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KINESIOLOGY AND HEALTH NEWSLETTER

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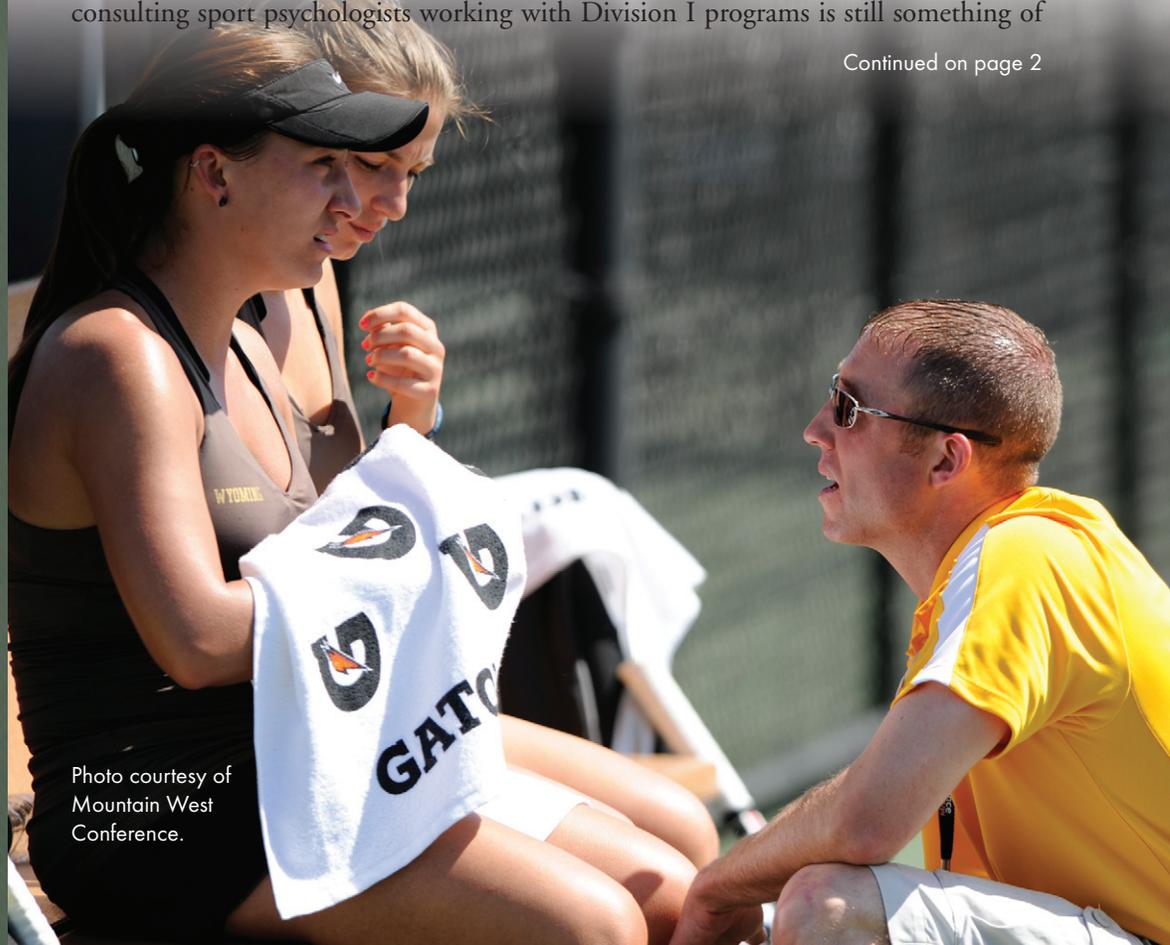
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READDY GETTING NATIONAL ATTENTION FOR WORK WITH UW SPORTS TEAMS

When Assistant Professor Tucker Readdy arrived on campus just before the start of the fall 2010 semester, he emailed each of UW's varsity head coaches offering to provide any assistance he could to athletes and teams. A newly minted Ph.D. from Oregon State, Readdy's studies concentrated on Exercise and Sport Psychology, his research focusing primarily on the relationship between exercise and mental health, including OCD and muscle dysmorphia. The emails were a shot in the dark—Readdy was hoping to lay some foundation for future research with student-athletes, and also to try to build some ties to the UW community in his first year. "I didn't plan on a huge response," Readdy says now. Nevertheless, he received five enthusiastic messages from coaches within seventy-two hours of his initial inquiry.

