



## Environmental Resources Center's Purpose Continues to Expand as the World Changes

Growing up in Southern California, Bruce Kingsbury always loved snakes, which is why he studied biology, eventually earned a doctorate, and in 1992 started teaching at Purdue University Fort Wayne.

At some point during the journey he realized something else about his fascination with reptiles—he also wanted to protect them.

"I actually remember being at a party about when I was finishing my Ph.D. Someone asked me, 'Why do you study snakes?' a question I had been asked many times before," Kingsbury said. "I had always simply responded, 'Because they were cool.' But I realized then that my historically convenient reply didn't resonate the same way anymore. I had transitioned from thinking I just wanted to learn about them because they were fascinating, to somebody compelled to protect them. And the way you protect them is you understand what they need and then try to get the powers that be to provide that."

That's how the seed for PFW's **Environmental Resources Center** in the College of Science, one of the university's 13 **Centers of Excellence**, started forming in Kingsbury's mind. He was interested in studying wildlife ecology, but also in promoting conservation. He believed he could find the funding necessary to fulfill his work on imperiled species while also filling the need for sharing expertise about growing community and societal needs.

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*Timya Townsend as Celie in "The Color Purple."*

## PFW Impact on Civic Theatre's 'The Color Purple' Years in the Making

Shortly after MarTeze Hammonds started as Purdue University Fort Wayne's chief diversity officer in 2020, one of his first invitations to speak on campus came from the Department of Theatre. Faculty members had recognized his background in professional theatre and performing.

When Hammonds finished, student Timya Townsend asked if he had any advice because she was considering a transfer.

"It was a really big deal for me," Townsend said. "Finally, I had someone who looked like me, did the same thing as me, and listened and understood everything I was going through. It was nice to have a mentor figure that I could actually relate to."

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## Practicing Patience Key during FAFSA Form Facelift

For students waiting for greater clarity on the 2024–25 Free Application for Federal Student Aid form, days may seem like weeks at the moment. But if history is any indication, there's still a high probability that this is going to be a very helpful resource sooner rather than later.

Locally, leaders from Purdue University Fort Wayne say the number of Pell-eligible students in Indiana will more than double, rising from 14,175 to 30,249. Purdue Fort Wayne also anticipates a significant increase in its Pell-eligible students. Applying the new criteria, the university expects an increase of approximately 27%.

To lend some reassurance with the pace of the process, the Office of Financial Aid at Purdue University Fort Wayne wants to remind applicants that despite the delays it expects to experience receiving necessary information from the U.S. Department of Education, the financial aid team continues to monitor all new developments and is there to assist in any way possible.

More information, updates, and a schedule of FAFSA support nights over the next two months is available online by [clicking here](#). Applicants can call the Office of Financial Aid at 260-481-6820 or email [finaid@pfw.edu](mailto:finaid@pfw.edu) for additional assistance.



*Fans were treated to a high-flying display of acrobatics offered up by the Indiana Pacers Power Pack during halftime of Thursday's homecoming week "Whiteout" at Memorial Coliseum. The men's basketball team (15-8) came up short versus Milwaukee 68-65 before bouncing back on Sunday at Gates Sports Center with an 82-78 victory over Youngstown State.*

## Blizzard Warning Expires; Homecoming Memories Remain in Effect

The Blizzard of Dons has cleared, but last week's Homecoming 2024 celebration left a flurry of Mastodon pride in its wake.

After a crafty Tuesday evening of making blankets and bracelets, Wednesday's Dons in Vegas casino night attracted a full house of players winning gear and prizes. The fun stretched into the weekend with a night of ice skating, a Saturday feast from Fresh Ideas, and the first-ever PFW lip-sync championship, where dance group Bollywood Jhoom electrified a crowd of more than 1,000 fans to take home first place.

Meanwhile, Mastodon student-athletes dominated the weekend with a four-game sweep at the Gates Sports Center. Women's basketball defeated in-state rival IUPUI, men's volleyball took down Saint Francis (Pa.) and nationally ranked Penn State in a pair of thrilling matches, and men's basketball iced the Youngstown State Penguins. And to cap it all off on Sunday, **six Mastodon greats** were inducted into the PFW Athletic Hall of Fame.

To relive the fun of this year's Blizzard of Dons, check out the **homecoming photo album** on the Purdue Fort Wayne Facebook page.



## Purdue Fort Wayne Esports Adds New Coach and Scholarship Opportunities

As the spring semester season starts to crank up, big things are happening with Purdue University Fort Wayne's **esports program**.

Under the direction of new coach Jordan Cunningham, 53 players represent the university in local and national competitions. Arriving in the fall, Cunningham has restructured the program to build off the base started in 2019 by Mitch Davidson, associate vice chancellor for ITS and executive director for distributed campus services, and Brian Spaulding, associate director of technology workspace.

Cunningham wrote a handbook for his esports players, running the section like an athletic department varsity team with structure, practice expectations, and decorum, along with support such as new gear to wear on road trips. The seven squads that make up the overall team took their first road trip in October to the "Battle for Indiana" at Butler University.

[READ MORE](#)

## Eventful

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*There's always plenty to do at Purdue Fort Wayne. To find your favorites—or discover new activities—check the full **events calendar** often to see what's happening on campus.*

FEBRUARY

8

Thurs., noon–1 p.m.

## From Campus to Career: Mastering Professional Attire

Transitioning from the campus to the professional world requires more than just a degree; it calls for a keen understanding of the art of professional attire. This workshop will equip you with the knowledge and confidence to present yourself professionally...

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FEBRUARY

8

Thurs., 8:30–10:30 p.m.

## TMC Skate Night

Celebrate Black History month by joining The Multicultural Center for skating at Roller Dome. Free admission and skate rental with your PFW/IUFW ID...

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FEBRUARY

12

Mon., 6–8 p.m.

## Everybody Say Love Dinner

Join The Q Center for a Valentine's Day dinner with your queer friends and allies. Bring your boo, come solo, or join your friends/chosen family for this special, delicious, catered FREE MEAL!...

## News Spotlight

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*A sampling of external news coverage of Purdue University Fort Wayne.*

# Story of ETCS student's hometown project spreads

Local and national media | Monday

## Local artist captures life through art (21Country)

21Alive | Jan. 31

## WANE 15 sits down with Curtis Crisler to discuss poet laureate honor

WANE 15 | Jan. 31

## Mastodon Moments

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



As part of homecoming week activities, "Bollywood Jhoom," one of PFW's many **student organizations**, beat out some stiff competition to win the Lip Sync Battle at halftime of the women's basketball game on Saturday.

Athletics



Don Dates



News Center





Don Life Archive



Don Life is an official university communication sent weekly on Wednesday to all currently enrolled students. Don Life Special Edition is a supplement to the regularly scheduled newsletter. It covers breaking news and time-sensitive information directly related to university operations.

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