FOUNDED: 1926


SCHOOL COLORS: Green/White

MOTTO: Carpe Diem - Seize the Day

MASCOT: Luke the Laker

ENROLLMENT: Total Enrollment across all campuses: 3,352
44 states and 52 foreign countries represented

TOTAL FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES: 416

ALUMNI: Approximately 20,977

ACCREDITATION:
Middle States Commission on Higher Education
3624 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104
Phone: 267-284-5000

DEGREES: 86 undergraduate majors and 13 graduate programs.

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES: Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Music; also Associate of Science and Associate of Arts, Certificate Programs in the areas of Business and Health Professions.


HAMMERMILL LIBRARY: The Hammermill Library is a fully automated facility; the virtual library provides 24/7 access to most of the library's collections. Among the library's holdings are book volumes, eBooks and electronic journal databases to support the scholarly needs of students. It is also home to the Thomas J. and Michele Ridge Collection (archives) and the Sister Joan Chittister Archives.

ATHLETICS

TEAM NAME: Lakers

MASCOT: Luke the Laker

25 VARSITY SPORTS: Basketball (M/W), Baseball (M), Bowling (W), Cross Country (M/W), Golf (M/W), Soccer (M/W), Softball (W), Tennis (M/W), Volleyball (W), Rowing (M/W), Field Hockey (W), Ice Hockey (M/W), Lacrosse (M/W), Football (M), Wrestling (M), Water Polo (M/W).

CONFERENCE AFFILIATIONS: NCAA Division II. Division I in men's and women's ice hockey. Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference, Atlantic Hockey Association (men's hockey), College Hockey America (women's hockey), Collegiate Water Polo Association (men), Western Water Polo Association (women), Great Midwest Athletic Conference (men's lacrosse), Intercollegiate Rowing Association (men's rowing) and Eastern College Athletic Conference (women's rowing).

CLUB SPORTS: Hockey (M/W), Bowling (M), Volleyball (M); Equestrian, Frisbee, Sailing, Skiing, Figure Skating, Dance, all coed; and Marching Band, Pep Band, Color Guard and Club Cheerleading.
Merryhurst announced a multi-year plan designed to strengthen and expand its two- and four-year health care degree programs. The plan involves a multi-million-dollar investment in facilities expansion and upgrades on the Erie campus, while relocating all academic programs from its North East campus to Erie by June 2021.

The university announced a $9.5 million capital campaign for athletics: Laker for Life. The Campaign for Merryhurst Athletics. By the end of 2019, the campaign had netted $7 million, including the largest alumni donation in university history—$4 million from William and Betsy Hirt Vorhees ’77. Merryhurst has named its new and upgraded facilities The William J. Vorhees Jr. Athletic Complex, which includes projects that benefit not only Merryhurst student-athletes, but Merryhurst Prep student-athletes as well.

The university held a ribbon cutting at its library to unveil a $1.5 million main-floor facade. Part of the renovations included a collection of nine built-in glass display cases featuring historic documents, photographs and artifacts from the Thomas J. and Michele Ridge Collection. Special gifts from the Arnold D. Palmer 2003 Charitable Trust and the Henry L. Hillman Foundation of Pittsburgh made the display possible. Due to the special relationships Gov. Ridge had with the late Arnold Palmer and the Hillman family, both foundations made their first-ever gifts in Erie County. Another key donor, alumnus Brian DeFrancesco ’06 of Orange County, California, a former business student of university President Michael T. Victor, was on hand for the ceremonies.

They call it Caffrey’s at Marquette, McGurk’s at St. Louis University, O’Reilly’s Public House at the University of Notre Dame and last March Merryhurst University joined the club with its unveiling of “The Roost,” an authentic Irish pub in the heart of campus.

Merryhurst’s ongoing efforts to enhance the academic and physical wellness of hundreds of Erie County’s neediest children got a $3 million boost in 2019 from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). Through PDE’s 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program, Merryhurst receives $2 million to continue the Carpe Diem Academy in the Erie School District. Another $3 million grant supports the new Merryhurst Early Learning Academy (MELA), a Pre-K program in the rural Northwestern School District.

Thanks to the flexibility afforded students through the university’s REACH curriculum, strong faculty advisors, and the “15-to-finish” initiative, Merryhurst achieved an on-time graduation rate of 62 percent – the highest in the region.

Merryhurst was named “Lead Partner” in the Community Schools initiative at John Dehi Elementary School. The Community Schools model is a strategy launched in 2016 by the United Way to incorporate a wide range of resources in Erie schools to support students and their families.

