



MASTODON LIFE

Esports Program Continuing Rapid Growth to Acceptance

For years, frustrated parents told their kids that playing video games will never amount to anything. “You’re wasting your time; go outside and play with your friends,” is a familiar refrain. They might have been wrong, though, as university esports teams are now proving.

Because they play and understand the attraction of electronic games, Associate Vice Chancellor for Information Technology Services and Chief Information Officer Mitch Davidson and Assistant Director of Technology Support Brian Spaulding launched the **Purdue University Fort Wayne esports program** in March 2020. They drew 10 to 15 players on three teams to start.

Three years later, there are six teams, with varsity and junior varsity squads of around 45 total players. PFW plays universities like Kansas, Ole Miss, and all the Big Ten schools, beating some head-to-head. Some **streaming Twitch matches** draw more than 1,500 spectators, and there’s also a dedicated campus message board of more than 300 recreational players.

[READ ARTICLE](#)

[MEET THE MASTODON ESPORTS TEAM](#)

College of Science Honorary Invited Lecturer to Discuss Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Biology Research

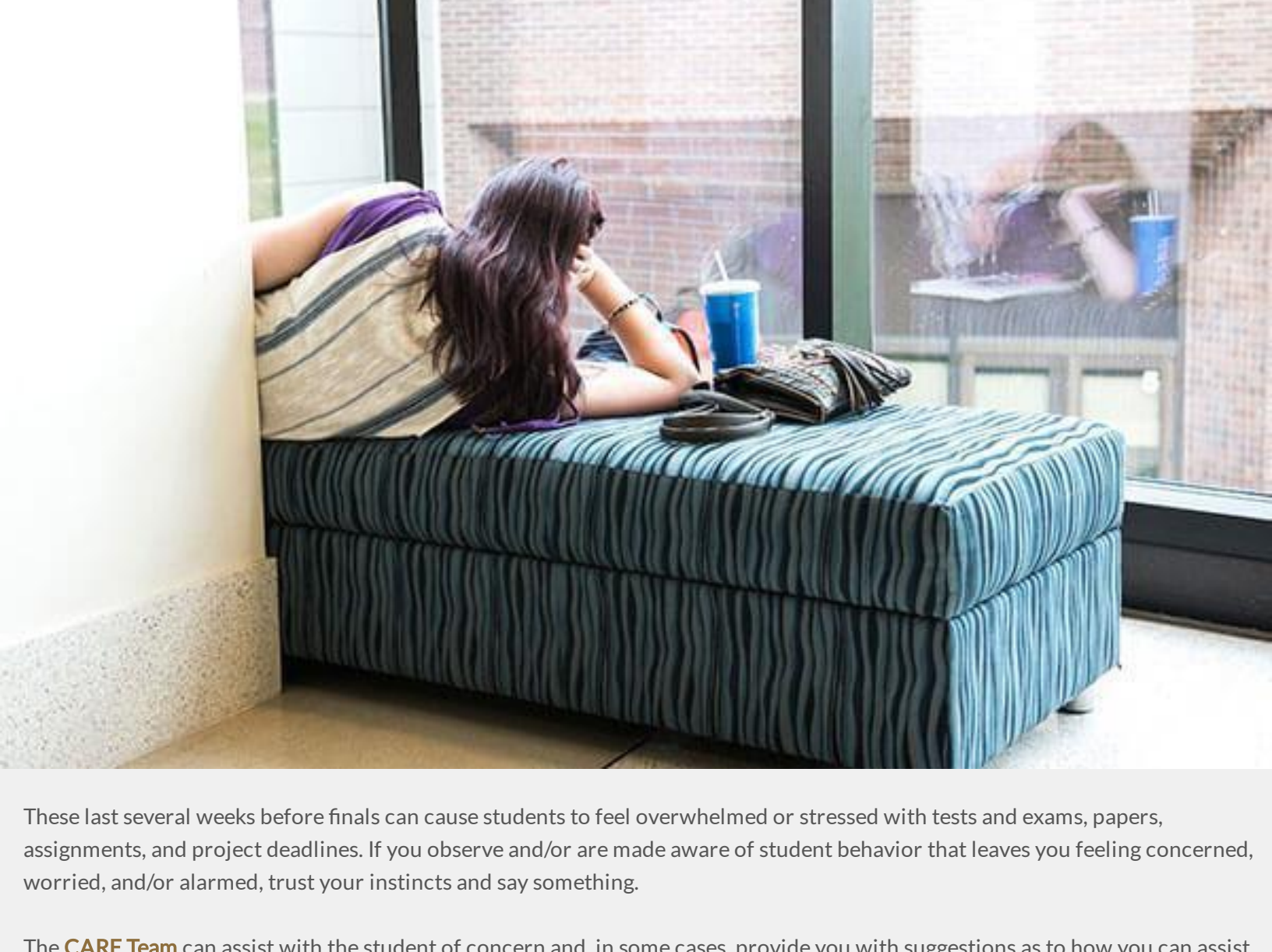
Daisuke Kihara will speak on one of the world’s hottest academic topics as part of the College of Science’s Honorary Invited Lecturer Series on March 21. The Purdue University professor in both the Department of Biological Sciences and the Department of Computer Science will discuss his research related to significant advancements in artificial intelligence at 7 p.m. in Neff Hall, Room 101, on the Purdue Fort Wayne campus.

