

Kinesiology

Committed to nurturing the development of the whole person, in body, mind and spirit.



Diversity and Inclusion Speaker Series

The 9th annual Kinesiology Diversity and Inclusion Speaker Series was held March 12, 2025. Over 170 PLU students, faculty, staff, administrators, and community members attended this year's event. This year's event was due, in large part, to community and legislative work spearheaded by Dr. Terri Farrar and Dr. Charlie Katica.

Dr. Katica co-founded Rainier Adaptive Sports, which is a nonprofit organization that provides athletic opportunities for adaptive athletes throughout Pierce County and the South Sound region. And, Dr. Farrar has worked with physical educators throughout Washington State and brought a first-of-its-kind continuing education endorsement program centered around Adapted Physical Education. Both of these faculty members leveraged their community connections to bring this year's panel of advocates and activists to PLU.

This year's event titled, "Inclusive Movement: Advocating for Accessibility and Inclusion in Sport, Recreation, and Physical

Education," featured a panel of speakers. Dr. Katica moderated the panel, which featured:

Toni Bader (Adapted Physical Education Specialist in Seattle Public Schools), **Megan Blunk** (Team USA Paralympic Gold Medalist and Rainier Adaptive Sports Junior Wheelchair Basketball Coach), **Taylor Moseley** (Program Manager, Outdoors for All Foundation), **Kenny Salvini** (Co-Founder and President, Here and Now Project), and **Noah Seidel** (Region 3 Developmental Disabilities Ombuds). Each panelist spoke about professional challenges and opportunities and sharing their lived experiences.

More than 60 PLU Kinesiology students provided formal feedback about the event. A few

representative comments spoke to the impact of this year's panel:

- "It was a good reminder that the core of Kinesiology revolves around the people we interact with and intend to serve."
- "There are always opportunities as long as you take action. Advocate and help shine a spotlight on those who are underrepresented."
- "You'll never be fully prepared – is a thought that I'm taking with me. Listen to the points about what adaptations people actually want/need/are comfortable with. Don't assume."
- "Change takes a long time. Do not get discouraged by the pace of change. Just continue to push the barriers and strive for it. I can play a role."



CONGRATULATIONS TO STUDENT PRESENTERS

Thanks to generous donations from alumni, faculty, staff, and community members during Bjug Day, the Kinesiology Department was able to offset costs for students to attend and present at conferences.

This year, **Saisha Morales, Samuel Flynn, Susana Lopez, Jazmin De Santiago, Renae Alonzo-Fernandez, Sara Olvera, Matthew Knoll, Isiah Spear, and Isaiah Baer** attended the **SHAPE WASHINGTON CONFERENCE** held at PLU in October. The students assisted the SHAPE WA board, attended multiple sessions, and networked with other PETE/HETE students and teachers from across the state of Washington.

The Department of Kinesiology faculty also recognizes students who were selected for the **PLU DR. RAE LINDA BROWN UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AND CREATIVE PROJECTS SHOWCASE** in May 2025. **Anthony Adams, Braeden Samura, Hannah Cecil, Landen Sexton, Meghan Hamell, Mollie Walker, and Waylan Mettler** presented a digital poster of their Kinesiology 384: Foundations of Health and Fitness Promotion project at the showcase.

THANK YOU to every donor who made these experiences possible for students.



And congratulations to all of the student presenters and conference attendees!

Alumna Positively Impacts FTWL Program



This year, we welcome back **Ms. Whittaker** ('21) to PLU Kinesiology. Ms. Whittaker is teaching multiple physical activity courses in our FTWL program. With a degree in Health and Fitness Education and having previously taught physical education at Tahoma High School (Maple Valley, WA), she brings strong pedagogical skills and strategies to our program. Ms. Whittaker has quickly made a positive impact with undergraduate students and we are excited to have her back on campus and in the department. "I'm excited and grateful to be back at PLU! As a student,

PLU, and specifically within the Kinesiology department, was a place where I felt seen and accepted for who I was. I was able to gain the knowledge and confidence needed to pursue my passion of becoming a Health and Physical Education Teacher. Now teaching Fitness and Wellness classes at PLU feels like a full circle moment! I hope to create a positive learning environment for students just as my former professors did for me. So far I am enjoying getting to know some of the amazing students at PLU and the opportunity to teach new classes!"

Welcome Dr. Missy Widmann



Welcome **Dr. Missy Widmann!**
In Fall of 2024, Dr. Missy Widmann joined the PLU Department of Kinesiology as

Visiting Faculty. Previously, Dr. Widmann taught several courses as part of the FTWL program, and we are excited to have her join the department and teach some of our introductory and internship courses along with some of the undergraduate courses in our Health and Fitness Education concentration.

