

Need Analysis

- Unemployment rates were much higher for people with a disability than for those with no disability across all educational attainment groups. The unemployment rate for people with a disability was 7.2 percent in 2023, about twice that of those with no disability (3.5 percent). (Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Department of Labor, 2023).
- The poverty rate among individuals with disabilities approaches 25%, as compared to the national average of 11% and PA average of 11.8%. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023). The poverty rate among working age individuals with disabilities in PA is estimated at 26.7%
- The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act enacted in July, 2014 requires extensive pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities that are geared toward successful acquisition of competitive integrated employment.

Program Structure



Bearcat B.E.S.T Program Goals

- 1. Increase the level of functional independence for all students in the program.
- 2. Prepare each program participant for an integrated, competitive or supported, if appropriate, employment environment.
- 3. Maximize independence in activities of daily living to empower each participant to live in the most independent setting possible.
- 4. Assist students in creating a family/community support system utilizing selfadvocacy skills appropriate to their disabilities.



Program Description

- **Structure:** The Bearcat B.E.S.T. Program operates on a full-time basis, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., utilizing a hybrid calendar of a public school district and Saint Vincent College. The college has approximately 140 days of education, but a public-school student is required to have 180 day of education.
- Enrollment: Sponsoring school districts may make application on behalf of their students. A request for a submitted application can be made by the school, parent or student. Limiting the capacity to service 24 students enables the Bearcat B.E.S.T. program to design an individualized program of studies for each student based upon a careful assessment of his/her needs in each of the core, "pillar" areas.
- Cost: Tuition is approximately \$40,000 per year per student.

Academics



Fall Semester

Spring Semester

SAINT VINCENT COLLEGE

BB101LA: Language Arts Skills I or BB103LA: Survey of Literature I BB102LA: Personal Writing I

BB101MA: Basic Computation I or BB103MA: Advanced Computation I BB102MA: Intro to Real World Measurement

881011L: Intro to Independent Living

88102L: Intro to the Contemporary Kitchen

BB10155: Building Healthy Relationships BB102SS: Social Skills Practicum I - Fitness Activities

BB10355; Current Events & Problem Solving

BB101VT: Employment Skills BB100ID: Orientation Seminar BB101ID: Study Skills & Organization | BB104LA: Language Arts Skills II or BB105LA: Survey of Literature II or BB106LA: Genre Studies I: Mystery & Suspense **BB107LA: Expository Writing through Professional Documents** BB108LA: Research & Public Speaking

BB104MA: Basic Computation II or BB105MA: Advanced Computation II BB106MA: Personal Finance & Banking Basics

or BB107MA: Intermediate Banking & Personal Finance or BB108MA: Advanced Banking & Personal Finance

88103IL: Personal Health & Hygiene

88104L: Kitchen II - Rangetop Recipes

BB104SS: Emotional Regulation

BB10555: Social Skills Practicum II - Continuing Fitness

8810655: Project Based Community Service

BB103VT: Vocational Skills II

BB104VT: Employment Skills Practicum

BB102ID: Study Skills & Organization |

BB201LA: Genre Studies II: American Humor BB201MA: Integrated Math Applications I

BB201IL: First Aid & Community Safety

882021L: Appliance-based Cooking

BB20155: Introduction to Self-Advocacy

BB2025& Social Skills Practicum III- Continuing Fitness

8B201VT: Vocational Skills III

BB202VT: Basic Computer Applications

BB203VT: Employment Skills Internship I

BB201ID: Study Skills & Organization III

BB202LA: Genre Studies III: Historical Fiction BB201MA: Integrated Math Applications II