Sponsored by the PFW laboratory of data science, and with funding from the Indiana Data Mine, Kihara’s presentation will center on how AI approaches are making positive contributions to biology research, including drug development. Some of his examples will include AI applications in biology research focusing on methods developed by his lab, including predicting protein structures and structure modeling of proteins, DNA, and RNA from low-resolution cryo-electron microscopy image data.

AI-based programs have surpassed human abilities in board and video games. Recent AI tools can also generate artistic images prompted by user-input text, and a new chat tool can fluently answer complicated questions.

A member of the faculty at Purdue since 2003, Kihara has been working on algorithm and software development in broad topics in **protein bioinformatics, including computational drug design**. His research projects are continuously supported with funding from the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, and private industry. He has published over 230 research articles and has served on numerous review panels for federal funding agencies in the U.S. and abroad. In 2021, he was elected as an American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering Fellow.

Concerned about a Student? Contact the CARE Team



These last several weeks before finals can cause students to feel overwhelmed or stressed with tests and exams, papers, assignments, and project deadlines. If you observe and/or are made aware of student behavior that leaves you feeling concerned, worried, and/or alarmed, trust your instincts and say something.

The **CARE Team** can assist with the student of concern and, in some cases, provide you with suggestions as to how you can assist the student directly. Fill out a CARE referral [here](#).

APSAC Hosting Open Forums

The **All Professional Staff Advisory Committee** serves as a two-way conduit between professional staff and the administration. Each spring APSAC accepts nominations for new members. Committee members have several important responsibilities that include, but aren’t limited to, serving on a variety of institutional committees. Support is needed every year, as committee membership changes annually.

Nominations will be open soon, and elections will follow shortly thereafter. Nominate a team member or yourself, and invest in a change by joining the APSAC committee.

Open forums to educate professional staff on the services the committee provides, encourage active participation, and highlight the upcoming elections will be hosted in the IDEASpace at Helmke Library on these dates:

March 27 | 3:30–4:30 p.m. | in-person only
 March 29 | 9–10 a.m. | in-person and remote

Have a question? [Ask APSAC](#).