Dr. Widmann co-founded and serves as the President of Neural Education, a nonprofit whose mission is to equip K-12 educators with research-supported, neural-informed learning practices. Dr. Widmann is familiar with PLU as she has worked with Dr. Farrar to host the Neural Education

Conference at PLU, which brings educators from across the state to the university to learn research-based strategies.

Much of Dr. Widmann's community-focused work is multidisciplinary - crossing education, technology as well as health and fitness domains. Prior to PLU, she served as an educator at both the middle school and high school level. Her expertise in implementing technology in education as well as her PreK-20+ teaching background will continue to benefit our students, especially those with interests in health and physical education.

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS: STUDENTS LEARN FROM CURRENT PRACTITIONERS

Each year, alumni return to PLU and their Kinesiology roots to connect with current students.

This year, **Matthew (Matt) Leslie** (MSK '21) spoke with students in Dr. Hacker's Kinesiology 390: Applied Exercise and Sport Psychology course about his experiences as a NOLS Custom Education Director. Matt also shared how his PLU education shaped his career and developed his passions for coaching, sport psychology, experiential education, and outdoor adventure.

As he noted, *"My message to students is to find and highlight the connecting threads of what excited you and gives you purpose."*

Dr. Hacker's Kinesiology 390 class also welcomed **Natalie McCarthy** ('09), paralympic rower, back to campus this Spring.

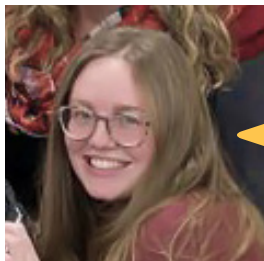
In addition, as one of their events this year, the Kinesiologists of the Future Club organized a panel of recent Kinesiology alumni featuring **Erika Bakner** ('17), **Elijah Hurt** ('19), and **Bo Pearson** ('15). These alums returned to campus to speak with current KFC members about how their degrees in Kinesiology helped them attain their careers in Occupational Therapy, Physical Education, and Strength and Conditioning, respectively.

THANK YOU to all of our **2024-2025 alumni guest speakers.**



Alumni Give Back as Internship Supervisors and Cooperating Teachers

We spoke with two KINS alumni about their current careers, supervising student interns or student teachers, and reflecting on their time in the Kinesiology program.



Jordan Fahey ('19)
Exercise
Science. Lead
Clinical Exercise
Physiologist,
Multicare/
Pulse Good
Samaritan Hospital
Cardiopulmonary
Rehab (six years)

What do you enjoy most about your career choice?

What I love about cardiac and pulmonary rehab is that I get to know the patients I work with really well. I also get to share my knowledge and passion for health & wellbeing! I get to teach education classes, teach strength training classes, and teach patients how to help themselves. I get to watch and support their progress through the program and gain confidence in themselves which is very rewarding!

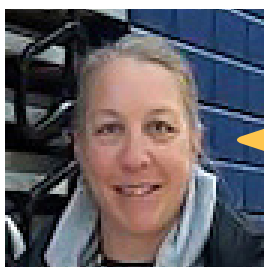
Why do you choose to work with PLU Kinesiology student interns?

I love the fresh perspective that students bring. Working in a career for many years you get used to doing things a certain way or referring to the same people. Students make me consider things I have never thought about and bring inspiration for new ideas. I also appreciate how they will ask me questions; it challenges me to check my knowledge and to stay current in the field!

What is one piece of advice you would give to prospective practitioners interested in entering your field?

Stay teachable! Once you are done with school, there is still quite a bit more learning to do. I am still learning something new every day.

My advice would be to take advantage of as many opportunities as you are able. Things like fall prevention fairs, heart walks, any sort of volunteering in the community. You will appreciate the different perspectives you gain from it. You will also get to build more connections with others in your field that way! It helps to not feel alone in your field and to bounce ideas off each other.



Leah Sandlian ('13)
Bachelor of Arts in
Physical Education.
Physical Education
Teacher/Athletic
Director, Surprise
Lake Middle
School (8 years)

What do you enjoy most about your career choice?

What I enjoy most about being a PE teacher is building relationships with my students and creating a safe learning environment for them to learn to enjoy physical activity.

Why do you choose to work with PLU Kinesiology student teachers?

What I enjoy most about working with PLU Kinesiology students is they have received the same pedagogy, Professors attention to detail that I had learned during my time at PLU.

What is one piece of advice you would give to prospective educators interested in entering your field?

