

Autism Services Center Summer Transition Program



WESTERN MICHIGAN
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Making the Grade

Each student participating in the Summer Transition Program is enrolled in a WMU general education course for credit. Students were able to choose from four courses selected by program staff because they are beginning courses and easily transferrable to other colleges or universities. We have students enrolled in American History to 1877 (HIST 2100), Principles of Sociology (SOC 2000), and Public Speaking (COM 1040).

The WMU course experience allows students to practice skills they are learning during the Summer Transition Program, such as preparing for exams, taking notes, communicating with peers and professors, using a syllabus to plan for due dates, and getting to class on time.

It has been great to see students take responsibility for their classes. They are taking pride in writing and presenting speeches, completing their weekly assignments, preparing for their exams, and communicating with their professors!





Working on Campus Working on the “Soft Skills”

After an exciting day of interviews and being placed in their respective work-sites, on-campus employment is now in full swing. Students are practicing a lot of what they have learned during Summer Transition Program instruction. They are practicing how to send emails to employees in other departments, communicate with faculty and staff politely, and ask for help from their supervisors. We are now focusing on appropriate use of down time when working. Some students are learning the benefit of being able to study while at work and others have been paired to work together to create a Prezi about their

experiences in the Summer Transition Program. This project allows them to practice how to collaborate with others and work with technology they will use in the future.

During their work experiences, students are learning to deal with difficult situations. While staffing the reception desk, one student calmly dealt with an upset customer, and was able to work out a solution to meet her needs. Other students have learned how to think on their feet and have found ways to problem solve in novel work situations. For example, when asked

to complete a work assignment that they didn't know how to do, several students have actively sought out assistance from someone who could help. Students have also worked on accepting feedback from their supervisors.

Based on supervisor reports, students are going above-and-beyond in their positions and are receiving a lot of positive feedback. Supervisors are quick to let us know how much they are enjoying working with our students!

Program Sponsors

WMU's Autism Center of Excellence would like to extend our deepest thanks to the Great Lakes Center for Autism Treatment and Research and Novel Responses, Inc for their generous donations to the Autism Service Center's (ASC) Summer Transition Program.

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Classroom Experience

Building Skills

Students meet with Kourtney Bakalyar, program coordinator, twice a week as a group to build the skills necessary for success at the college level.

The College Experience Course focuses on providing information on how to navigate the college experience while students are living, studying, and working on WMU's campus. Early in the semester, students learned how to pull out the important sections of their syllabi. Students practiced using their WMU course syllabus to write deadlines and assignments on monthly and weekly calendars to better manage their time. Students also learned about resources to help them stay organized, including Google calendar, Habitica.com, and reminders. The course has also emphasized independent living skills, such as maintaining healthy eating habits, living with roommates, and the importance of exercising.

During the social and study skills workshops, students have learned about active listening and note taking techniques to make the most of their time in class. Students have practiced advocating for accommodations, asking questions, politely telling someone "no," and accepting "no" as a response. Students have also learned about email etiquette and the appropriate way to communicate questions or concerns to professors. These skills are essential for students in both the class and employment settings. We have seen our students use these skills outside of the classroom when visiting their job placements!



Meet the Staff

Kayla Jenssen

This section will feature a different Summer Transition Program staff member each edition.

Kayla Jenssen received her Bachelor of Science degree in psychology from Madonna University. Kayla is now a graduate student at WMU and is pursuing a Master of Arts in Behavior Analysis. As a student at WMU, Kayla has served in a variety of roles. Currently, Kayla serves as the Practicum Coordinator for the PROMOTES Employment Project. In this setting, Kayla helps coordinate a team of undergraduate and graduate-level job coaches who support students in building vocational and job-related social skills relevant to successful

integration into the workforce and community. Kayla and the PROMOTES team also provide support and supplemental instruction to business leaders in the community.

This summer, Kayla is serving as a Graduate Assistant for the ASC Summer Transition Program. Kayla assists in the classroom and runs study sessions for students. Kayla created a system for measuring student classroom performance and helped create video models as a class-wide instructional tool. Kayla's primary responsibility is to assist students in their on-campus employment settings; she visits each student's job site to work on skill development and to serve as an additional resource for students.



Kayla Jenssen is the Graduate Assistant for the Summer Transition Program





To stay up to date with the Summer Transition Program and other Autism Services Center events, find us at...

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