That first, tentative step yielded big results—for the last two years, Readdy has worked with the football, cross-country, tennis, and golf teams to set up programs that try to improve motivation and communication among athletes and coaching staff alike. His work is catching national attention, particularly his relationship with the football team; last fall, he was even featured in a USA Today article that focused on the evolution of his relationship with the football coaching staff and, in particular, Coach Christensen. Readdy thinks that some of this attention is due to the fact that consulting sport psychologists working with Division I programs is still something of

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Photo courtesy of Mountain West Conference.

## TUCKER READDY *Continued from page 1*

a rarity. There are probably ten or fifteen people who do what he does for other college programs, he says—but in terms of intensity of work put in and the depth of his involvement with coaches, it's more like five.

Readdy's work for the football team alone takes an unusual amount of dedication—he essentially operates on the same schedule as the coaching staff during the season, attending daily morning meetings and afternoon practices during the school week while balancing his teaching responsibilities. And his weekends are almost entirely consumed by football, as the game day schedule starts at 7:30 in the morning and doesn't let up until well after the game is over. Readdy, the son of a high school and community college football coach, feels right at home on the sidelines.

It's no surprise that much of his work has become focused on the coaching staff of the football team, and particularly what motivates coaches to perform in a high-stress position with such grueling hours. "Why do college coaches do what they do?" he asks. "What positives outweigh the clear negatives?" From a research perspective, coach behavior has been a fruitful subject of inquiry—but it has also been a key element of his consulting work with the team. One of his projects included observing assistant coaches at practice and coding each interaction with players into one of several categories. He then sat down with the coach and explained what he had observed, and what percentage of time the coach had spent engaging in various kinds of behaviors. After each report, Readdy says, coaches tended to increase the amount of time they spent teaching about 6-10%, and negative behaviors lowered by about 3% overall.

Coaches "don't know why what [they're] doing is effective," says Readdy. For the most part, coaches learn from those who came before them, and generally lack any kind of background in theory. Readdy is trying to change that, both through his targeted observations and through larger group conversations. At the end of his first season, he gave a presentation to the coaching staff about how to improve player motivation overall, and next year he will be taking over the program's goal-setting program.

Overall, says Readdy, his focus will stay primarily on the coaches. When there are 100 athletes and ten coaches, it's simply more effective, he says. "If I can introduce

coaches to the models we're working with, it diffuses to the athletes." However, he has also begun to work more with individual players this year, as his consistent presence has helped to build trust. He has recently focused on the kicker, whose position interests Readdy because of the complex psychological stakes. "You take three steps back and two to the side. It sounds simple, but it isn't," he says. In reality, kickers have to stay narrowly and externally focused on a target despite the distractions of emotion and ego. Kickers have a uniquely difficult task, says Readdy, and he has worked to mentor UW's freshman kicker through the process of setting his own routine.

Readdy's football work might be the most intensive of his consulting projects, but it isn't the only one. He has traveled with the tennis team to work individually with both players and coaches, and recently picked up work with the women's golf team, which is exciting because it presents entirely different psychological challenges than football, he says. His skills are in such high demand that he has recently started his own sport psychology consulting business, formalizing the role that he has adopted at UW in the last two seasons.

Such a move likely puts him on the cutting edge of a young but growing field. Sport psychology, as a discipline, is only forty or fifty years old, and is still developing a scholarly base. While studies in youth and non-competitive sport are common, it is hard to gain access to elite college sports teams. "I got extremely lucky," Readdy acknowledges.

Ultimately, Readdy hopes that his work will lead to procedural changes at the level of the NCAA aimed at decreasing the burdens on coaches and helping them fulfill their responsibilities. Limiting recruitment time, he suggests, could be one option, and studies on burnout among coaches deserve resources. For now, though, the payoff is more immediate: Readdy is proud, most of all, of the relationships he's built. "When I walk into Coach C's office, Coach Stender's office, or Coach Clower's office, I know they are going to listen to what I say, be interested, and do what they can to embrace and apply my ideas." And sometimes those ideas are played out on a large scale: in the 2010 season, during Christensen's post-game speech to the team against San Diego State, Readdy noticed some familiar language. "He said about 75% of what I brought up in his office," Readdy says with a smile.