In another strategic partnership, the Erie City School District and Merryhurst earned a $500,000 PKsmart Grant to develop an integrated K-12 computer science curriculum intended to prepare students for in-demand careers in the digital economy.

The university’s new Cyber Security undergraduate major enrolled 63 students in fall 2019, a record cohort for an inaugural academic program. Cyber is a discipline within the Ridge College of Intelligence Studies and Applied Sciences, which began in 1992 by preparing students for careers in national security and law enforcement and, later, business intelligence. In response to the nation’s growing need for cyber security specialists, the Ridge College is again evolving. Besides the new Cyber Security major, it is also growing programs in money laundering and anti-human trafficking.

In fall 2019, the following departments achieved a freshman enrollment that is or exceeds a 10-year high:

- Environmental Science, History, Interior Architecture & Design, World Languages & Cultures, and Music

- The university instituted an MSN in Integrative Nursing Leadership, a fully online program. Merryhurst offers multiple pathways to enter and advance in the field of nursing, including those of LPN, ASN, RN-to-BSN and, now, MSN. The university also launched a new graduate program in Teaching Excellence.

In addition to ranking Merryhurst in the top tier of Best Regional Universities in the North, U.S. News & World Report also ranked Merryhurst among the “top colleges for veterans” and a “best value” for 2019.

Other accolades for 2019 include being named to The Princeton Review’s annual Guide to Green Colleges, the Top Ten colleges in Pennsylvania offering the best design and visual communication programs (Zippia, a leading online career guidance resource), and among the 30 best colleges for students on the autism spectrum by AppliedBehaviorAnalysisPrograms.com.

Athletics had a stellar year with eight teams selected for the NCAA Tournament, led by historic seasons for men’s basketball, baseball and rowing. The university added JW Women’s Soccer and Women’s Bowling to its sports offerings while launching a robust club sports program with the goal of 65 new students across nine programs for Fall 2020.

Building on the best elements of its own sustainability program, Merryhurst joined forces with the Green Building Alliance as founding partners of the Erie 2030 District. The 2030 District is a national model whose partners seek to achieve a dramatic reduction in the energy consumption and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of the built environment and advance the development of sustainable, resilient, equitable and carbon-neutral buildings and communities.

The History Department’s Waves of the Past, Leaders of the Future three-week credit-bearing maritime history course aboard the U.S. Brig Niagara was recognized for its ingenuity at the Pennsylvania Museums Annual Conference last spring. The institutional award for “special achievement” was presented to Merryhurst along with the Erie Maritime Museum and Flagship Niagara League.

Calling him “a teacher in the model of the best,” Merryhurst selected Philosophy Department Chair James Snyder, Ph.D., as the 2019 recipient of its Teaching Excellence Award.

Erie native Christine Spadaforo, an accomplished executive whose extensive career experience ranges from corporate board rooms to nonprofits, created a new endowed chair in Music and an endowed scholarship in Voice Performance in honor of her late mother, Mary. Spadaforo spoke at Merryhurst’s 91st Commencement last May.

Merryhurst University was among 11 schools across the nation to be awarded competitive 2019 NCAA CHOICES grants to fund alcohol-related education and prevention programs. In Merryhurst’s case, the funding – $30,000 over three years – supports the United in Making Wise Choices Program, which has as its core goal that students make responsible choices about alcohol.

With 561 donors contributing $53,839, the university exceeded its Giving Day goal of 500 donors and $50,000, and also earned a match of $50,000 from three trustees – Stephen Fedler, John Langer and Des McDonald – making the gain more than $100,000 in one day.

In another show of philanthropy, Merryhurst Student Government gifted $600,000 over the next five years to support three projects: a new sports court outside of Ryan Hall, which opened this past fall; a seating-and-stage venue called Luke’s Landing, which will complement The Roost and Laker Inn (in progress); and a students-only recreation facility, which is in the development stages.

Merryhurst lost two faculty members this past year – both young and both beloved by the college community: Karen Williams, professor of Spanish in the Department of World Languages and Cultures, and Tom Kitchen, assistant professor of Education.

In an effort to protect the digital resources of the university and its employees, the Merryhurst IT Department implemented numerous security initiatives, among them Advanced Threat Protection for email, new endpoint security software, and Multi-Factor Authentication.

The university’s Human Resources team also managed a number of significant projects including the transition to a new health insurance carrier and prescription carrier to ensure employees have access to all local providers.

As it moves toward its Centennial (September 2026), the university is in the midst of preparing a new strategic plan, which will help guide decisions through the coming years.