I feel a standout characteristic or skill is the willingness to make mistakes and learn and show initiative when first starting out.

One piece of advice I would give to prospective students is to make sure you know the "why" you are pursuing the job you want. Make sure the why is for you, and that you are passionate and dedicated to that "WHY."

Kinesiologists of the Future Club is BACK!!!



This spring, our Kinesiologists of the Future Club returned! Founded in 2014, the club is open to all undergraduate students with an interest in Kinesiology. Although the club had been active in previous years, Dr. Marin and a group of invested students re-energized the Club in Spring 2025. When asked why she felt it was important to restart KFC,

co-President Haley Gotto (junior) said, "I wanted to help restart KFC to help teach other students about their future options and provide opportunities for people while also getting to learn more for myself. I think we have valuable opportunities and a good kinesiology community at PLU as well as great teachers and outside connections that can

help enhance our experience; we can only benefit more from the extra exposure and options through KFC." Treasurer Noah Friedrich (sophomore) added, "I wanted to join the club to help promote Kinesiology-related events and find ways to engage with exercise around campus". The club hosted its first meetings in Spring 2025, featuring a Kinesiology Alumni Panel, and study sessions the week before finals. According to club Secretary Liah Nottingham (sophomore), "The vision is to hold events that help educate KINS majors, provide services to the community, and make our major a more formed community on campus". "My hope is that the club continues to do that for other students too, help them find direction, feel supported, and realize they're not alone in their uncertainty. Since being part of the club, I've seen how many of us," said Co-President Selena Hansel (junior).

2024-2025 Student Award Recipients

Each year the Kinesiology faculty select deserving Kinesiology students for three different organizational awards. The students selected for these awards are being recognized for their outstanding academic achievement, the contributions they have made to their community, service to PLU and to the Kinesiology department, as well as their potential to become future leaders in the field. In addition, the faculty vote for outstanding PLU Kinesiology undergraduate students who are recognized for their academic success and their work in the field. The Kinesiology faculty would like to congratulate all of these students on their outstanding accomplishment.



Taylor Schmidtke was named the 2025 *SHAPE America Major of the Year*



Julia Causbie was recognized as the 2025 *American Kinesiology Association Undergraduate Scholar of the Year Award Winner*



Susana Lopez received the *SHAPE Washington Roger C. Wiley Emerging Leader Award*

Faculty's Scholarly Applied Pursuits

Dr. Farrar presented “Effective strategies for teaching and assessing skills-based health education” and co-presented “Advocating for your adapted physical education program” at the SHAPE America Conference in Baltimore, MD. She and *Dr. Widmann* were awarded an OSPI grant to co-create dynamic, focused attention open education resources in partnership with Bethel School District. Dr. Farrar is also currently serving on the OSPI Health Standards Advisory Committee, which is responsible for reviewing and providing feedback on the revised K-12 health standards.

Dr. Hacker was invited to write three book chapters for leading sport and exercise psychology textbooks. She delivered the Admired Leadership keynote address, “No Room for Errors,” to over 900 global participants and delivered two presentations at the National Soccer Convention. She and *Dr. Mann* taught classes as part of the Quatsabadi Summer STEM Program at PLU this past June. Dr. Hacker was also featured on multiple podcasts, including: the UK Podcast “The use of multi-sensory imagery in goal achievement,” UCL in London, ESPNW Laughter

Permitted, Coaching Insider, and To The Bone, among others. And, she was interviewed by multiple media outlets for her expertise on a variety of topics, including by GQ Magazine, Psychology Today, and Coaching Insider.

Dr. Katica was named Executive Director of Rainier Adaptive Sport (a nonprofit organization he co-founded) and secured \$175,000 in grants for RAS. Both *Dr. Katica* and *Dr. Farrar* were awarded the PLU Karen Hille Phillips Regency Grant.

Dr. Mann co-authored two book chapters for one of the leading applied sport psychology textbooks in the U.S. As a certified trainer for the Positive Coaching Alliance, she delivered coaching workshops impacting more than 700 coaches and youth sport leaders across the United States. Dr. Mann also co-organized and co-led the Regional Coach Educator Roundtable in conjunction with members of the King County Play Equity Coalition.

Dr. Martin wrote an entry for the Association for Applied Sport Psychology blog titled, “Play hard, have Fun, be a good sport: Coaching strategies to keep kids in sport.”

Dr. McConnell spearheaded the university's accreditation process over the past several years, which culminated in a multi-day site visit in Spring 2025, involving every department and aspect of campus life. She also continues her work as a lead author for multiple Health and Wellness books published by Human Kinetics, a leading publishing company in the areas of health and physical activity.

