

# *BROOKLYN BAY UNIVERSITY*

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## MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

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# Presented By:



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# Our Goal

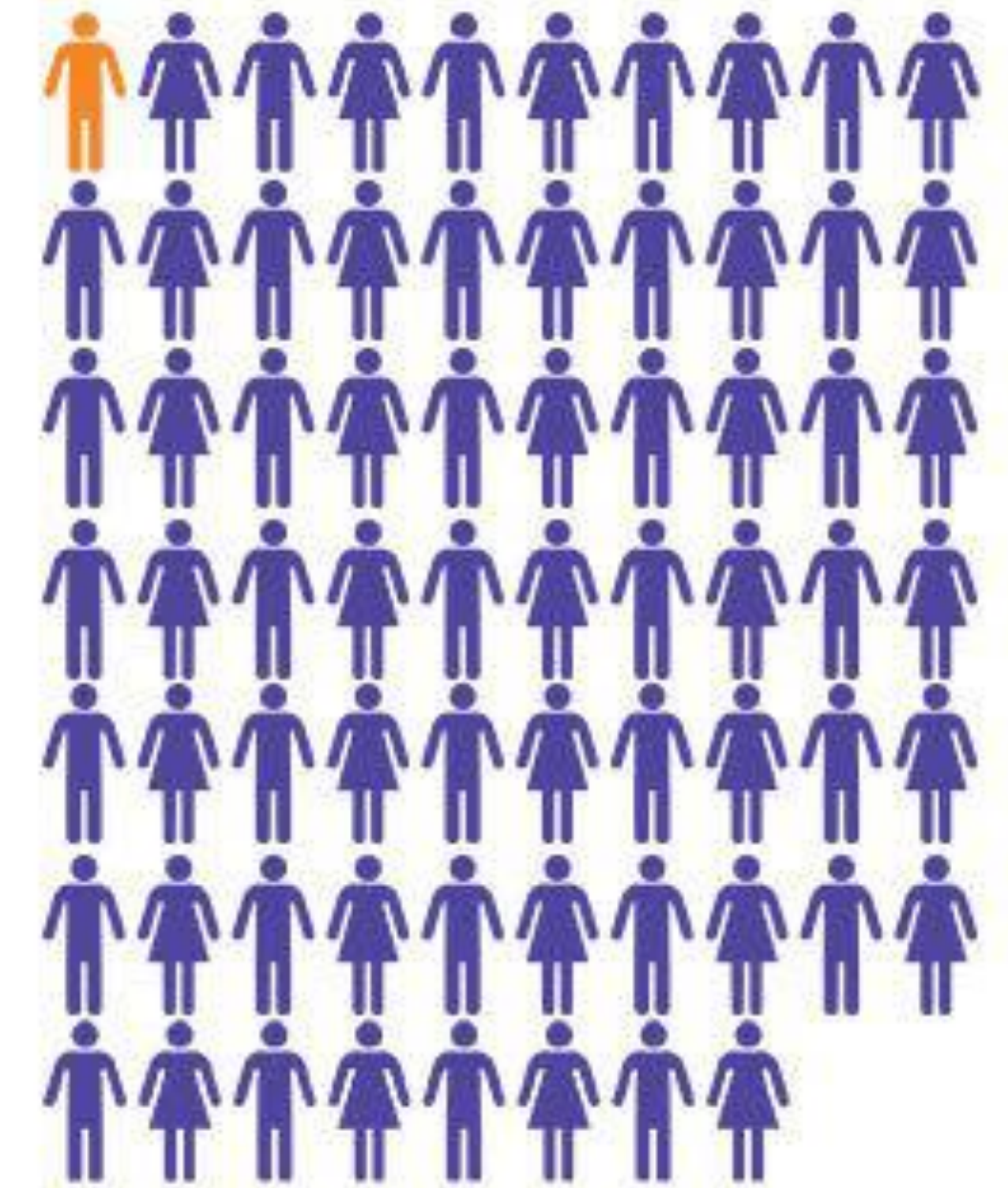
The number of students with autism in CUNY schools have nearly doubled since 2012. (Currently estimated at 120 students at Brooklyn Bay)

The retention rate for this student group is significantly lower than their peers.