Order Academic Regalia for Commencement by April 6

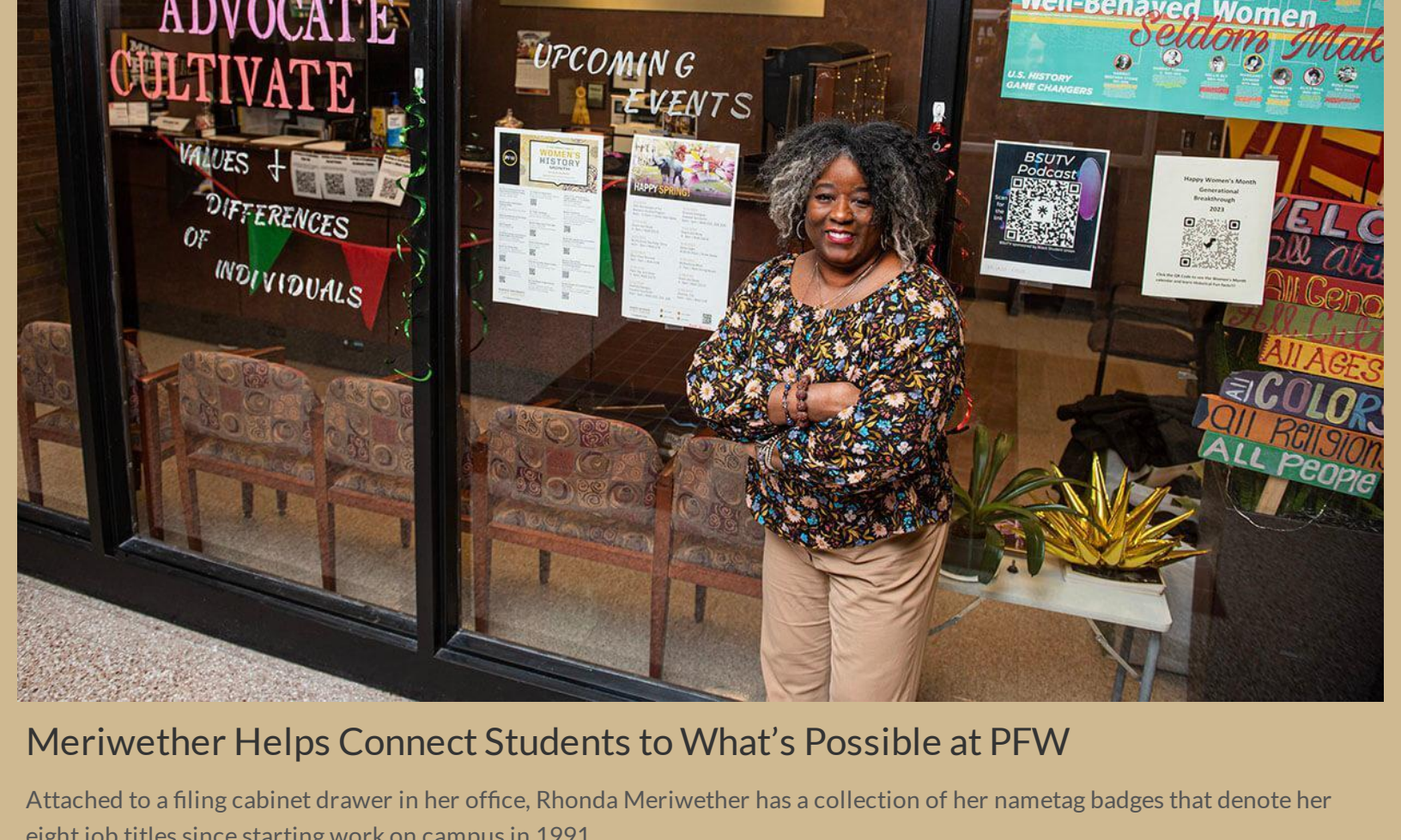


Purdue Fort Wayne’s 2023 Commencement will be held May 10 at 4 p.m. in the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum. All faculty and staff are encouraged to attend and participate in this joyous occasion that is the culmination of our students’ academic experience—and one of life’s special moments. If you are a faculty member and wish to participate in the ceremony, you can find the registration link [here](#).

Faculty are asked to wear academic regalia; tams are optional. If you need to rent regalia, please use this **online form**; the university will cover the cost of rentals. There will be no pickup on campus this year, as everything will be shipped directly to faculty members and will include a return shipping label. The deadline for orders is April 6.

Dedicated People

Our campus community’s growth and success is the result of faculty and staff who work tirelessly to help make the university such a special place to work, learn, and flourish. This series helps us recognize those who exemplify PFW’s positive progress.



Meriwether Helps Connect Students to What’s Possible at PFW

Attached to a filing cabinet drawer in her office, Rhonda Meriwether has a collection of her nametag badges that denote her eight job titles since starting work on campus in 1991.

They show her professional progression and her dedication to Purdue University Fort Wayne.

As director of the Multicultural Center, Meriwether works for the university, but she’ll tell you she actually works for the students.

“The way I see my job is I’m here to help connect with students so they feel comfortable and welcome on campus, so we retain them to graduate,” Meriwether said. “I work with everyone. Multicultural means everyone. It’s a fun job, and I live to stay busy.”

[READ ARTICLE](#)

Featured Events

There’s always plenty to do at Purdue Fort Wayne. Some opportunities are exclusive to university employees and their families. Check the full [events calendar](#) often to see what’s happening on campus.

MARCH
20
Mon., 7:30–9:30 p.m.

Vocal Division Showcase and FRIENDS Recital

Vocal students will present Her “Voice Matters: Songs of Women Composers,” a recital to celebrate the 50th anniversary of PFW’s women’s studies program. Co-sponsored by the FRIENDS of the university..

MARCH
21
Tues., noon–1 p.m.

Healthy Boiler Virtual Workshop: Plant Power

Learn about the health benefits of plant-forward nutrition. Discover the flexibility and benefits of this type of eating and cooking. Register by March 20...

From the Field

Several colleges, departments, and programs at PFW publish e-newsletters. Follow these links to read the latest:

- [Environmental Resources Center](#)
- [School of Education](#)

In a Snap

Seen and noted around campus. Monitor our university social feeds for more great moments of Mastodon life.



Civil discussion and pizza were offered in the packed IDEASpace in Helmke Library during a gun control debate, cosponsored by the College Democrats and the College Republicans on Monday.

News Center



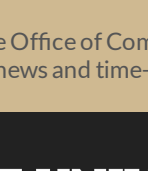
Events Calendar



Athletics



Ripples



Inside PFW is an official university communication for faculty and staff. All submissions should be sent to inside@pfw.edu no later than 2 p.m. on the day prior to the next edition to be considered for inclusion. Newsletter guidelines can be accessed in the PFW News Center by [clicking here](#).

Inside PFW is produced twice weekly on Tuesday and Thursday by the Office of Communications and Marketing. *Inside PFW Special Edition* is a supplement to the regularly scheduled newsletter. It covers breaking news and time-sensitive information directly related to university operations.

PURDUE UNIVERSITY
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