



NEWSLETTER

President's Pen

Dear Piedmont University Community,

Fall is in the air, the leaves are changing, the temperature is dropping, and we are looking forward to participating in the City of Demorest's Trunk-or-Treat again this year!

Recently we announced that U.S. News & World Report ranked Piedmont University the No. 2 Best Value in the State of Georgia among regional universities for the second year in a row! This ranking reaffirms our commitment to providing a high-quality education that prepares students for successful careers without compromising their financial futures.

As we look ahead, I am confident that our collective efforts will continue to drive the university forward. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to ensuring our success!

Sincerely,
Marshall M. Criser, III

October 2025

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Travel Study Students Take on Italy

Grace Wills



Jazmin Gutierrez-Melo

From Costa Rica to England to Italy and more, Piedmont University students have a variety of travel study opportunities each year. We asked two of our students who have completed a travel study program about their experiences; here's what Jazmin had to say!

Why did you want to study abroad?

The reason I chose to study abroad is because I wanted to immerse myself in another culture and step out of my comfort zone.

How did you choose Italy as your destination?

Before I settled on Italy there were other countries in mind such as Czech Republic and Greece. I chose Italy because it is one of the most beautiful countries and because I wanted to see the Colosseum and explore Venice. Also there is so much history in Rome.

What has been your favorite experience so far?

My favorite experience has been the little things such as walking around during the nighttime because that is when the city is most alive. Also eating and trying gelato.

Did anything about the study abroad experience surprise you?

What surprised me the most is how slow everything moves here even though it is a city. Everyone takes their time, and no one is in a rush, unless you are running late. It's not like New York where everyone is on the go. Also, in the grocery store you have to weigh the vegetables yourself and put a sticker that marks the price, seems normal but we don't do that in America.



What else do you want to accomplish before your semester abroad ends?

Before this semester ends I want to make as many memories as possible and go visit another country. As a first-generation student memories are what matter to me the most because I want to tell my family and friends everything. I'm the first person in my family to live overseas and it's such a bittersweet feeling. I'm forever grateful to have such a supportive family and to have God.

Travel Study Students Take on Italy

Grace Wills



Angel Tavera

Here's what Angel had to say!

Why did you want to study abroad?

I wanted to study abroad because I wanted to experience college in a different city and environment. I believe that experiencing a different culture is one of the best ways to grow both personally and academically.

How did you choose Italy as your destination?

I chose Italy because it's one of the places I've wanted to visit ever since I was a kid. It has always been my dream to experience the history behind its architecture and art, especially in Rome. Studying in a place with such cultural heritage gives me the chance to learn not only in the classroom but also through everyday experiences.

What has been your favorite experience so far?

My favorite experience so far has been exploring the city of Rome. I've visited the Pantheon, the Colosseum, and the Vatican City.

Did anything about the study abroad experience surprise you?

Something that surprised me was that the bottle caps don't come off the water bottles.

What else do you want to accomplish before your semester abroad ends?

Not only do I want to pass my classes, but I also want to accomplish visiting and exploring other cities in Italy and Europe before my semester abroad ends.

Anything you want to add?

I'm really thankful to my parents for supporting me and to Piedmont University for giving me the opportunity to study abroad. This has been an incredible experience that I would recommend to anyone. This opportunity means a lot, and I'm excited to learn, grow, and make the most of my time here.