University services have not evolved.

We need to create services to increase retention, persistence, and success.

## NUMBER OF CHILDREN IDENTIFIED WITH ASD



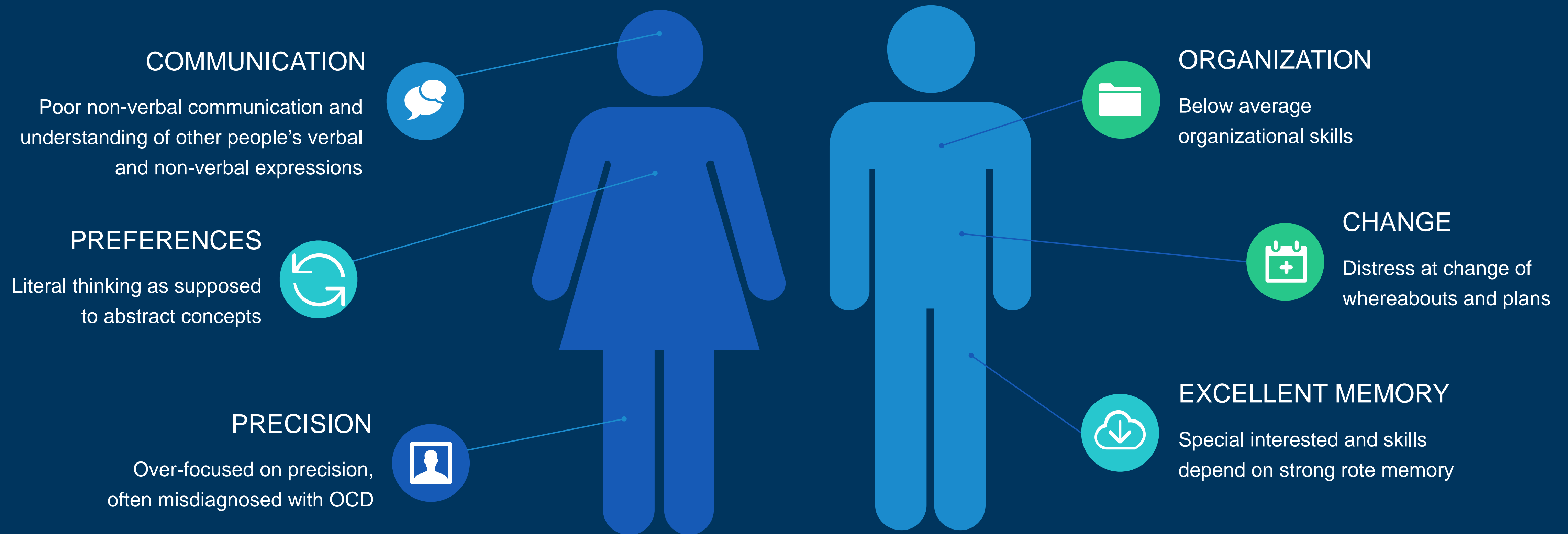
1 in 68



U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention



ASD refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with **social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication**, as well as by **unique strengths and differences**.



# UNDERSTANDING CHALLENGES FOR STUDENTS WITH AUTISM

*In order to meet the needs of this group of students, we must understand their challenges. Students have specifically identified 6 challenges that they struggle with:*

Struggling with  
new situations  
and unexpected  
changes

Exhausting out  
necessary social  
contacts

Processing  
information

Struggling to be  
flexible in time  
management

Doubts and  
disclosure

Mental Health

# What does Brooklyn Bay University already provide for these students?

- ➔ Students can self-disclose their disability to the Office of Disability Services to receive classroom accommodations
- ➔ Students are given a personalized Educational Support Plan to distribute to their instructors
- ➔ Students with ASD have access to Disability Services staff for questions, concerns, and advice



**We aim to create partnerships among the departments of Disability Services, Residential Living, Campus Activities, and Student Services to improve students' academic, personal, and social life in the following ways:**

1. A highly specialized support program located within Disability Services
2. Campus-wide initiative to increase visibility and promote inclusion of students with ASD
3. A restructure of campus student services, including housing, dining, orientation, and academics

# ACCESS: A Highly Specialized Support Program

BROOKLYN BAY  
UNIVERSITY

ACCESS



*"what distinguishes one person from  
another is not ability, but access"*



# HIGHLY SPECIALIZED SUPPORT PROGRAM

Autism

Campus

Connections and

Educational

Support

Services

ACCESS is a program designed for students with autism that aims to provide individualized support through mentoring and coaching.

