

Unified Games at the Big House



U of M  
GROUP  
MAIZE

FISCAL YEAR 2024-25

# ***DONOR IMPACT REPORT***

**M** | SCHOOL OF KINESIOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



# FROM THE DEAN



In fall 2016 — the start of my first academic year as the new dean of the University of Michigan School of Kinesiology — I was constantly thinking about the future. So was everyone in our classrooms, offices, and labs. I know because I wrote about it in the letter that opened our school's magazine that year. We were all considering how we'd "evolve our curriculum," "grow our programs and research," and "actualize the plans [we'd] hatched and dreams [we'd] nurtured."

That sentiment has not changed; we are still a community that looks forward. But, as I enter my final academic year as dean, it's gratifying to reflect for a moment and consider all that has occurred in the nine years since I first wrote about how much there was "to do, and research, and learn, and discuss, and share" — especially because so much of what we envisioned happened.

Since 2016, our health & fitness major has evolved into applied exercise science, a dynamic, flexible program that allows students to choose the courses that will best prepare them for their dream careers in the health sciences. We've added two winter-start programs, in which select waitlisted students start at Kines in the winter semester with an accelerated schedule. Our athletic training major has transitioned to a master's degree, and we have another new master's program (intraoperative neurophysiology) accepting applications for its first cohort next fall.

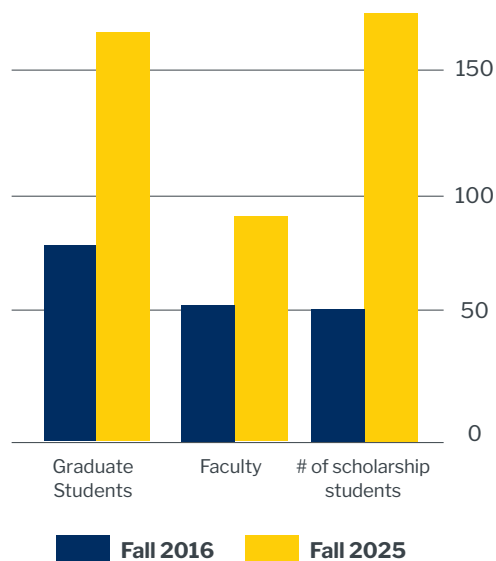
Amid all this change, our numbers have grown, particularly in the categories in the graph.

Our ability to grow and shift in all these ways reflects your sustained commitment as donors. We are able to support more students, faculty, and programming in part because you have given more to the School of Kinesiology, both in terms of transactions and average gift size, over the last nine years. Our endowment has nearly tripled since I started as dean — and you have helped to make that happen.

Inside the rest of this report, you'll see how your contributions over the past year have allowed us to continue smashing records — **reaching 52% of our fundraising goal for our Every Move Matters campaign 12 months after launch** — through many thoughtful gifts. Looking back at what we've accomplished this year and before, we've unmistakably built something "stronger, bigger, and better than we ever could have imagined by ourselves," just as I'd hoped in 2016.

**Thank you and Go Blue!**

Lori Ploutz-Snyder  
Professor and Dean, School of Kinesiology



# GLOBAL AMBITIONS

With generous gift, U-M alum Josh Warsaw boosts financial support for Kines students to go abroad.

The University of Michigan considers travel out of the United States a transformative part of the college experience — so much so that the administration developed a strategic plan to increase the proportion of U-M students going abroad, with a focus on first-generation students.

As part of that plan, the School of Kinesiology has spent the past few years trying to secure more financial support for students interested in going abroad. The biggest boost to those reserves has come from **Josh Warsaw**, a U-M alum who sits on both the advisory committee for our Every Move Matters fundraising campaign as well as the university-wide Southern California Campaign Council.

Warsaw's recent gift has doubled Kines' annual available funding to support students working, studying, and volunteering internationally. In recognition of this generous donation, the school's Office of Global Engagement is now named the **Warsaw Family Office of Global Engagement**.

"Giving to a cause like this will allow students to be more refined when engaging with other cultures," Warsaw says. "International travel will not only better them as a person and help them grow culturally, but it is also going to give them an edge in their career. These days, it's very competitive out there. So it's important to have all the right tools at your disposal."

Warsaw was fortunate to experience international travel at the age of 8 on a trip to Korea for the 1988 Summer Olympic Games. It was there that he fell in love with global engagement, with the food, culture, traditions, and people leaving a lasting impact.

His family also has a history of philanthropy. His grandfather, David Warsaw, endowed a sports complex at a university and spent the remainder building a research center with a lab specializing in esophageal cancer, a disease he'd experienced firsthand. His father and uncle teamed up to help form the first sport business program outside a school of kinesiology.



