

Earn an AMI Diploma and a USA Montessori Bachelor's Degree at the Same Time!

In 2016 Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) and Wend (then the James Walton Fund) collaboratively announced a grant opportunity and called for proposals to develop a bachelor's degree program at an accredited college or university in the United States. Proposals were submitted and in 2017 the University of Hartford (UH) in partnership with the Montessori Training Center Northeast (MTCNE) managed and operated by Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) were the sole recipients of the grant which totaled \$4.8 million US.

UH and MTCNE were selected in part because of a long lasting partnership started in 2007 with the development of the Master's Degree in Education with a Montessori Concentration. The Master's Program and partnership have been maintained for over a decade enrolling over 130 AMI diploma holders in the UH M. Ed. Program with Montessori Concentration. The new grant would expand this successful graduate school option to an undergraduate degree.

The purpose of the grant was to create a four-year bachelor degree that integrates the AMI diploma training into a university's undergraduate curriculum, such that successful completion of the program would result in a bachelor's degree in Montessori Education, an AMI diploma and eligibility for a public school state teaching certificate. The grant provided the partnership funding for student scholarships, marketing, curriculum development and program research, stipends for AMI trainers in training, management and supervision. Dr. Paige Bray, Director of Montessori Studies at UH and Tim Nee, then Managing Director of MTCNE, were named as the principal investigators (PIs) for the grant through the University.

Moving a new program through a university system is not an easy task. With guided support from the PIs, both institutions and Wend's Nora Flood, the program is now a recognized university option that is fully integrated into the university recruitment, application and matriculation process. The approved curriculum, guided by Dr. Bray, MTCNE's Courtney Reim and AMI Trainers from MTCNE, Gerry Leonard and Gretchen Hall, was successfully ushered through the university system process.

To date 57 undergraduate students have enrolled in the UH Montessori bachelor degree options. Forty-one of those students will receive annual scholarship funding through degree completion with an average annual award of \$16, 124 US. This incredible funding has provided access to a degree and an AMI diploma that would not be possible for those economically challenged. The program is proud to have seen its first graduates in the last couple of years. The funding also has thus far helped support 9 AMI Trainers in Training at MTCNE to be auxiliary or full trainers at all age levels. The Trainers in Training program supports AMI diploma training sustainability at both MTCNE and UH.

The undergraduate degree program provides for two pathways: a bachelor of arts (BA) for those wishing to complete a bachelor degree and a bachelor of science (BS) for those seeking a more traditional four-year college degree program. Those enrolled in the BA are typically students who are

older than post-secondary school, have undergraduate credits and have never finished an undergraduate degree. Approved undergraduate credits are generously accepted by UH for those applying to the BA program and at times, the credits acquired through the Montessori coursework provides the students with enough credits to complete their degree while others may require additional university courses. The BS is a more traditional four year undergraduate pathway with student's commuting or living on campus and matriculating through the Montessori course of study, leading to an early childhood or elementary teaching degree. It is important that we let all know about these incredible and unique opportunities at the University of Hartford within the AMI community.

Fall recruitment for next year's admissions cycle is underway for the BS program. Students from around the world are encouraged to apply! The University will provide support for applicants who may require a student visa to study in the states. Without continued good student enrollment, the program can face elimination. Through our collective efforts we hope to show a significant increase of worldwide interest with applications from around the globe from students looking to receive a prestigious USA BS Degree and the world recognized quality Montessori AMI Diploma within a planned college program.

To learn more about the degrees go to <https://www.hartford.edu/montessori>. Please help spread the word to increase our training options for more interested candidates to become Montessori teachers worldwide.

Article contributed by Tim Nee, Dr. Paige Bray and Courtney Reim, September 2022.

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