BB204IL: Household Management

88205iL: Oven-based Cooking

8820355: Community Relations

BB204SS: Social Skills Practicum IV- Continuing Fitness

BB201VT: Vocational Skills IV

BB202VT: Computer Applications in the Workplace

BB203VT: Employment Skills Internship II

BB202ID: Study Skills & Organization IV

BB301LA: Genre Studies IV: Contemporary Realistic Fiction

BB301MA: Applied Practical Math I

BB301IL: Consumer Nutrition

BB302IL: Transportation & Safety

BB30155: Advanced Self-Advacacy

BB301VT: Employment Externship I BB302VT: Vocational Seminar I

BB301LA: Genre Studies V: Expository Texts 8B301MA: Applied Practical Math II

BB303IL: Balance Meal Preparation

BB302SS: Human Sexuality

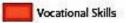
8B301VT: Employment Externship II

88302VT: Vocational Seminar II

BB301ID: Transition Seminar









Independent Living Skills

- Using the Council for Exceptional Children's evidence-based Life Centered Education curriculum prepares students to live successfully and competently in a variety of environments.
- Training in the skills of independent living will facilitate the students' abilities to:
- Exhibit proper grooming and hygiene;
- Raise, prepare, and consume food;
- · Purchase food and plan meals
- Clean food preparation areas
- Store food properly
- Prepare meals, read labels, and follow recipes
- Demonstrate appropriate eating habits
- Plan and eat balanced meals;
- Perform housekeeping tasks, including laundry skills;
 - Wash clothing
- Purchase clothing
 - Demonstrate knowledge of prices and sales
 - Iron, mend, and store clothing
 - Demonstrate use of dry cleaners and the laundromat
- Use public transportation;
- Make choices to enable community participation and recreation.
- Self-advocacy
- Banking apps and education
- Pet care
- First aid and safety
- Permit preparation



Social Skills

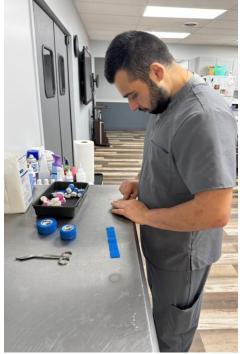
Social skills training utilizing research-based curricula assists each student to enhance **self-awareness**, acquire **self-confidence**, develop **self-advocacy** skills, and exhibit responsible **citizenship**.





Using Recreational Facilities and Engaging in Leisure Activities











Vocational Skills

- Vocational training is directed toward the goal of competitive employment for all program participants and enables students to:
 - explore occupational possibilities;
 - select and plan occupational choices;
 - exhibit appropriate work habits and behavior;
 - seek, secure, and maintain employment.
- Students will have 5 internships, 3 on campus and 2 off campus during their time at B.E.S.T.

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Inclusive Opportunities

- Bearcat B.E.S.T. students enjoy access to the same opportunities as their neurotypical peers, including fitness facilities, game rooms, on campus dining, sporting events, APB activities, clubs, dances, and campus events. Students also are required to present at the academic conference and commencement where they will receive a Certificate of program completion from B.E.S.T..
- Academic Opportunities: participation in undergraduate classes on an audit or noncredit basis. This participation is supported by a neurotypical Saint Vincent student in a one-to-one relationship. Some courses that have been audited are Children's Literature, Astronomy, Introduction to Engineering, Biology, Accounting, Introduction to Mass Media, U.S. History and more. Some of those courses could contain a study abroad component.

Outcomes

Through a system of

- classroom instruction,
- supervised practice,
- coached field experiences in various sites on campus, and ultimately, placement in a supervised externship in an off-campus setting, students are prepared to exit the program to seek competitive employment and maximal adult independence with meaningful participation in their local communities.













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Ongoing and Longitudinal Assessment

- A variety of assessments are used to evaluate outcomes of the Bearcat B.E.S.T. program and to monitor student progress on an ongoing basis.
- Bearcat B.E.S.T. provides an alumni Facebook page to communicate with alumni and their families.
- Once a quarter, we meet with the alumni and their families to engage in a skill review seminar using questions and answers to provide on-going support for transitional and vocational needs.
- Parent surveys are sent out yearly to maintain accurate information about employment.







• The Bearcat B.E.S.T. Program at Saint Vincent College offers a unique campus-based experience with same-aged typically developing peers that promotes participants' skill development for maximal adult independence and competitive employment.





Graduation Ceremony



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Bearcat B.E.S.T. Transition Program

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Website: https://www.stvincent.edu/academics/experiential-learning/community-outreach/bearcat-best-program.html