Dr. Papadopoulos delivered an invited presentation at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Department of Physical Education. Presentation topic: “Strength and Balance Exercise Programs for the Prevention of Falls in Older Adults.”

Dr. Widmann is serving as principal investigator for three different grant awards (from Murdock Trust and OSPI). She delivered presentations at both Bethel SD and Bellarmine Prep and was a featured speaker by the Northwest Association of Independent Schools. Dr. Widmann also presented at SHAPE WA. Dr. Widmann continues her extensive work as President of Neural Education.



STUDENT INTERNSHIP PLACEMENT SITES 2024-25

3 DIMENSIONAL PHYSICAL
THERAPY
John Greene

ACTIVE DEVELOPMENT
THERAPIES, LLC
Noe Feliciano

ATI PHYSICAL THERAPY
Noah Childress

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
Jessica Heinauer

COMPLETE PHYSICAL
THERAPY
Kailee Efros-Bohn
Benjamin Kraska

ELITE PHYSICAL THERAPY
- GRAHAM
Nicholas Hedges

ELITE PHYSICAL THERAPY
- NORTH TACOMA
Sarah Brandt

FIRCREST GOLF CLUB
Brigham Novak

GOOD SAMARITAN
HOSPITAL CARDIAC
REHAB
Annelies Richie

JBLM 5TH AIR SUPPORT
OPERATIONS SQUADRON
Min Cho
Jack Collins

JBLM
Erin Huss

JBLM H2F
Erwin Robles

KAUFMAN CHIROPRACTIC
Griffin Montana

MT TAHOMA HIGH
SCHOOL FOOTBALL
Gavin Hawley
Stevan Rodriguez

MVP MOVEMENT AND
PERFORMANCE PT
Kellen Meade
Jaden Pieper

OLYMPIC SPORTS & SPINE
- FEDERAL WAY
Nicholas Yeun

OLYMPIC SPORTS & SPINE
- TACOMA MALL BLVD
Brian Bouthillier

PEARSON CHIROPRACTIC
Marc Basa

SUNDANCE CIRCLE
HIPPO THERAPY
Luke Farag
Raylie Wardenaar

TACOMA GENERAL
CARDIAC REHAB
Dylan Jones

UNIVERSITY OF
WASHINGTON STRENGTH
& CONDITIONING
Charlie Olson

WASHINGTON PREMIER
FOOTBALL CLUB
Hannah Cecil

THANK YOU to all of our internship site supervisors, cooperating teachers, partner schools and organizations! **Your dedication to our students and our program makes a difference!**

STUDENT TEACHER PLACEMENTS 2024-25

ALDERWOOD MIDDLE
SCHOOL—MR. TAYLOR
NAKAMURA
Isaiah Baer

STEWART MIDDLE SCHOOL
—MR. BOB GATBUNTON
Samuel Flynn

EVERGREEN ELEMENTARY
—MR. EARL TILLIS ('15)
Matthew Knoll

COLUMBIA JUNIOR HIGH
SCHOOL—MRS. SUE
WATERS
Susana Lopez

MIDLAND ELEMENTARY
—MS. KIM JACKSON
Taylor Schmidtke

CONGRATULATIONS

CLASS OF 2025 KINESIOLOGY GRADUATES

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN KINESIOLOGY

Isaiah Andrew Baer
Samuel Houser Flynn
Erin Nicole Huss
Matthew Joseph Knoll
Susana Lopez
Taylor Jo Schmidtke
Kaylen Destiny Nohelani Sumait

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN KINESIOLOGY

Anthony Michael Adams
Marc Basa
Brian Michael Bouthillier
Sarah Helena Brandt
Julia Christine Causbie
Hannah Cecil
Jack Danahy Collins
Andrew John Comito
Lily Sequoia Dose
Blake Andrew Doss
Kailee Ocean Efros-Bohn
Luke Paul Farag
Noelani Racquelle Feliciano
Renee Ann Grauerholz
John Henry Greene
Meghan Kimberly Hamell
Gavin Hawley
Nicholas Herrick Hedges
Jessica Loren Heinauer
Benjamin Joseph Kraska
Kellen Paul Meade
Vasko Pierre Mladenov
Caleb James Ness
Charles Xavier Olson
Corissa Breanne Olson
Jaden Pieper
Annelies Marie Richie
Erwin Andres Robles
Stevan Richard Rodriquez
Devin Jerome Stanley
Jonathan James Tyrell-Smith Jr.
Mollie Elizabeth Walker
Raylie Wardenaar
Nicholas Sopaek Yeun
