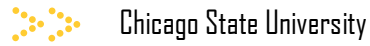
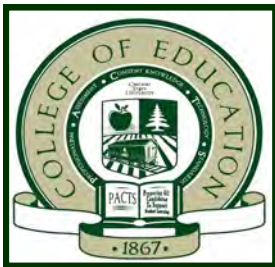


Health Education, Physical Education, and Recreation Newsletter

June 9, 2026



HPER offices are now located in JDC 201.



Chicago State University
9501 S. King Drive
JDC 201

Letter From the Editor

Welcome to the 18th year of the newsletter from the Department of Health Education, Physical Education, and Recreation! The purpose of the newsletter is to share highlights of what students, faculty, and alumni have accomplished since we last met. Highlights of

this edition are our PE and Recreation scholarship winners, spring 2026 graduates, and updates from one of our esteemed alumni, Hector Rico. Since graduating, Hector has continued to grow professionally, applying for his National

Board Certification. He is a valued placement for our PE students to do their observations hours. Please continue to send me happenings in your life to share in future editions of the newsletter.

Dr. Sarah Buck,
newsletter editor



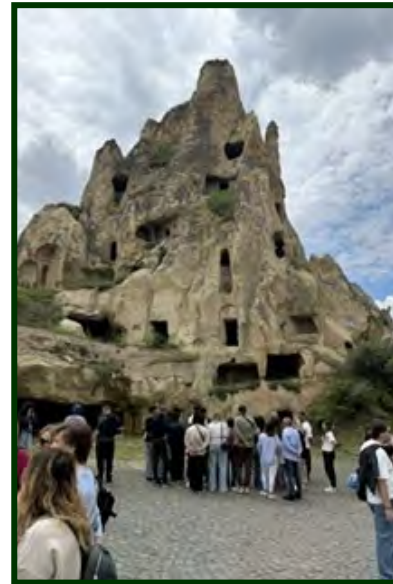
L to R: Simone Detwyler (Rec), Corey Finkley (Rec), Joshua Cenicerros (Rec), Efrain Rivas (Rec), Jamal Ibrahim (PE), Dr. June Shingles

Professor Michael McNicholas: What Have You Been Up To?

I will be working on research projects over the summer and am open to hearing about students who would like to collaborate on professional presentations. Please reach out to mmcnicho@csu.edu if you are interested.

I am also planning a trip to Sweden's Astrid Lindgren Museum and a Moose Safari in June with family. Additionally, I am participating in kayaking events in July and August. Finally, I am

taking a vacation trip that I lead for adults with intellectual disabilities to Memphis, TN in August.



Dr. Buck, What Have You Been Up To?

With changes that happened within our department in the past year, I now serve in multiple roles: I am Program Director for the undergraduate (including the new Health, Wellness, and Sport degree) and graduate Physical Education programs. I also serve as Advisor for all programs in addition to my regular faculty duties. Our new HWS degree has welcomed ten new majors this year

and is designed for students interested in careers related to fitness, wellness, or sport (e.g., coaching or training). Many of the new HWS majors are part of CSU's inaugural football team. I also successfully completed the PE Program Review this spring, with administration viewing the changes we have made to our programs favorably. I was fortunate to travel to

Turkey in May, where I ate all the (vegetarian) food and pet all the cats. Although there are multitudes of stray cats in Turkey, they are mainly healthy, well-fed, and friendly. I will travel to Colorado in August for hiking in four different cities. Lastly, my volunteer work through Rotary continues, as I led the fifth annual Chicago River Cleanup by kayak in June.

Did you know there are enormous jumping fish in the river? A very unpleasant surprise this year. And, I had the pleasure and honor of awarding Jasmine Minor, ABC7 Chicago anchor, with one of Rotary's Women of the Year awards, also in June, and will present a scholarship to the Fernando Jones Blues Kid at his annual camp for young musicians in July.

Hector Rico: What Have You Been Up To? Part 1

I am currently finishing my 2nd year of National Board Candidacy (NBC) with the Nurturing Teacher Leadership (NTL) program. This year's focus was on Components 1 (C1) and Components 3 (C3) of the National Board Portfolio. C1 is the content specific exam that I will take on June 15th. It consists of 45 multiple choice questions and 3 constructed-responses exercises which make up 30% of the summative portfolio score. To prepare for the test, I do weekly studying with practice exams. C3 is the video re-

ording part of the portfolio. You must submit two videos from two different classrooms and units showcasing your teaching technique. Along with the videos, you need to submit an instructional context form, instructional planning form and a 4-page written commentary for each video. I showcased my 5th grade floor hockey peer assessment lesson and my 3rd grade hand striking (Volleyball) self-assessment.

Compared to last year, I am doing less writing but more

recording and editing my videos to meet the highest score on the Rubric (1-4). Even as an experienced teacher, it helps to record yourself teach and reflect on ways to improve and recognize areas of strength. If you are thinking about starting the National Board journey, here are some tips to help you decide: find a cohort program or mentor to guide you. It helps when someone who is already certified and has been through the writing process can peer review your forms and writing. CPS has the NTL program, and

review your forms and writing. CPS has the NTL program, and IAHPERD has a state-wide program as well. Make sure you have time to write and study. NBC can take time, but reflecting on my experience reminded me that's how we grow and develop. It's worth it.

Hector Rico: Part 2

On May 15th, my school hosted USA Swimming and Olympic Gold Medalist, Matt Grevers, for National Water Safety month. They came to Marsh Elementary to talk to our middle school students about the importance of being safe this summer near bodies of water and the Olympic athlete experience. According to the American Red Cross Association, drowning is a public health crisis with it being the second leading cause of unintentional injury for school-aged youth. Nationwide, we lose approximately 11 people a day to drowning. My school community

is located 10 minutes from Calumet Park Beach and 30 minutes from Indiana Dunes National Park. With many students sharing their summer swimming adventures, I thought this presentation would be great to prepare them for a safe and active summer.



2026 HEPER Scholarship Winners



The Alice Smith Memorial Award- Jamal Ibrahim (PE)



The Chicago Park District Recreation, Sports Management and Therapeutic Recreation Scholarship Award- Corey Finkley (Rec)



The Chicago Public Schools Health Education and Physical Education Scholarship- Frankie Lee (PE)



The Lottie C. Patarini Scholarship Award, PE Merit Award- Victor Herrera (PE)

2026 HEPER Scholarship Winners



PE Merit Award- Jasmine Curry



PE Merit Award- Sydney Wetherspoon



PE Graduate Award- Enrique (Sammy) Cervantes



PE Graduate Award- Wes Needle

2026 HEPER Graduates



Jasmine Curry (PE)



Jamal Ibrahim (PE)



MSED PE- Sammy Cervantes, Tim Ludwigsen



Recreation Graduate and The Chairperson's Recreation, Sports Management and Therapeutic Recreation Scholarship Award- Efrain Rivas

Congratulations!



Dan Higgins, MSED PE Alumnus, recently earned his EdD in Kinesiology and Exercise Science from Concordia, Saint Paul. Dr. Higgins was an adjunct in Spring 2026, teaching Principles of Physical Fitness and Exercise Physiology.

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