



Grocery Bingo



NEWSLETTER

President's Pen

Dear Piedmont University Community,

As we move forward through the semester, I want to thank each of you for the energy, dedication, and resilience you bring to our university community. The weeks ahead will bring challenges, but they will also bring opportunities to learn, grow, and support one another.

Let's keep working together with the same spirit of collaboration and perseverance that makes our campus so special. I look forward to finishing this semester strong - together.

Sincerely,
Marshall M. Criser, III

September 2025

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Brandon Philpot: SAIL Navigator, Nursing Major, Campus Leader

by Terrie Ellerbee



When sophomore Brandon Philpot talks about Piedmont University, he describes it as “one big family.” It is easy to see why. From his role as a Navigator in Piedmont’s bridge-from-high-school-to-college program called SAIL to giving campus tours, running the scoreboard at athletic events, and tutoring fellow students, Philpot has immersed himself in campus life — and brought his signature enthusiasm with him.

In the SAIL program, Navigators are upper-level students, while Voyagers are incoming first-year students. Philpot applied to join SAIL as a Navigator after hearing how impactful it was for first-year students.

“SAIL exceeded my expectations,” Philpot said. “I made a lot of new friends and met amazing Voyagers and Navigators alike. The experience was definitely worthwhile, and I’m looking forward to doing it again next year if I get hired.”

For Philpot, the most rewarding part of being a Navigator is giving new students something he didn’t have himself.

“I unfortunately couldn’t attend SAIL as a freshman, so I didn’t have a mentor. I want to give incoming freshmen something I couldn’t have — helping them navigate this huge transition not only into college but into adulthood.”

A nursing major, Philpot chose Piedmont for its outstanding nursing program, small class sizes, and the close-knit, supportive community.

“Along with the professors always being kind and attentive, making sure I am doing well and setting me up for success — my expectations were exceeded. I’m glad I chose this college, and I have no regrets.”

Philpot is quick to thank the faculty, staff, and mentors who have made an impact on him, giving shoutouts to Professor Jeff Bowers, Dr. Douglas Butts, Dr. Ryan Franklin, Professor Natalie Simmons, Ineke Dyer, Jalen Davis, Oliver Howington, Lyn St. Louis, and many more across campus.

He’s equally enthusiastic about his many campus roles: TEAM Piedmont, MANE Leaders, SAIL, Athletic Communications, tutoring, and tours for future Lions. “Being involved on campus has changed me as a person. I feel more outgoing and confident, and I’m always looking forward to meeting new people every day.”

Asked what advice he would give to new students, Philpot doesn’t hesitate: “Get ready to have good time management — but also get involved! Meet new people, explore new things, and step beyond your comfort zone.”





Jamie Purdy Named Director of Intercollegiate Athletics

by Joseph Garwood



Piedmont University recently announced the appointment of Jamie Purdy as its new Director of Intercollegiate Athletics. Purdy is a 2000 graduate of Piedmont College and a longtime leader within the department.

Purdy steps into the position after a decade as the Assistant Director of Athletics and Senior Woman Administrator (SWA), where she has played a vital role in the oversight and growth of Piedmont's 22 intercollegiate sports.

Purdy has also served as the head women's basketball coach since 2005 and has established one of the most successful programs in the South Region. Entering her 21st season in 2025–26, she holds a career record of 398–190 (.676) and ranks among the top 50 winningest active NCAA Division III coaches by winning percentage.

Her teams have earned seven NCAA Tournament appearances, nine 20-win seasons and championships in three different conferences. This past season, Purdy led the Lions to a share of the CCS Regular Season crown, as the Lions validated the accomplishment by cruising to the CCS Conference Tournament Championship in front of the home fans at Cave Arena. The team was rewarded with their seventh NCAA Tournament appearance under Purdy's watch.

"It is a tremendous honor to be selected to lead a department that means so much to me," Purdy said. "This place has been home for more than two decades, and I am excited to continue building on the foundation of success."

In her administrative tenure, Purdy has helped oversee day-to-day department operations and served as a key figure in departmental planning, compliance, and student-athlete development.

Congrats!

Kristie Harris Brings Decades of Leadership Ability to Piedmont's Chief Financial Role

by Terrie Ellerbee



Piedmont University has welcomed Kristie Harris as the new Vice President of Finance and Chief Financial Officer. With more than two decades of leadership experience in higher education finance and human resources, Harris brings both strategic expertise and a deep commitment to students. In this Q&A, she shares what drew her to Piedmont, her philosophy on financial stewardship, and her vision for supporting the university's continued growth and success.

What drew you to Piedmont University, and what excites you most about joining this community?

What drew me to Piedmont University was its strong sense of community and its commitment to transforming students' lives through education. Having spent more than 20 years working in higher education finance in Florida, I've seen firsthand how sound financial stewardship directly supports the student experience and strengthens an institution's ability to fulfill its mission. I look forward to helping build on the university's momentum and ensuring that our students have every opportunity to thrive here at Piedmont.

What's your overall philosophy when it comes to managing a university's financial operations, especially during times of change or uncertainty?