***"Giving to a cause like this will allow students to be more refined when engaging with other cultures. International travel will not only better them as a person and help them grow culturally, but it is also going to give them an edge in their career."***

**– Josh Warsaw**

They expected each of the next generations to build their own wealth and then decide which sector of society to give back to, Warsaw says.

"It was about making your own legacy," Warsaw says. "I knew when I had the means to give that I definitely wanted to, but I wanted to do something that was important to me."

"Growing up in Southern California, interacting with a lot of different people and thinking about how to grow myself as a person and a communicator, I realized how important it is to understand where people are coming from," he continues. "There are all these different layers to culture that you can start to peel back and when you do that, you put yourself in a positive position for the future."



# DONOR INNOVATION GRANTS

Each year, up to five \$5,000 Donor Innovation Grants are awarded to faculty and staff members for a special project that directly impacts our students and/or the community at large. Here's what the grant recipients accomplished in 2024-25.



## ◀ POP-UP SAFETY TOWN IN A BOX

Safety Town camps, which teach young children about injury prevention concepts like helmet and medication safety, are a valuable experience — but they're also expensive to host and require a lot of staff. So U-M Concussion Center associate director **Andrew Hashikawa** used funds from a Donor Innovation Grant to ship kits with educational Safety Town materials to designated resource centers across Michigan. Now early care providers and preschool teachers can borrow the kits, expanding the number of children who learn key safety procedures.

## INSOLE FORCE PLATES

With his Donor Innovation Grant, faculty member **David Lipps** purchased three sets of instrumented shoe insoles to use in **MVS 452: "Scientific Inquiry Using Wearable Technology."** The insoles have sensors that act as portable force plates when slipped into a pair of shoes, allowing students to measure and analyze the forces exerted by the ground (ground reaction forces, or GRFs) on the body during activities such as walking, running, and jumping. This year, some MVS 452 students chose to compare how the forces changed in heels versus running shoes while others measured how different surface conditions (grass, concrete, a treadmill) affected GRFs.



## ◀ KIDSPORT

The long-running physical activity summer camp run by **Kinesiology Community Programs** directed its Donor Innovation Grant toward: 1) expanding counselor orientation from three to five days; 2) paying the lead counselor for KidSport Adaptive (KidSport's camp for kids with neurodevelopmental and physical differences, who receive more personalized support); and 3) purchasing new equipment, including yoga balls, a parachute, and a giant tic-tac-toe game.

## JONES MOVEMENT SCHOLARS ▶

A new, donor-funded undergraduate research program, **Jones Movement Scholars** received support from a Donor Innovation Grant to pay for software and equipment that would help the participating students and their mentors during the research experience. Turn the page for on this program.



## HOW CAN WE USE AI IN SCIENTIFIC WRITING?

When generative artificial intelligence started gaining traction, faculty member **Kara Palmer** wondered whether she could incorporate the technology into her scientific writing class to help students. Thanks to a Donor Innovation Grant this past year, Palmer taught two of her three class sections to outline and edit their own research papers using UM-GPT and, in the AI-based platform ResearchRabbit, to create interactive visualizations showing connections between existing papers (example pictured right).



# STUDENT INNOVATION GRANTS

This year, for the first time, we gave \$5,000 to select student groups as well. Here's how they used their funds to bolster innovative projects.



## ◀ SPECIAL OLYMPICS COLLEGE AT MICHIGAN

Thanks to its Innovation Grant, the SO College at Michigan chapter brought 200 Special Olympics athletes and partners from chapters and universities across the Midwest to Michigan Stadium for the **Unified Games at the Big House**. The athletes and about 70 volunteers participated in on-field games and activities centered around inclusive physical activity, including football, soccer, and volleyball. An MC, a DJ, and guest speakers — including a gold-medal winning athlete at the Special Olympics World Winter Games — rounded out the positive vibes.

## MICHIGAN SPORT CONSULTING GROUP (MSCG) ▶

To better emulate the professional life and work of a consultant, MSCG members applied for an Innovation Grant to cover a trek to Chicago. There, they met in person with a current client (Google) and other organizations with whom the group had developed relationships (Deloitte, the sports marketing agency Revolution). The students were also able to network and learn more about Chicago's sport and consulting cultures with U-M and MSCG alums during their official meetings as well as meals.



## ◀ U-M POWERLIFTING

This student org funded USA Powerlifting memberships and meet fees for 11 first-time powerlifting athletes with its grant.

## KINESIOLOGY STUDENT GOVERNMENT (KSG)

With its grant, KSG put on the **Kinaction Gala**, an event that brought Kinesiology students, faculty, and staff together to recognize achievements and build community.

# ADVANCING MOVEMENT, EMPOWERING STUDENTS

In the donor-funded Jones Movement Scholars Program, students have enough time, money, and support to see what a research-focused career is really like.

When **Tom Jones** met with U-M Kinesiology faculty to talk about their research on movement disorders and the needs of their students, he asked, “What would you need to be successful?”