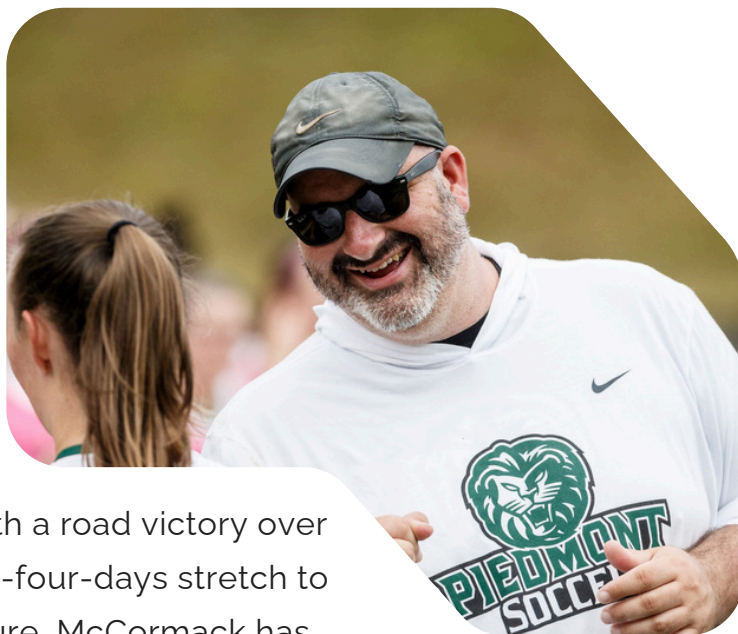


Legendary Lions: McCormack, Stephens Reach Career Milestones

by Joseph Garwood



If you have been around Piedmont Athletics for any length of time, you will certainly recognize both Timmy McCormack and Jimmy Stephens as fixtures of the sidelines at the Walker Athletic Complex for Piedmont Men's and Women's Soccer. Earlier this season, both were able to surpass career milestones, with McCormack picking up his 100th career victory while Stephens notched 200.



McCormack recorded win No. 100 on August 30 with a road victory over Regent University, part of a grueling four-games-in-four-days stretch to open the season, all Piedmont wins. During his tenure, McCormack has led his teams to multiple conference championships and helped his student-athletes succeed beyond the field, mentoring three CoSIDA/CSC Academic All-Americans.



On the men's side, Stephens continues to be a cornerstone of the program as he enters his 21st season. Truly a Lion for Life, Stephens was a member of the inaugural Piedmont Men's Soccer team. Fast forward over 30 years and he reached the 200-win milestone as a head coach on September 17, when the Lions defeated Toccoa Falls 2-1 in front of the home crowd. Over his career, Stephens has guided the program to a GSAC Championship and coached Piedmont's first two-time CoSIDA Academic All-American, Cameron Earls.

Together, McCormack and Stephens represent the sustained excellence and leadership that define Piedmont Soccer, both on the pitch and in the classroom.



Dyer's Path to Purpose

by Caylin Anderson, Online Editor
The Roar



The roar of engines echoed from across the Iraqi desert as convoys rolled through Camp Taji. In the middle of the chaos was a young communications specialist named Tristan Dyer, carrying more than just radio equipment. Dyer took the stories of his fellow soldiers, stories that the world might never hear unless he told them.

Dyer often found himself standing around the television with his fellow soldiers, eyes glued to the screen as it displayed moving pictures. Television often serves as a form of distraction, allowing individuals to unwind and watch something enjoyable after a long day at work. However, this was not the case for Dyer. The television was seemingly stuck on news channels, with reporters elaborating on strategy and attacks. These news stations refused, however, to elaborate upon the “human element.”

“Soldiers were portrayed as though they were made by cookie cutters, all the same. I knew then that I could represent this depiction of soldiers at war in a much better light,” stated Dyer.

As soon as Dyer received his honorable discharge from the military, he decided to take it upon himself to depict the stories of soldiers at war through the art of visual journalism. He aimed to capture the raw, unfiltered humanity of soldiers, showcasing their struggles, camaraderie and resilience in ways that the news failed to convey.

Photography was just a stepping stone for Dyer. While attending the Brooks Institute of Photography and earning a bachelor's in visual journalism, something deep inside him awoke—his passion for documentary film. While at the Brooks Institute, Dyer worked tirelessly on “The Other Way Out,” a film depicting one woman escaping a 15-year addiction to opiates. The film is entirely narrated by the woman, recalling the experience of her addiction and the use of a controversial method of recovery called Ibogaine. Her story is illustrated through stop-motion animation and time-lapse photography.

The film won the 2009 Best Animation award at the New England Film Festival, along with an Alliance for Community Media award for best non-professional animation.

After dedicating countless hours to work in film and documentary, Dyer has found himself at Piedmont University with a desire to pursue a career in academics as an assistant professor teaching film and documentary production classes.

Dyer has taken easily to his role in overseeing the film and documentary production major, hoping to bring a “figure it out” spirit. “Making a film is like a giant set of obstacles on the way to the goal of telling a certain story. I feel the most fun part of creating films is coming up with clever ways to get around or through those obstacles. Sometimes those solutions lead to a really compelling aspect of the film.”

To read the rest of the story on The Roar, please click [here](#).

