



NEWSLETTER

President's Pen

March 2026

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Dear Piedmont University Community,

The Piedmont Symposium, an annual showcase of academic excellence that has more than quadrupled in size since its inception, will be held on April 9th on both the Demorest and Athens campuses. Symposium is an exciting opportunity for our students to demonstrate they are ready to confront complex issues and make meaningful contributions to their fields, communities, and the world.

Created to encourage deeper learning experiences, the Piedmont Symposium first took place in 2019. That year, students presented 88 research projects. The number of projects and students participating in the event has increased every year since, even amid the turbulence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Last year, more than 400 students presented over 250 projects.

I encourage each of you to come out and support these talented students!

Sincerely,
Marshall M. Criser, III



Dana Davis Honored with Kindness Award

by Haley Watts



Junior exercise and sport science major Dana Davis has been named the recipient of this year's Michael and Emily Robertson Kindness Award at Piedmont University, recognizing her commitment to service, generosity, and compassion both on and off campus. In her nomination, Professor Lindsay Dilbeck wrote that Davis is "an exceptional student on the Demorest Campus and serves as a living example of compassion and community focus through her selfless dedication to the greater good."

Originally from Monroe, GA, Davis is already looking forward in her academic journey—she will begin her master's program in athletic training this May. Alongside her studies, she has dedicated time to mentoring young athletes, serving as the girls' basketball coach at Commerce Middle School for the past two years. She continues her involvement with youth athletics as an assistant coach at Commerce High School.

On campus, Davis leads with the same passion for service. As president of the Peace Club, she works closely with faculty representative Dr. Deb Dooley to support projects that promote sustainability and the well-being of our environment. The club's current effort is the creation of a campus garden designed to teach students about growing their own food. Located near the sand volleyball court and the baseball scoreboard, the garden will be accessible to everyone and provide hands-on learning opportunities. Any leftover produce will be donated to the student pantry.

In addition, the group is partnering with Sautee Nacoochee Center to establish a pollinator garden that supports monarch butterflies and other beneficial species. The project highlights the importance of biodiversity while offering students a meaningful way to engage with environmental stewardship.

The Kindness Award was created by Michael and Emily Robertson from Milwaukee, WI. Their sincere desire in establishing the award is rooted in the words of the prophet Micah: "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God." Presented annually, the award honors an undergraduate student who demonstrates kindness to others through their actions within the Piedmont University community.

Congrats!

The Voice of Debate at Piedmont: Dr. Janice Moss mentors generations of critical thinkers

by Terrie Ellerbee



For more than two decades, Dr. Janice Moss has led Piedmont University's Speech and Debate program, shaping generations of students into confident communicators and critical thinkers.

Moss founded the program in 2003 and has served as its coach and adviser for 23 years. Her leadership extends beyond campus. In 2015, she was elected president of the Georgia Parliamentary Debate Association (GPDA). She was Coach of the Year two years prior to that, and she served as director of the GPDA State Championship Tournament hosted at Piedmont.

The program itself grew out of student interest in Moss's public speaking classes.

"I was inspired by students in my public speaking class who wanted to take an advanced course in speech and debate," Moss said. "I established the debate team and created courses such as Debate Practicum and Debate Argumentation to provide students with a strong foundation in debate."

In its early years, Piedmont students competed in policy debate tournaments throughout the Southeast, gaining valuable experience while strengthening their communication, leadership, and critical thinking skills.

"Students who participate in debate gain valuable skills in communication, collaboration, audience analysis, and research," Moss said. "These are all skills that employers value."

The program's affiliation with the National Parliamentary Debate Association (NPDA) and the Georgia Parliamentary Debate Association (GPDA) has also strengthened Piedmont's presence in the collegiate debate community.

Behind each competition is extensive preparation. Students often spend weeks researching topics, organizing arguments, and practicing before traveling to tournaments.

"Preparation, research, and practice are key factors in our students' development and success," Moss said.

That preparation continues to pay off. On Feb. 28, at the 43rd annual Novice National Individual Events & Debate Tournament at Berry College in Rome, Georgia, several Piedmont students advanced to final rounds while competing against institutions including the University of Alabama and the University of North Carolina.

William Peeples placed third in Dramatic Interpretation, while Rachel Simmons placed sixth in both Impromptu Speaking and Persuasive Speaking. Gabriela La Rosa also competed in Impromptu Sales, earning a score of 92 in the second preliminary round.

For Moss, the greatest reward has been watching students grow in confidence and discover their voice.

"Debate is critical thinking in action," she said. "Students gain communication, leadership, and life skills that benefit them long after graduation."



Piedmont students Rachel Simmons, Gabriela La Rosa and William Peeples at Berry College.

Students interested in participating in the debate team can enroll in MCOM 3008: Debate Practicum or learn

more about Piedmont's Mass Communications program. Learn more:

<https://www.piedmont.edu/program/mass-communications/>



Students gather in the commons gym to participate in the Knock Out Stress tournament held by Piedmont University's Morgan's Message chapter.