In May 2025, a little over a year after that first meeting, the **Jones Movement Scholars Program** launched off the back of a \$300,000 gift from Jones, a U-M alum and retired insurance executive.

The program provides a stipend for select students to work in a Kinesiology lab full-time for a summer, with ongoing mentorship for one to two years. Additional funding is available for conference attendance or other professional development, and there’s a community engagement requirement to ensure the students better understand the experiences of the patients they’re interacting with, who often have movement disorders like Parkinson’s disease or multiple sclerosis.



“As faculty, our responsibilities extend beyond our front-facing roles in the classroom,” says **Dominique Kinnett-Hopkins**, an applied exercise science faculty member who’s a mentor in the program. “Through this program, we’re able to share more about what research really involves, and students are able to experience the ups and downs, the challenges, and the excitement.”

**Here’s some of the benefits this year’s three participating students have reaped so far:**

**Sophie Chong, movement science and neuroscience senior:** “I’ve been working on a clinical trial, and a lot of the meetings with the participants are four or five hours long or even all day. Being able to be in **Jacob Haus’** lab all summer allowed me to go to every single one of those sessions, which I wouldn’t be able to do otherwise.”

**“I have big expectations for experiential learning at Michigan and what that means for the distinction between Michigan education and other education at this level.”**

– **Tom Jones**



**Brooke Bailey, movement science junior:** “Pursuing a PhD or whatever I want to do in my future is like stepping into uncharted waters. But [Kinnett-Hopkins] has been the best for that. She always sends me opportunities that I probably never would have found.”

**Levi Kopald, movement science senior:** “I’ve also had some mentorship from the other PhDs in **Michael Vesia’s** lab. It’s a community.”

*If you’re interested in supporting the Jones Movement Scholars Program, contact chief development officer **Robin Stock** at [rmstock@umich.edu](mailto:rmstock@umich.edu).*

# A SPORT SCIENCE IMMERSION

This year, the Kinesiology-based **Human Performance & Sport Science Center (HPSSC)** launched a pioneering lab for student-athlete analytics. A donor gift helped it get up and running.

Before any of the sports seasons even started this year, the Stephen M. Ross Athletic Campus got a big win: The **HPSSC Athlete Innovation Lab (HAIL)** opened inside the Performance Center, which houses training facilities for nearly two-thirds of Michigan's student-athletes.

HAIL provides data to U-M's athletic teams to help coaches customize training, recovery, and return-to-play plans. The data is collected — under the supervision of two HPSSC staff members — by U-M students interested in sport science who are learning how to apply their knowledge of exercise physiology to elite athletes.

The first two students involved at HAIL were supported by a gift from the Evans Family. The donation allowed movement science master's student **Miles Brown** and cross country athlete Ian Hill to spend the summer helping establish HAIL and enhance the resources available to coaches, athletic staff, and student-athletes.

The pair set up and calibrated lab equipment and developed and tested possible assessment methods, including biomechanical analysis and lactate threshold — an important indicator of how long an athlete can keep up a sustainable pace.

Each student also led an independent project: Brown ran a study exploring anaerobic speed reserve, a popular training optimization metric for middle-distance runners, and Hill developed and tested the protocol for resting metabolic rate testing that is now being put to use in HAIL.

"I have learned a great deal during my time in HAIL," Brown says. "The mentorship I've received has sharpened my technical skills and given me insight into what performance science research requires from inside the laboratory."



## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

...Awards for Student Excellence support students' professional development, including internship opportunities, conference attendance, job interviews, and other types of advancement.

These awards are available for students from the following regions:

- Tri-State (New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut)
- Chicago
- Los Angeles
- San Francisco Bay Area

Are you interested in supporting students from your community? If so, talk to **Louis Perdue** ([perduel@umich.edu](mailto:perduel@umich.edu)) and **Marlon Wright** ([marlonw@umich.edu](mailto:marlonw@umich.edu)).

# 2024-25 AT A GLANCE

## \$3,113,943

TOTAL FUNDS RAISED THIS YEAR

### 194

SCHOLARSHIPS AND  
AWARDS GIVEN

### 834

GIFTS GIVEN TO OUR SCHOOL

## \$712,043

IN TOTAL STUDENT SUPPORT GIVEN  
THANKS TO DONORS

### 76%

OF DONORS GAVE  
\$100 OR LESS

### 350

TOTAL DONORS

### 19%

FACULTY EXCELLENCE

### 56%

INNOVATION

### 25%

STUDENT SUCCESS

PROPORTION OF FUNDS RAISED SUPPORTING EACH CAMPAIGN PILLAR

## EVERY **M**OVE MATTERS

Now until July 2026, all new monthly gifts will be  
matched for 12 months up to \$100 per month.

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