## *In Memoriam:* ED WAGGY

The University of Wyoming lost one of its brightest young scholars when Ed Waggy, who had just recently completed his Master's in Kinesiology and Health, passed away unexpectedly on December 3, 2011, at the age of 27. While the Kinesiology and Health community mourns his untimely death, Waggy leaves behind a markedly strong legacy of hard work, commitment, and generosity as both a researcher and a teacher.

Waggy's unique commitment to his scholarship was evident throughout his time as a Kinesiology undergraduate and graduate student. He became interested in heart function early on in his academic career, and, for his Master's thesis, designed multiple studies that investigated the cardioprotective effect of training, attempting to quantify the usefulness of exercise as preventative medicine. He was exceptionally driven, and focused on getting his research exactly right—a perfectionist whose hours of dedication paid off when he was asked to present some of his findings at conferences in Seattle and Turkey. He was also honored as an American Kinesiology Association National Graduate Scholar.

His singular ability to dedicate himself to a task, project, or ideal was apparent from his first days on the UW campus as an undergraduate student; originally from Franklin, West Virginia, he had been adamant about going to college in Wyoming. Although Waggy may have enjoyed the similarities of landscape between his home state and his adopted one, "he loved the West," remembers Paul Thomas, Waggy's academic advisor. "He didn't want to go back east." His commitment to exploring Wyoming's open spaces and maintaining an active lifestyle manifested in his career choices: Waggy spent nine seasons as a wildland firefighter for the Forest Service. Never one to miss an opportunity to ask new and difficult questions, he had plans to explore fireline physiology later in his academic career.

Dr. Thomas remembers that Waggy had a funny side, too—they occasionally played pranks on each other, and generally "had some fantastic interactions." Waggy's good humor may have been part of what made him such a successful instructor as well as a student—in 2010, he was honored with an Ellbogen Outstanding Graduate Assistant Teaching Award for his four years of work as an instructor in Zoology and Physiology. "He got awards because he'd spend hours helping [his] students. They raved about him in lab," Thomas recalls. "He was a



Ed Waggy (center) and Sean Reid, assisted by Dr. Meg Flanigan Skinner, test Reid's air outtake to evaluate his lung volume. (Photo courtesy of UW Marketing)

tremendous organizer...a natural leader, a terrific worker. He totally blew me away."

The Division of Kinesiology and Health and the Department of Zoology and Physiology jointly organized a memorial service in Waggy's honor shortly after his funeral, during which his parents, who were present, shared stories with members of the UW community about Ed. But it isn't only the UW community who will remember Ed fondly—Adam Boucher, a Forest Service firefighter who worked with Waggy on Casper Mountain, confirms that in all areas of his life, Waggy was extremely inquisitive. "One of the things that he would do on assignment was to try and learn a new skill every day. Sometimes he would practice picking old discarded locks that no longer had the original key and try for hours until he got it right," remembers Boucher. "He never wanted to stop learning."

This legacy of inquiry and hard work will be honored through "a memorial award for the GA who best exemplifies the qualities that Ed held so dear," says Meg Flanigan Skinner, Director of the Ellbogen Center for Teaching and Learning. Through the generosity of Waggy's parents, an annual award will be presented to a graduate assistant teaching in the biological sciences who exhibits concern and caring for students, strives for student excellence, and shares knowledge and experience with other instructors.

Additionally, another Kinesiology graduate student currently working with Dr. Thomas will incorporate the data that Waggy generated into a manuscript to be submitted for publication. "We don't have too many Master's students that generate publishable novel data," explains Dr. Thomas. "He was special." When the manuscript is accepted, Thomas says he will make a special request for equal co-authorship, to be shared between his current student and Waggy. "They will both be first authors."

## *Giving Back to Wyoming*

### PE TEACHERS GET STUDENTS MOVING IN POWELL

It's a common truism that a good workplace environment has everything to do with one's coworkers. And indeed, for recent UW alums and Wyoming natives Waleryan Wisniewski, Luke Robertson, Chase Kistler, and Charli Youngberg, all of whom are employed as Physical Education teachers in Powell, Wyoming, it has made all the difference: not only do each of them love their jobs, but they also help constitute one of the best-integrated teams of PE teachers in the state.

