



Jane Leatherman and Rama Cousik are faculty in PFW's School of Education.

SoE Introduces Focused Autism Concentration

During seven years as a South Bend middle school special education teacher, Jennifer Castle has documented an increase in the number of students she works with who have autism diagnoses. After recently earning a master's degree from Purdue University Fort Wayne, she reached out to her professors for advice and the latest trends teachers can utilize.

"Adding an autism concentration is not just timely—it is essential," Castle said. "As autism diagnoses continue to rise and awareness grows, teachers must be better equipped with specialized knowledge and strategies to meet the complex needs of students on the spectrum."

Cousik, associate professor of special education, recently received approval to move forward with four classes at PFW focused on autism. They have always wanted to start a concentration to help teachers work with this unique student population.

"We hear the need in the community and amongst our students who are already teachers," Cousik said. "We are listening to them."

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Help Area K–12 Students through “Herd Back to School” Supply Drive

Members of Purdue University Fort Wayne’s campus community can take part in a new initiative to support K–12 students in Allen County as they begin to prepare for a new school year that will be here before they know it.

The goal of the “Herd Back to School: Summer Supply Drive,” which is being organized by the Office of Admissions, is to fill 250 backpacks. On top of individual donations, departments and units are encouraged to work together to purchase items and spread the word.

“We want to support students in the community by ensuring they have the necessary materials to succeed in the classroom, from physical supplies to other valuable resources like information

about our 21st Century Scholars program,” said Makenna Kooy, admissions counselor and drive coordinator. “We want to add to the excitement of back to school by helping students and their families get what they need for their first day, hopefully easing some of the stress that comes with it.”

Volunteers are also being recruited to help sort, pack, and distribute supplies at an on-campus resource fair scheduled for Aug. 1.

Backpack recipients will be identified in advance by the admissions team using its list of students in grades 7–12, and through collaboration with local school systems for those in grades K–6.

Click here to find a list of the most needed items and to learn where the labeled donation bins are located.

Good to Know

July Faculty and Staff Portrait Session

Faculty and staff who would like to have portraits taken may do so Tuesday from 11:30 a.m. to noon. The photographer will be set up on the north end of the skybridge connecting Helmke Library and Walb Student Union.

News Spotlight

A sampling of external news coverage of Purdue University Fort Wayne.

PFW adds summer FAFSA completion events

21Alive | Wednesday

Tooth truth: Fluoride’s protective powers proven often across decades

The Journal Gazette (subscription required) | June 18

Future Don earns scholar athlete accolade

WIVB (Buffalo, New York) | June 16

In a Snap

Seen and noted around campus. Monitor our university social feeds for more great moments of Mastodon life.



Bows are raised as Kevin McMahon, assistant professor of music, starts the next lesson at Purdue Fort Wayne's 30th Annual Summer String Camp. The five-day opportunity for K-12 students is taking place this week. Classes include work with string orchestra, chamber ensembles, and other group sessions for violin, viola, cello, and bass.

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