Housed within the department of Disability Services, ACCESS will address many of the challenges students with autism face adjusting to the university environment.



# ACCESS WILL OFFER...

## Coaching

Students meet one-on-one with Disabilities Services staff to discuss academic progress, and challenges and successes in daily life

## Support Group

Facilitated by the department of Disability Services, students will have scheduled times to meet with each other in a group setting



# ACCESS WILL OFFER...

## Peer Mentoring

Students will have casual day-to-day interactions with a peer mentor.

Peer mentors will be upperclassmen who are partnered with first-year students. They will be hand-picked and trained by the department of Disability Services to mentor students in all aspects of their daily lives.

## Housing Accommodations

Through the department of Residential Living, students can request specific housing accommodations such as requesting a single room, opt in to have a roommate who is also in ACCESS, or to be paired in a suite with their peer mentor.



# ACCESS WILL OFFER...

## First-Year Orientation

First year students will attend an ACCESS Orientation where students will arrive on campus before the start of classes to acclimate to the campus environment and meet their peer mentor. ACCESS Orientation will also provide training related to advocacy, life skills, and social skills for the transition to college.

To rollout, ACCESS will be marketed heavily to incoming first-year students and transfers and their parents.

ACCESS will also be open to students with ASD who are already currently at the institution, regardless if they have registered with Disability Services or not.

Students will need to provide documentation to receive services which may come from primary care physician, psychologist, neurologist, or other licensed professional.

The goal of ACCESS is to help students grow and develop, by providing opportunities that enable students to “increasingly be able to integrate and act on many different experiences and influences.”

# ACCESS WILL OFFER...

ACCESS is designed to meet the academic, social, and personal needs of our students with ASD. The previously mentioned programs are implemented intentionally to create an engaging, holistic experience for all students, staff, and faculty involved.

ACCESS Program	Academic	Social	Personal
Coaching	✓		✓
Support Group		✓	✓
Peer Mentoring		✓	✓
Housing Accommodations			✓
First-Year Orientation	✓	✓	✓



The background of the slide is a photograph of a university campus, featuring a large bridge, a building, and a grassy area with picnic tables. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text is centered in the middle of the slide.

# University-Wide Support Initiatives to Increase Engagement and Inclusion



# Common Reading Program

BBU's Bay Book Program is a common reading initiative which is designed for all students (especially first-year students) to take part in a shared curricular and social experience.