My philosophy is grounded in three key principles: integrity, transparency, and accountability. During times of change and uncertainty, these principles become even more important. By approaching challenges with integrity, communicating openly, and holding ourselves accountable, we build trust and create a foundation for stability.

How do you balance fiscal responsibility with supporting growth, innovation, and student success?

It begins with a clear focus on students. Every financial decision should support their success, whether that's through academic programs, campus resources, or new opportunities for engagement and learning. Fiscal responsibility provides the foundation by protecting the university's long-term stability and ensuring data-driven decisions. At the same time, we must be strategic in investing in areas that support innovation and growth for our students. That means identifying priorities that strengthen Piedmont's future and finding creative ways to maximize our return on investment.

On a personal note, what do you enjoy doing when you're not working?

Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with family and friends. That's always my go-to place for peace and enjoyment. I also love the outdoors, especially with the cooler weather in the Georgia mountains. Coming from Florida, I've always appreciated being near the water, and I'm excited to explore the beautiful scenery and outdoor activities that North Georgia has to offer.

From Track to the Lab: Piedmont Biology Major Heads to San Diego State for Graduate School

by Terrie Ellerbee



Piedmont University graduate Jadon Gonzales earned a degree in Biology and Environmental Science with a minor in Chemistry this May. The journey that led there began with spikes on the track, not slides under a microscope.

"I actually chose Piedmont because of the Track and Field program," Gonzales said. "Athletics brought me there, but science is what kept me."

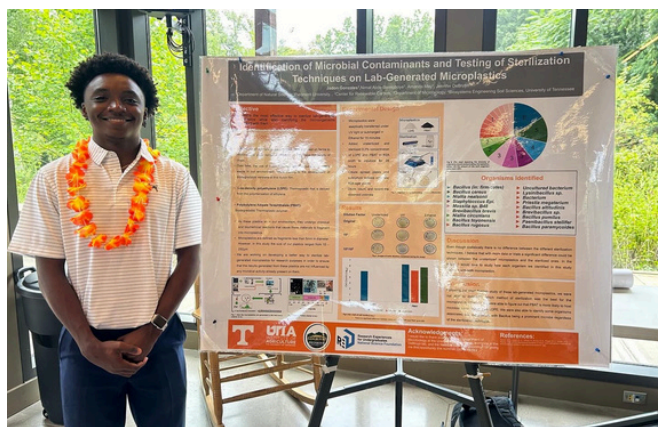
Originally interested in the pre-med route, Gonzales quickly discovered a passion for scientific research and environmental impact, staying true to the biology major while shifting focus toward discovery and innovation.

"I really enjoy conducting research and contributing to the world of science," Gonzales said. That drive led to multiple competitive opportunities, including a summer internship with LOGIC Environmental Consulting and a coveted position in the Microbiology REU (Research Experience for Undergraduates) program at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

"Earth Science Professor Dr. Debra Dooley helped guide me toward both internships. And Assistant Biology Professor Dr. Rebecca Godwin always pushed me to rise to my potential. She never let me settle," Gonzales said.

That mentorship—and the close-knit relationships built with professors and coaches—proved to be the most meaningful part of his Piedmont experience.

"I've learned so much, but the biggest takeaway has been discipline. Being a student-athlete in Cross Country and Track & Field for all four years really helped prepare me for the next chapter."



That chapter began this fall at San Diego State University, where Gonzales is pursuing a master's degree in biology. Drawn by the lab's research focus and an inspiring principal investigator, he is already envisioning what's next.

"I hope to eventually earn a PhD, do research, and maybe even teach at a university. Running my own lab one day isn't out of the question."

As he crossed the Commencement stage prepared for graduate school, Gonzales's advice to future Lions was simple: "Get involved. Say yes. You never know what doors will open."

For more information about Piedmont University's Biology degree, visit piedmont.edu/program/biology/.



SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 6-8PM ARRENDALE AMPHITHEATER

Concert will be moved to Swanson Center in the case of bad weather

**TICKETS: \$25 STADIUM (LAWN CHAIR
OPTIONAL), \$10 LAWN**

**Varsity, Fresco's, and Kona Ice food trucks on
site starting at 5:30PM**

**Visit piedmont.edu/event-ticketing to
purchase tickets**

PROCEEDS ENHANCE STUDENT EXPERIENCES THROUGH FRIENDS OF THE ARTS

Calendar of Events

SEPTEMBER

9/18 Fine Arts College Experience
(FACE)

9/20 Fall Family Day and Bogey &
the Viceroy Concert

OCTOBER

10/5 Appassionato Choir, directed
by Alexander Thomlinson

10/7 Forensic Science & Criminal
Justice Preview

10/9 Fall Break

10/16 Art Reception: Conserving
America's Wildlands, the Vision of
Ted Turner by Rhett Turner

NOVEMBER

11/6-8 Godspell

11/13 Piedmont University Singers

11/18 Piedmont University String
Orchestra

11/20 Piedmont University Wind
Ensemble

11/20 Art Reception: Christmas at
the Museum: Jan Walker & the
Kingdom of Neep

For event details, or to view the full calendar,
please visit [here](#).