Morgan's Message: Taking a Shot at Mental Health continues to grow as an important resource for student-athletes at Piedmont University. The national organization aims to provide mental health resources while empowering athletes to speak openly about challenges that often go unseen.

The chapter has quickly become a supportive community across campus. Its mission is to reduce the stigma surrounding student-athlete mental health while encouraging meaningful conversations and peer support.

The organization's butterfly logo featuring Morgan's favorite color, teal, and a semicolon at the center, symbolizes hope and solidarity for those facing mental health struggles.

Freshman soccer player Noah Lacroix first discovered Morgan's Message while researching clubs on campus and was immediately drawn to its mission.

"As an athlete, mental health affects my performance heavily," Lacroix said. "If my mental health is poor, my mindset regarding fitness becomes weaker."

Now serving as an ambassador, Lacroix hopes to share resources and support with fellow students while raising awareness about the importance of prioritizing mental wellbeing.

Freshman lacrosse player Lily Rhue joined the organization after experiencing the impact of mental health challenges firsthand.

"I lost someone to suicide and wanted to try to help others before it could be too late," Rhue said.

Rhue works to spread awareness about Morgan's Message and encourages open conversations among teammates and classmates. By listening and offering support, she hopes to ensure that no student feels alone in their struggles.

Sophomore men's lacrosse goalkeeper Logan Hoenig also emphasizes the connection between mental health and performance.

"As a goalie, I know I can't be at my best unless I'm in the right headspace," Hoenig said. "Keeping my mental health in check is the first step."

Through advocacy, education, and peer support, Morgan's Message continues to make a meaningful impact across campus by reminding student-athletes that prioritizing mental health is an essential part of success both on and off the field.

A Piedmont Legacy: Chloe Spradlin Takes Her Leadership to U.S. Soccer

by Terrie Ellerbee



When Chloe Spradlin graduated from Piedmont University in December 2024, she left behind more than memories. She left a legacy—one built on leadership, curiosity, and a willingness to ask bold questions.

Today, Spradlin is already building the next chapter of that legacy as Senior Coordinator of Media Relations for U.S. Soccer, where she helps manage communications for one of the nation's most prominent sports organizations as the United States prepares to host the upcoming FIFA World Cup.

"This role is completely new," Spradlin said. "I'm the first person to step into it, so I'm helping shape what the position will look like for the people who come after me."

Her work includes writing press releases, preparing executive briefings, and supporting the organization's public messaging and media strategy.

Spradlin's path to Piedmont began after transferring from another university where she had been playing soccer. Once on campus, she quickly immersed herself in opportunities that would define her time as a Lion. A standout defender for the Piedmont women's soccer team, Spradlin helped lead the Lions to a conference championship. Off the field, she found her voice in campus media—joining *The Roar*, Piedmont's student newspaper, and rising to Editor-in-Chief, where she helped lead the student newsroom and tackle stories that mattered to the campus community.

But for Spradlin, the most lasting part of her Piedmont experience was the people.

"When I think of Piedmont, I think of home," she said. "The mentors, professors, coaches, and friends I met there helped me become the person I am today."

Now working on the national stage, Spradlin carries those lessons with her.

"You have to wake up every day and decide that you want to succeed," she said. "At Piedmont, I learned that when you love what you're doing, it doesn't feel like work."

That mindset—embracing opportunity, asking bold questions, and investing in community—is part of the legacy Spradlin built at Piedmont and continues to carry forward in her work with U.S. Soccer.



Learn more about Piedmont's Mass Communications program at

<https://www.piedmont.edu/program/mass-communications/>

Read more about Chloe's success as a student-athlete here:

<https://piedmontlions.com/news/2024/10/24/senior-spotlight-womens-soccer-2024.aspx>

Agatha Christie's

AND THEN THERE WERE NONE



DIRECTED BY JOHN F. SPIEGEL

APRIL 16-19, 2026

Thursday - Saturday, April 16-18, 2026 at 7:30 PM
Sunday, April 19, 2026 at 2:00 PM
Swanson Mainstage Theater



\$10 Adults, \$5 Seniors and Students, Piedmont Faculty, Staff, and Students are Free. Scan the QR code or call the Box Office at 706-778-8500 x1355 to purchase tickets.

And Then There Were None is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com



Calendar of Events

MARCH

- 3/19 Piedmont Athletic Lions (PAL) Games
- 3/26 Piedmont University Singers
- 3/28 Museum Community Workshop: Sculpture Workshop with Normando Ismay
- 3/29 Louise Bass, organ

APRIL

- 4/9 Symposium
- 4/9 Piedmont University Wind Ensemble
- 4/14 Piedmont University String Orchestra
- 4/15 Disaster Drill
- 4/16-19- Theatre: And Then There Were None
- 4/17 Accepted Students Day
- 4/25 Great Composers Concert
- 4/25 Alumni Day
- 4/28 Piedmont University Chamber Ensembles