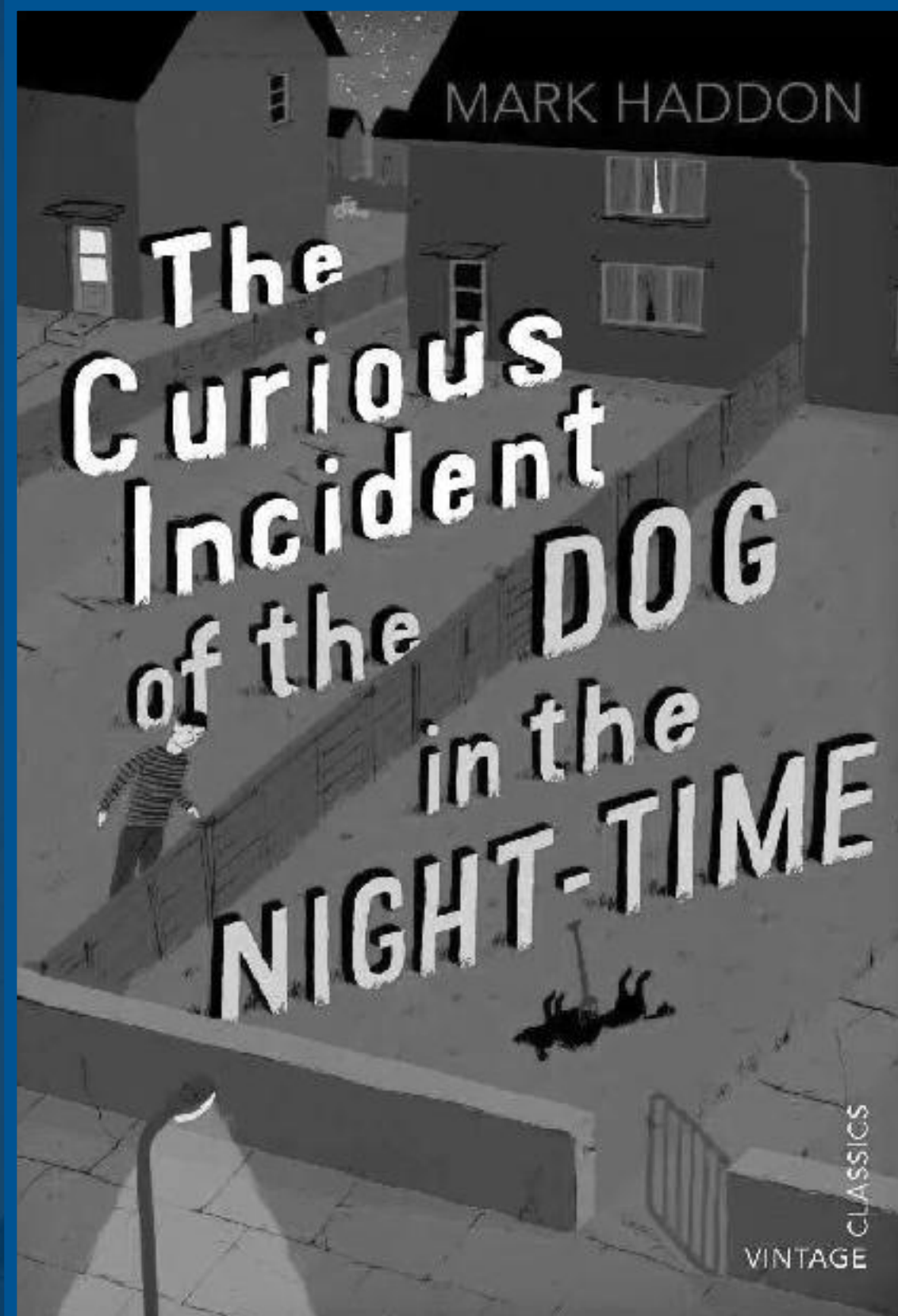
In the first year ACCESS is implemented, we will utilize the University's Common Reading Program to promote the ACCESS program and increase visibility of Autism Spectrum Disorder by choosing a book that highlights a person with ASD in a positive way.

*Possible Bay Book Options can include:*

The Curious Incident of the  
Dog in the Night-Time  
by Mark Haddon

Look Me in the Eye  
by John Elder Robison

Speed of Dark  
by Elizabeth Moon



## Campus-Wide Initiatives



# University Training on ASD

The department of Disability Services will offer campus wide training to faculty and staff.

blueZONE training will include education on ASD, information on reasonable accommodations, and communication techniques.

We can offer “blueZONE certification” to faculty and staff who have completed training.



**Campus-Wide Initiatives**



# Campus Dining Services

Research shows that people with Autism may benefit from a casein- and gluten- free diet.

Dining services is able to work with the School of Health Sciences to develop menus that we can incorporate into our options if future studies show that Students with ASD would benefit.

Campus dining facilities are currently able to accommodate for these dietary restrictions, however we will begin clearly labeling daily options for students.



## Campus-Wide Initiatives



# Academics and Universal Design

Universal Design is “the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.”

The Division of Academic Affairs has collaborated with Disability Services to create specific sections of courses that will offer Universal Design.

Professors will volunteer to teach these classes and will receive specialized training.

Students may register for these classes with the approval of the Office of Disability Services or the ACCESS coordinator.