After Wisniewski and Robertson, of Rock Springs and Monroe, Wisconsin, respectively, finished their Bachelor's degrees at the University of Wyoming in 2007, both were on the hunt for work, and Park County School District 1 was advertising a position for an elementary school PE teacher. Both interviewed for the job, and they so impressed the hiring committees that both were taken on shortly thereafter: Wisniewski was hired for the originally advertised job at Southside Elementary School, while Robertson was offered another newly opened position as soon as it opened up, and today teaches at both Parkside and Westside Elementary Schools.

The graduates moved to Powell, and immediately started collaborating—because the two of them had been friends since their time at the University, it seemed only

natural to meet up after work and talk about the positive experiences and challenges they were experiencing as new teachers. Robertson credits this impulse to share ideas and work together on the community ethic of the Division of Kinesiology and Health—as an undergrad, he says, he felt like a member of a family. “I remember how close we were as a cohort, as a program—working together as a group, planning lessons,” he explains. “It never seemed like we were working by ourselves.” He says he didn't realize how special this kind of academic community was: UW students in the PE teacher program were always “working together toward a common goal.”

It wasn't long after Wisniewski and Robertson's arrival that another PE position opened up in Powell, this time a spot for a high school teacher. After a similarly impressive interview, Chase Kistler, another recent UW alum originally from Sheridan, was hired for the job. And the following year, Charli Youngberg, of Saratoga, was hired fresh from the University as well—she and Kistler now comprise the entirety of the Powell High School PE staff. Youngberg remembers that Robertson called her after she was officially offered the job in order to convince her to take the position, telling her that she would be a crucial addition to the Powell PE team. “He made me feel like I would be an important part in what they were trying to do,” she says. Interactions such as this

reinforced to Youngberg that she was truly joining a team of teachers, and as soon as she arrived in Powell, “Luke organized a barbeque...so that I got to meet all the PE teachers in the district.”

She continues, “One thing that helped me a lot was knowing that [Robertson, Wisniewski, and Kistler] got similar training as me, so I knew that they were going to have high expectations for their students. It was easier for me to raise the bar because

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(L to R) Luke Robertson,  
Waleryan Wisniewski,  
Chase Kistler,  
Charli Youngberg

## GIVING BACK TO WYOMING Continued from page 4

I knew I wasn't alone. I had support—there were three others here supporting me.” With that kind of support and encouragement, the four teachers have been able to help improve and streamline the PE curriculum for the whole school district. “It’s neat to work together,” says Robertson, adding that being able to align a K-12 curriculum with a coordinated and enthusiastic team is a unique opportunity. “We’re able to bounce ideas off one another,” he explains. Youngberg and Kistler, for example, are working on creating a shared PE time slot where each could offer a class option, allowing students to choose between activities and creating an age group crossover. The innovative proposal would hopefully keep students motivated and invested in participating: “When we mix classes, my younger students get the challenge of playing games against upperclassmen, and Chase and I get to work together to make all of the students better,” explains Youngberg.

Such exciting alignments and creative thinking from the team of teachers has attracted attention from district supervisors, who note the truly substantial contributions that the four young teachers are making to the Powell educational community. Says RJ Kost, Curriculum Coordinator for the school district, “These four [instructors] from the University of Wyoming have been able to step into our program and continue to develop a progressive and relevant program for our youth. They are not ‘beginning teachers’...they are active, involved, collaborative, and integral to the continued success of our program.” These positive impressions are not limited

to administrators in the school district: Youngberg notes that, upon her arrival in Powell, she was impressed with the good reputation that the three young teachers had already built in the community.

Notably, all four teachers are active in Powell beyond their responsibilities in the classroom: Robertson coaches swimming, Youngberg coaches volleyball, and Wisniewski and Kistler coach both basketball and football. The four teachers are model students as well as teachers—they are all either currently working on a Master’s degree through the Division of Kinesiology and Health, or have plans to begin one in the near future. In addition, they have been integral parts of school administrative proceedings—most of the four have been actively involved in hiring committees, including the recent decision to hire a freshly graduated UW alum to fill a new position at Parkside Elementary. Next year, Celina McGraw will join Robertson, Wisniewski, Youngberg, and Kistler to become Powell’s fifth Cowboy alumni PE teacher, bringing even more new and invigorating ideas to the table.

