

# Altoona Mirror

## Mount to offer two new degrees

### Cybersecurity, digital forensic investigations offered

CRESSON — Mount Aloysius College will offer two new associate degrees: cybersecurity operations and digital forensic investigations.

Students who enter the new programs in the spring will have two options upon completion: find entry-level employment opportunities or continue with their education by completing an information technology bachelor's degree.

Jeff Sunseri, one of the college's two full-time professors in the IT program, said on Monday that credits from the associate programs count for required courses in the IT program's concentration area of studies.

Sunseri said the program has several adjunct instructors, who provide current knowledge from constantly changing experiences in digital forensics and cybersecurity jobs.

*"We actually consider that a strength of the program,"* he said of adjuncts. *"They're typically people who are active in the industry."*

IT senior Daniel Singer said he has a concentration in cybersecurity and thinks that the new associate programs will provide great opportunities for

future students.

*“I think it’s going to create great opportunities to further their careers, and I think it’s good for the college,”* Singer said. *“They’re opening up a bunch of opportunities, and the college is always moving forward. It’s nice that the curriculum is always changing for industry needs.”*

Mount Aloysius College President John Mills said he had the pleasure of talking about the new programs on Monday from a point of view of having little to do with creating them.

*“To me, it was a slam dunk and one of the easiest things I’ve done,”* Mills said of newly created programs. *“This is a perfect example of the direction we’re going to be heading in the next few years.”*

Sunseri, who played a big role in creating the programs, also helped to design a new \$94,000 IT lab in the college library’s basement.

*“I think that that’s going to be the centerpiece of the program. I think that the curriculum is very forward-thinking, and I think our use of adjuncts is very beneficial to the students. The software that we licensed for our lab is super, super important,”* Sunseri said, adding that the IT classroom experience includes hands-on experience.

*“We have them rip (a computer) down until it’s just the bare aluminum case. They rip it apart, and then we say, ‘OK, put it all back together and show me that it will boot back up.’ Hands-on experience is super, super important because (students) could enter the workplace and not have to spend a significant amount of time learning new things.”*

Walter Hutsky, information technology manager of Precision Business Solutions’ Ebensburg office, said that in the past, several interns with hands-on experience from Mount Aloysius College have been hired full-time by his company.

*“We’re struggling right now with really finding qualified individuals in the area to join our team. The Mount has been a great resource for providing us with trained individuals.”*