The Standard Never Changes: A Conversation with Professor

Garrett Kinsey

by Terrie Ellerbee



When Health Sciences Assistant Professor Garrett Kinsey steps into a classroom at Piedmont University, he carries more than a syllabus. He brings a philosophy shaped by years of competition, mentorship, and an unwavering belief in the next generation. Kinsey's postsecondary academic path began at Berry College, where he earned a degree in sports administration and economics while playing football alongside his brother, Mason. That experience planted the seed for a career rooted in discipline, teamwork, and a love of sports. He completed his Master of Science in Health and Human Performance at Piedmont, where he now teaches courses ranging from Advanced Strength Conditioning to Health Policy, Law and Issues. But the classroom is only one of the many arenas where Kinsey shows up each day.

Wearing many hats

By 4 a.m., while most of his students are still asleep, Kinsey is already at Crown Athletics—the sports performance gym he co-owns in Cornelia.

"We've got a 5 a.m. women's boot camp that crushes it four days a week," Kinsey said. "Then another group at six that focuses on strength conditioning. They're so committed—they drive in from Commerce and Banks County every single morning."

After finishing at the gym, he's on Piedmont's campus by 7:30, ready to teach his 8 a.m. classes. Afternoons find him on the football field, where he serves as a high school coach, running practices until early evening. Then it's home—where dinner, lesson planning, and dog walks with his German Shepherd, Luna, round out the day. "It's long days," Kinsey admits. "But it's very fulfilling."

A teacher at heart

Kinsey said he never expected to return his native Habersham County after college, but he now feels called to make a difference at home.

"I don't want small-town kids to ever think they're capped or boxed in," he said. "There is nothing in this world except opportunity if it's framed the right way. My job is to help students take valiant steps toward their dreams, no matter how big."

That belief shapes not just his coaching and his gym, but also the environment he cultivates in Piedmont classrooms.

"The standard never changes. The standard is the standard for a reason," Kinsey said. "We want students to feel supported but also challenged. We're not a safety net. We're straps on your shoulders to help you balance. You'll stumble, but you'll grow."

The Standard Never Changes: A Conversation with Professor Garrett Kinsey

by Terrie Ellerbee

Kinsey's Rules of Life

Step into Kinsey's office, and you'll find a whiteboard covered with reminders that reflect his teaching style and outlook. Among his "10 Rules of Life":

- Kindness is free.
- They're not giving you a hard time. They're having a hard time.
- It's not all about you! How liberating is that?!

They're not just phrases—Kinsey lives them. Whether guiding a student through a challenging assignment, mentoring an athlete through recovery, or pushing clients in the gym, his approach always comes back to encouragement, resilience, and perspective.

Looking ahead

Like so many Piedmont professors, Kinsey lives what he teaches. His business, Crown Athletics, recently expanded into a 10,000-square-foot space in downtown Cornelia, and Kinsey is eager to see where the next chapter of growth will lead. But no matter how full his days get, his central mission remains the same: helping others unlock their potential.

"I love that our students here have such drive," he says.

"They've got their hands in so many things, and that's the beauty of it. If you want to go do something, go do it. Right now. Don't wait."

For Kinsey, the standard never changes. For the students and athletes he mentors, that standard is set high. Piedmont is educating a generation of students who will take the standard with them as they inspire others to achieve more and live better lives.

For more information about Piedmont University's offerings in Sport and Fitness, Athletic Training, Applied Health Science, and other related fields, visit piedmont.edu/nursing-health-sciences.



Mason Kinsey congratulates his brother Garrett — now a professor at Piedmont — on a touchdown while they played together at Berry College. Mason lives in Nashville and is a wide receiver for the NFL's Tennessee Titans.

Admission Tour Rockstars

Admissions could not be successful without the support of the amazing faculty and staff on campus that helps to provide a personalized tour for each student that visits campus.



1. Dr. Jeff Bruns (95)
2. Dr. Tony Frye (67)
3. Ms. Amy Young (51)
4. Dr. Elaine Bailey (38)
5. Professor Lindsay Dilbeck (36)
6. Professor John Lanneau (31)
7. Professor Brandon Reynolds (25)
8. Professor Chanda Carlan (18)
9. Professor Kristin Whitlock (17)
10. Dr. Octavius Mulligan (16)

Calendar of Events

OCTOBER

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

NOVEMBER

11/4 RiteCare Clinic Grand Opening

11/6-8 Theatre Production: 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

DECEMBER

12/5-6 37th Annual Lessons and Carols

12/12 Fall Commencement

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



ANNUAL GIFTS of \$1,000 OR MORE
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We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to our Yonahian Society and donors. Your generosity and support have made a significant impact on Piedmont University. Your contributions have enabled us to continue our work, reach our goals, and make a positive difference in the lives of those we serve.

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