Indeed, a commitment to learning is important for any instructor, and these exemplary teachers seem to have taken the lessons of their time at UW right into the classroom. To be a good teacher, “you have to listen to other people,” reflects Robertson. “[You have to] take advice, watch other people teach, and be willing to grow.” Even once you become a teaching professional, he says, “you think you have something figured out, but you’re still learning. You’re always trying to improve.”

## THANK YOU, DONORS!

The Division of Kinesiology & Health would like to thank the following donors for their contributions. Due primarily to their support, the Division has been able to offer academic scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students, fund student travel to professional conferences for educational development and presentation of research, as well as purchase necessary equipment for integral undergraduate and graduate courses. If you are interested in contributing to the enhancement of students’ learning in the Division of Kinesiology & Health, please refer to the donation information within this newsletter.

Thanks to our donors who have contributed between October 2011 and April 2012:

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# K&H SUCCESSES, SPRING 2012

## FACULTY SUCCESSES

### HONORS AND AWARDS

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**Jennifer Martin** was once again honored with a “Tip of the Cap” award from the UW Cap and Gown Chapter of Mortar Board. The award honors those staff members who offer “exceptional contributions to the University of Wyoming and inspiration of students.”

### PUBLISHED AND IN-PRESS ARTICLES

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Alderman, B.L., **Benham-Deal, T.B.**, Beighle, A., & Erwin, H. (in press). Physical education’s contribution to daily physical activity among middle school youth. *Pediatric Exercise Science*.

**Wallhead, T.L.**, Garn, A., & Vidoni, C. (in press). Sport education and social goals in physical education: Relationships with enjoyment, relatedness, and leisure-time physical activity. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*.

**Porter, C.M.** (in press). ‘Choice’: What we mean by it, and what that means for preventing childhood obesity. *Public Health Nutrition*.

### NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATIONS

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Pelletier, D.L. & **Porter, C.M.** (April 2012) *Expanding the frontiers of nutrition research: New questions, new methods and new approaches*. Symposium session selected for American Society for Nutrition Annual Meeting at Experimental Biology. Porter’s presentation was, *Food Dignity: Action research frontiers in nutrition*. Seattle, WA.

**Porter, C.M.**, Daftary, S., Herrera, H., Neideffer, M., Sequeira, E.J., & Sutter, V. (April 2012) *Food Dignity: Five community food system stories*. American Society for Nutrition Annual Meeting at Experimental Biology. Seattle, WA.

**Porter, C.M.**, Daftary, S., Gregory, M., Herrera, H., Sequeira, E.J. (June 2012) *Food Dignity: Growing and learning from community-led food systems*. Presentations and panel with the Society for Agriculture and Human Values. New York, NY.

## STUDENT SUCCESSES

### *Ed Waggy and Nicole Strom Honored as AKA National Scholars*

In the spring of 2011, the American Kinesiology Association honored the academic leadership of two K&H students: Nicole Strom was presented with the AKA National Undergraduate Scholar award, and Ed Waggy was recognized as an AKA National Graduate Scholar. Both students were selected for this honor because of their exceptional interest in the field of kinesiology. They demonstrated this interest through their ambitious research projects, assumption of leadership positions in the department, and volunteer service in kinesiology-related endeavors.

Strom, from Rock Springs, WY, graduated with a Bachelor’s in Kinesiology and Health Promotion in May 2011, and is currently enrolled in the Master’s program. Known for her caring nature and commitment to bettering the lives of others, Strom completed an internship at the Jackson Hole Therapeutic Riding Association, where she assisted individuals with disabilities in hippotherapy sessions. She also established the Young Athletes Program in Laramie, a branch of the Special Olympics meant to improve motor and social functioning in developmentally disabled children.

Waggy, of Franklin, WV, completed his Bachelor’s in Kinesiology and Health Promotion in 2007, and graduated with his Master’s in 2011. His research primarily focused on the use of exercise as preventative medicine; the preliminary findings from his thesis suggest that exercise training may help protect the heart in an ischemic setting. This project was presented at the national meeting of the American College of Sports Medicine in 2009. Ed was also recognized in 2010 with an Ellbogen Outstanding Graduate Assistant Teaching Award.

### PRESENTATIONS

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Woodsum, G.M., Hubbell, C., & **McCrackin, P.** (2012). *The road not taken: Miracles and hazards of letting a project define itself*. Story session at the 15th Annual Conference of Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, Houston, TX, April 2012.

