catherine's Club Giving Circle, sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, awarded Mercyhurst \$2,000. With this award, Mercyhurst University gave a \$500 scholarship to four nursing students who are also mothers to pay for textbooks. This grant was led by Bethany Woods, director of academic community engagement.

Congressional Earmark. Mercyhurst received a \$250,000 congressional earmark from Senator Casey. This Earmark will support "AIM 2.0," part of the Autism Initiative at Mercyhurst (AIM). The purpose of AIM 2.0 is to grow AIM's capacity to both sustain its success and to widen its reach. Ryan Palm, executive Director of Brad McGarry Center for Neurodiversity, will be leading the project.

PROPOSALS IN PROGRESS

IC CAE: Mercyhurst will request \$2,500,000 from the Intelligence Community Center of Academic Excellence to form a consortium to enhance the Intelligence Studies program. Lindy Smart, executive director, Intelligence Studies, will be leading the program.

Hearst Foundations: Mercyhurst will request \$100,000 from the Hearst Foundations to fund student scholarships. The Hearst Foundations fund educational institutions demonstrating uncommon success in preparing students to thrive in a global society.

APPLICATIONS PENDING

There are over **\$3,986,266** in proposals pending. Some of the applications are listed below:

Booth Ferris Foundation—\$300,000

The university submitted a request to the Booth Ferris Foundation for \$300,000 to fund Lakers Building Bridges, a peer-to-peer mental wellbeing support program. The goal of this program is to improve the mental health of Mercyhurst students by cultivating a sense of connection and community on campus. Sue Sweeney, MA, LAT, ATC, CES, campus health and well-being director, will be overseeing the program.

America250PA—\$2,346,500

Mercyhurst recently submitted a \$2,346,000 grant request to America250PA for renovations to the Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center that will enable additional programming, particularly from the Mercyhurst Institute for Arts & Culture (MIAC), during 2026, the 250th anniversary of the United States. Brett Johnson, MIAC artistic director, will be overseeing the project.

Catalyst Fund—\$12,000

The university submitted a \$12,000 request to the Catalyst Fund through its Innovation Theme category to support a Soviet Visual Arts Exhibition. The goal of this project is to educate both the Mercyhurst community and Erie residents about Soviet history, language, and culture by displaying Soviet posters throughout the campus and throughout the Erie community. In doing so, Mercyhurst will create a model for other liberal arts institutions for utilizing real-world artifacts to educate the community about other countries and cultures. Nora Arkelian, director of the Hammermill Library, will be leading the project.

Congressional Earmark—\$508,300

The Police Officer Training Academy at Mercyhurst requested \$508,300 from U.S. Sen. John Fetterman's appropriations program as well as U.S. Sen. Bob Casey's appropriations program and U.S. Representative Mike Kelly's office. If awarded, the funding would promote the safety of police officers, the community, and individuals experiencing behavioral health crises

by expanding the Academy's 24-hour behavioral health curricula module to prepare cadets to implement identified responses and developing a three-tier in-service training system for active officers. Bill Hale, program director of the Police Academy, will be leading the program.

ECEPDO—\$368,938

Mercyhurst University submitted a \$368,938 request to the Early Childhood Education Professional Development Organization (ECEPDO). The request supports initiatives of the university's Department of Education. Susan Johnson, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Education, will be leading the program.

SAMHSA—\$306,000

Mercyhurst requested \$306,000 from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration through the GLS Campus Suicide Prevention Grant Program. If funded, this program would strengthen suicide prevention and promote mental health at Mercyhurst. Sue Sweeney, MA, LAT, ATC, CES, campus health and well-being director, will be overseeing the program.

Kubota Foundation—\$10,000

Mercyhurst requested \$10,000 from the Kubota Foundation to fund the expansion and accessibility of the Mercyhurst garden. This grant will be led by Molly Tarvin, sustainability coordinator.

FUTURE FUNDING

Mercyhurst will be applying for the **Swipe Out Hunger grant in 2024**. This grant focuses on feeding students in need so they can focus on their education instead of their next meal.

This year, Mercyhurst will apply for funding from the **Edith L. Trees Charitable Trust**. If this grant is received, it will fund AIM program operations and opportunities for students.

Mercyhurst will apply for the **Mercy Fund for Ministry in 2024**. This grant is given by the Sisters of Mercy, founders of Mercyhurst University. If funded, this grant will support systematic changes in areas of racism, environment, and concern for women.

The Department of Government and Foundation Relations raised a total of \$7,366,766 in grants between June 2022 and April 2024.

GFR: JUNE 1, 2022 - APRIL 15, 2024

\$7,366,766

