

OVERVIEW

History of Aurora University

Aurora University traces its origins to the 1893 founding of a seminary in the small town of Mendota, Illinois. Though established initially to prepare graduates for ministry, the institution soon adopted a broader mission and moved to a new campus on the western edge of the nearby community of Aurora. With this change came a different name and a growing enrollment. When World War II ended, the campus population swelled again as veterans enrolled in the college's innovative evening degree program. The 1970s and 1980s saw an expansion of curricular offerings in a number of professional fields and the awarding of advanced degrees in selected disciplines. These changes culminated in the 1985 decision to rechristen the institution Aurora University.

History of George Williams College

The roots of George Williams College run deep in the YMCA movement of the 19th century. In 1884, leaders from America's "western" YMCAs gathered on the shores of Geneva Lake in Williams Bay, Wisconsin, to attend a summer training program. Two years later, the camp was incorporated, and the first parcel of the current Williams Bay campus was purchased. Since that time, College Camp has been a source of inspiration, recreation, education, and renewal for thousands of guests and students. In 1992, Aurora University and George Williams College traditions blended when the two institutions entered into an affiliation agreement that paved the way for a merger eight years later.

Aurora University and George Williams College: A New Era

Today, Aurora University is a private, independent, comprehensive institution with an enrollment of approximately 6,000 students. Aurora University is comprised of a main campus of 37 acres in Aurora, Illinois, and several locations. The three locations include the 137.5-acre George Williams College of Aurora University on Geneva Lake in Williams Bay, Wisconsin, and the Woodstock Center in downtown Woodstock, Illinois.

Additionally, Aurora offers courses and programs online through AU Online. Aurora University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission to award degrees at the baccalaureate, master's and doctoral levels.

On the Aurora campus, AU offers a variety of undergraduate and graduate programs. Undergraduate students participate in a wide range of on- and off-campus learning experiences. Students participate in more than 60 musical, literary, religious, social and service organizations, and play active roles in campus governance. The university also fields 22 NCAA Division III intercollegiate athletic teams.

At AU, we believe that the educational needs of our students are served best through the formation of strategic partnerships with institutions of like vision, mission, and values. Such collaborations also enhance the well-being of our communities around our campuses. The George Williams College of Aurora University location offers undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral academic programs. The location also boasts unique conference facilities and is home to the university's popular Music by the Lake summer festival. Aurora University draws upon the rich legacies and distinctive traditions of Aurora College and George Williams College. This history has helped shape Aurora University, which will continue to build upon its important past to help shape the future.