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## K&H SUCCESSES, SPRING 2012 Continued from page 6

### GRADUATE SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

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**Ashley Alden:** Southern California College (Optometry School)

**Bryan Dugas:** WWAMI program, Medical School

**Hannah Hurt:** Emory School of Nursing (Accelerated Bachelors of Nursing to Masters of Nursing program with a specialty in Family Nurse Practitioner and Certified Nurse Midwife)

**Sarah Majdic:** Idaho State University (Physician Assistant school)

**Andrew McKen:** Western States University (Chiropractic), Oregon

**Tyler Renner:** University of Wyoming Law School

**Amber Savage:** University of Utah or Brigham Young University (Master's of Public Health)

**Erin Heffron:** Master's in Nutrition at the University of Wyoming

**Jesse Massie:** Master's in Dental Biology—then Dental School—Creighton

**Andrew Ewell:** A.T. Still University Arizona School of Health Sciences (Physical Therapy)

**Dana Seth:** University of Utah (Physical Therapy)

**Robert Whittaker:** University of North Dakota (Physical Therapy)

**Heather Bregar:** SW Baptist University, Rocky Mountain School of Health Sciences (Physical Therapy)

**Kelsey Smith:** Rocky Mountain School of Health Sciences (Physical Therapy)

**Kara Rechar:** University of New Mexico (Physical Therapy)

**Taylor Kelting:** University of Wyoming Master's Program in Kinesiology & Health

### PROFESSIONAL JOB POSITIONS

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**Jennifer Bockman:** Pinedale High School Physical Education Teacher

**Celina McGraw:** Powell Elementary School Physical Education Teacher

### AWARDS

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**Bryan Dugas** and **Casey Ingersoll** were recognized by the American Kinesiology Association (AKA) as Undergraduate and Graduate Student of the Year, respectively.

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## K&H SUCCESSES, SPRING 2012 *Continued from page 7*

**Megan Patterson** and **Chris Wagner** were named the 2011 Majors of the Year at the Wyoming Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (WAHPERD) conference held in November, 2011.

**Angela Chambers** was selected to receive the Emily J. Smith (BS 1983) Memorial Scholarship.

**Carli Ausmann, Ciara Caves,** and **Brittney Kupec** were selected to receive the Floyd Hart Memorial Scholarship.

**Logan Wright** was selected to receive the Pax Ricketts Memorial Scholarship.

**Jeremy Brandl, Adam Cordell,** and **Rachel Ryan** were selected to receive the Campbell-Thouin-Marburger Physical Education Scholarship.

**Katherine Donahue, Kristin Glisczinski, Tyler Gifford,** and **Christa Munari** were selected to receive Kinesiology and Health Foundation Scholarships.

**Jessica Johnson, Kyla Radakovich, Carissa Lane,** and **Kelsey Schiller** were selected to receive Paul Stock Foundation Scholarships.

**Spencer Barton, Jose Ramiro Ojeda-Candelaria,** and **Corianne Calder** were selected to receive Gordon S. and Charlott Myers Health Sciences Scholarships.

**Gisele Dias de Oliveira** was selected to receive the Vernon Gale Scholarship.

**Katherine Donahue, Bryan Dugas, Jeremy Koci,** and **David Woodard** were selected as finalists for the Kinesiology & Health Top Senior; **Bryan Dugas** was chosen as the Top Senior.

**Jennifer Bockman** was chosen as the Physical Education Teacher Education Top Senior.

**Katie Leonard, Kevin Brown,** and **Sushma Alphonsa** received \$750 travel grants from the College of Health Sciences to present their research at the 2012 Annual Convention of the North American Society for the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity in Honolulu, Hawai'i.

**Tyler Rasmussen, Sushma Alphonsa,** and **Jason Falvey** received \$1,000 College of Health Sciences Grant-in-Aids to support various research projects in the 2012-2013 academic year.

**Alex Wolff** received a \$3,000 summer EPSCoR award for a research project titled, "Is it possible to change the molecular events following a myocardial infarction?"

**Sarah Basse, Josiah Black, Sarah Majdic,** and **Todd Mirich** were selected as the Division of Kinesiology and Health's representatives for the College of Health Science's ASPIRE program, which seeks to develop academic and professional leadership opportunities for students in the college.