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Education

Drexel University, Peirce College launch partnership geared toward adult learners

Drexel University continues to seek collaborations with other local higher education institutions, this time launching a partnership with Peirce College.

The partner programs, set to launch in the fall, will give Peirce students a pipeline to a Drexel degree.

The partnership, announced Wednesday, includes two different programs aimed at increasing opportunities for adult learners, the target demographic at Peirce. The private college located in Center City is the only higher education institution in the Keystone State dedicated exclusively to serving adult learners.



Drexel University will launch two new programs with another local school this fall.
DREXEL UNIVERSITY



By [Ryan Mulligan](#) – Reporter, Philadelphia Business Journal
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Peirce defines that population as those typically 25 years of age or older who are employed full-time and have delayed entering college. The school reported that 98% of its students are over the age of 21 and that the average student age is 37.

The first program will allow adult learners with fewer than 24 college credits to first enroll at Peirce to earn an associate degree, with credits transferring to Drexel for an online bachelor's degree. Students will have the option to earn certifications, as well.

The second program is a partnership with Saint Christopher's Hospital for Children in Hunting Park. That program will provide apprenticeship opportunities to complement Peirce's medical coding and billing certifications. Open since 1875, Saint Christopher's was rescued from bankruptcy in a joint venture between Drexel and Tower Health in 2019 and last year received a \$50 million cash infusion from a band of the city's most prominent health systems.

"This program aims to remove the barriers that prevent many adults from completing their degree, enrolling at colleges and universities and acquiring the credentials and advanced skills needed to secure in-demand, well-paying jobs," said Drexel President John Fry in a statement.

Peirce President and CEO Mary Ellen Caro added that the partnership allows the college to "expand access to quality education for adults in the region."

The move comes just six weeks after Drexel announced it had signed a letter of intent to explore an affiliation with Salus University. Like Peirce, Salus caters to adult students, offering graduate and post graduate programs and certifications.

Both moves can help Drexel expand its own enrollment, something that Fry has previously indicated as a priority. Drexel currently has an enrollment of over 22,000 students.

Peirce College, which opened in 1865, is considerably smaller with about 1,400 students enrolled, according to its website.

Peirce recently downsized from a 76,000-square-foot campus at 1420 Pine St. to 12,000 square feet in an office tower at 1608 Walnut St. as it leans into online class offerings.