What is a Post-Secondary Education Program?

A two-certificate program for students ages 18-26 who have completed high school and who have a documented intellectual and/or developmental disability (IDD). The Union EDGE Program will be residential or non-residential program designed to aid in career development and employment skills. Students will audit college courses, participate in life skills classes, have on-campus internships and experience the full range of college life.

Of the 227 post-secondary education program of this type throughout the country, the Union EDGE Program is the fifth in the state of Tennessee. We are the only program offering residential options for students, and only the second Christian university in the state to begin a program. Studies have shown that students with IDD who had some type of educational experience after high school were much more likely to obtain competitive employment, required few supports and earned higher wages.

TN PSE Alliance Approval
On February 23rd the Union EDGE Program received notification from the Tennessee Post-Secondary Education Alliance that we had received approval from the Alliance. This vote of approval from the Alliance allows all Union EDGE students to be eligible to receive the STEP UP Scholarship funds from the State of Tennessee.

“"The only disability in life is a bad attitude."”
Scott Hamilton

Fast Facts

- Union’s EDGE program will meet the Think College national standards.
- The EDGE program has applied for certification as a Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP) by the Department of Education, which separates Union as one of the 35 programs in the nation which will have attained this status.
- There are no CTP certified programs in Arkansas, Missouri, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana.
- The national rate of unemployment for individuals 16-21 with ID/DD is 85%.
- The unemployment rate for individuals ages 20-30 with ID/DD is 68%.
- The national unemployment average for graduates of PSE program is 42%.
- The graduates of programs similar to Union University have a 12% unemployment rate.
The Union EDGE Program will admit eight students in the fall. These students will each pay $15,000 in tuition. As the only residential PSE program in the state, Union EDGE students will incur additional room and board fees. Students will have the option to live on campus or with their families.

Our First Benefactor’s Dinner
Was held on Monday, February 23 in Germantown at The Butcher Shop. This wonderful evening was graciously sponsored by RHA of West Tennessee. Guests and staff were treated to great food and fellowship, while raising money for The Union EDGE.

Our second Benefactor Dinner will be held on April 21 at The Jackson Country Club. Our hosts for the evening will be Mr. and Mrs. Jerome Teel.

How can you help?
We need your assistance in raising the supplemental funds needed for this critical program. Thus far we have received commitments for $40,000. Our ultimate goal is $114,000. As you can see, the need is still great. If you would like to contribute, you can make a gift online at uu.edu/giving and designating “The Union EDGE Program” or by calling 731-661-5050.

The Union EDGE Accepts First Student

The Union EDGE Program is pleased to announce that we are currently accepting applications for the fall of 2015. EDGE will accept eight students into its inaugural cohort. Each semester students will audit two regular college courses with traditional enrolled students. Students will be enrolled in two EDGE Life Skills courses that will concentrate on employability, technology, and independent living skills. Students will participate in on-campus internships during year one and year two will feature off-campus internships.

We are pleased to announce Mr. Seth Ratliff of Coppell, Texas as our first official Union EDGE student. Seth’s grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Max Walker who both attended Union University! Seth played trombone in his high school marching band. His dream job would be to work for Apple Computers. We are so excited to welcome Seth on campus in the fall!