## *Possible Universal Design classes can include:*

- PSY 150 *General Psychology*
- COMM 201 *Foundations of Communication*
- ENG 101 *Writing and Rhetoric*
- MUS 101 *Music Appreciation*
- THEA 101 *The Theater Experience*
- ART 101 *Introduction to Visual Arts*
- MATH 101 *Mathematical Concepts*
- HIST 107 *World Cultures*

## Campus-Wide Initiatives

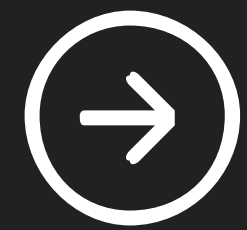
# Budget Breakdown

Budget Item		Cost
Graduate Assistant or Part-Time Support Staff	ACCESS will need a part-time staff member for administrative tasks. This person can be a graduate assistant or part-time employee.	\$10,654 per year
Student Peer Mentors	Student mentors will be paid small stipends throughout the year for their work with ACCESS.	\$10,000 per year
Operations and Programming	Disability Services will need money allocated for marketing materials and other small needs associated with rolling out university-wide initiatives (like dining labels and housing accommodations).	\$2,000 per year
Bay Book Program	The Office of First-Year Experiences coordinates the <i>Bay Book</i> program and its fund. Disability Services is prepared to assist in paying for this.	\$40,000 once (paid for by the <i>Bay Book</i> Fund)
Professional Development	Disability Services staff, university officials, and professors teaching universal design will need training and further professional development to adequately roll out these programs.	\$2,000 per year

**Total needed: \$24,654**  
 (with FYE paying for Bay Book Program)

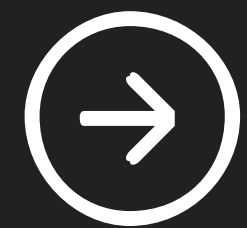


# Where can funds come from?



## Project REACH

*“Project REACH: Resources and Education on Autism as CUNY’s Hallmark is a university-wide project funded by the FAR Fund created to enhance CUNY’s capacity to support its growing population of college students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and to educate faculty and staff about students with ASD.” As a CUNY school, we are able to partner with Project REACH as a mini-grant to fund much of our program.*



Project REACH will be very helpful to support ASSIST and other ASD initiatives as Brooklyn Bay University, but alone will not be enough!



We have several grant applications pending to help fund our program, including the FAR fund and Autism Speaks Local Grant.



Collaborative efforts between departments can bridge the gap between what we need and are able to acquire through Project REACH and other grant applications.

# WHAT CAN WE EXPECT AFTER IMPLEMENTING THIS PROGRAM?

Engagement of currently enrolled students with ASD will increase.

*Research suggests that implementing programming increases the engagement and retention of students with disabilities. Currently, only about 27% of students who disclose ASD complete a degree at BBU (compared with 20% in national average). Our goal will be to increase this number to 50% within five years of implementation.*

Enrollment and disclosure of students with ASD will increase.

*Nationally, only about 30% of students with ASD who graduate high school will attend a 2 or 4 year institution, and many students never disclose their disability. This program will increase the confidence of students*

The quality and experience of our entire student body will be better.

*Our mission outlines a “commitment to diversity and inclusion,” and our program strives to support that statement. Students who attend a university with an inclusive and diverse environment have a deepened and more meaningful experience.*



# RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

- [Project REACH](#)
- [Autism Speaks Grants](#)
- [FAR Fund](#)
- [Students on the Spectrum](#)
- [Grand Valley State University Campus Links](#)
- [CDC Data](#)
- [CUNY Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Western Carolina University ONEBook](#)
- [Understanding Students with Autism](#)
- [Autism as an Academic Paradigm](#)
- Patton, L. D., Renn, K. A., Guido, F. M., Quaye, S. J., & Forney, D. S. (2016). *Student development in college: Theory, research, and practice*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Van Hees, V., Moyson, T., & Roeyers, H. (2015). Higher education experiences of students with autism spectrum disorder: Challenges, benefits and support needs. *Journal of autism and developmental disorders, 45(6)*, 1673-1688.