Alumni spotlights feature outstanding Ohio University Physical Therapy graduates who are succeeding in their careers around the country.

Nominate your friends and former classmates for the Ohio University Physical Therapy Alumni Spotlight series. Send your nominations to ptalumni@ohio.edu.

Ohio West

Ohio Bobcat Alumni spread far and wide across the country after graduation as they take their talents to new, profound jobs. However, there seems to be an increasingly large number of alumni gathering in Eugene, Oregon. Seven, to be exact, have relocated out to the west coast. This month’s Alumni Spotlight catches up with Jake Stephens, Aleksey Lavrinenko, Michael and Rachel Robinson, Sean Wilging, Rylee Fitzgerald, and Joe Wisniewski on how life in Eugene is shaping and advancing their careers.
When they aren’t working, the crew can be found together exploring the scenic outdoors and gathering monthly for Ohio Sunday dinners with even more Ohio natives in the area. Although, one thing is for sure, no matter how far away our alumni may go, their Ohio pride always holds strong (just look at that Ohio Rogue Steel pictured below).

Cooperative Performance & Rehabilitation

Pictured Above (L to R): Joe Wisniewski; current student, Jake Stephens; Class of 2018, Michael and Rachel Robinson; Class of 2019

It’s safe to assume that the recent rise in OHIO graduates to Eugene was initiated by one particular professor. Cooperative Performance & Rehabilitation was created in 2010 by Ohio University graduate and current OU professor, Dr. Robert Wayner, PT, DPT. After spending years on the west coast, Dr. Wayner returned to Athens and we have seen many students head west to follow in his footsteps ever since. Now Jake Stephens, Michael Robinson, Rachel Robinson, and Joe Wisniewski all find themselves following Wayner’s footsteps wearing OHIO green and white in his old office to remind everyone of their Ohio University roots. However, not all the Bobcats work together in Wayner’s old office; Aleksey Lavrinenko, Sean Wilging, and Rylee Fitzgerald are making their own major impact with other offices located throughout Eugene. Here is what the Bobcat Alumni have to say about their transition out west:
Michael Robinson

Hometown: Suffield, OH

Class: 2019

Why Oregon?
After doing my clinical rotation in nearby Springfield, Oregon, I knew I wanted to return full-time.

Additional Work Highlights:
In conjunction with Rachel and Jake at the clinic I work in analysis and treatment of running athletes, vestibular rehabilitation, and manual therapy. I treat orthopedic conditions, some neurologic conditions, and sports injuries. I enjoy returning people to recreational activities that their current functional limitations prevents them from accomplishing. I'm currently pursuing advanced certification as a Board Certified Orthopedic Specialist.

What do you like most about Oregon?
The large amount of Ohioans in an unlikely place and the vast amount of experiences and natural areas to explore.

Toughest Transition:
Getting used to people pumping your gas as it is the only state where it is illegal to pump independently.

What do you miss most about Athens?
The small town atmosphere, Jackie O’s and Little Fish on summer nights, and Stroud's run and Thunderbunny Trail.

Fun Fact:
In August, Rachel and I Summitted Mount Adams in Washington. It was our first summit at 12,500 ft. Moutaineering may be our newest hobby.

Rachel Robinson

Hometown: Brimfield, OH

Class: 2019

Why Oregon?
Throughout PT school I had developed an interest in both orthopedics and vestibular rehabilitation. I was fortunate enough to work as Robert’s GA throughout PT school, feeding into my interest of working with runners. Through his connections with CP&R, which specializes in both orthopedics and vestibular rehab, I was able to travel to Eugene, OR for my final clinical internship.
Shortly after, I was offered a permanent position and couldn’t pass up the opportunity!

**Additional Work Highlights:**
Another OU DPT grad and colleague of mine, Jake Stephens, has been working hard at developing our clinic’s RunWell program, a performance program for runners of all ages and abilities. It’s been an exciting experience to work alongside him to expand our clinic’s ties to the Eugene running community, and begin a running-related injury research project in partnership with the Ohio Center for Running Performance.

**What do you like most about Oregon?**
The outdoor beauty of Oregon has to be at the top of my list. On any given weekend we can travel a short distance to the rocky coast, mountains, waterfalls, and miles upon miles of running trails. I love that with each season, you have a different outdoor activity to look forward to – snowshoeing and cross-country skiing in the winter, then running, hiking and cycling in the summer!

**How was the transition to the west coast?**
A move across the country away from family and friends was of course challenging, but the Ohio and PT community connections made me quickly feel at home. Between my amazing coworkers, monthly Ohio Sunday Dinners, and a welcoming church, I've been quite satisfied! Oh, and having my husband, Mike Robinson (OU DPT grad and CP&R employee), alongside has been key.

**What do you miss most about Athens?** Mostly my PT classmates (except for the 5 that are here in Eugene with me!)

**Fun Fact:** I recently acquired the best new running buddy - Poppy, a 2 year old Aussie mix who loves trail mornings, tennis balls, and belly scratches.
**Hometown:** Dayton, OH

**Class:** 2015 (Undergrad), 2018 (DPT)

**Why Oregon?**
I had done my other clinical rotations local and wanted to adventure out West before graduating. Dr. Wayner hooked me up at his old workplace here in Eugene and I was lucky enough to get a job offer as a student and decided to take a risk and accept. I was not planning on moving out here originally, but here I am!

**Additional Work Highlights:**
In addition to working with runners, we are a vestibular specialty clinic so we see lots of dizzy kids and adults here as well - a challenging and exciting area to practice. (Addition: As Rachel mentioned, Jake is working hard developing their clinics RunWell Program for runners in the area.)

**What do you like most about Oregon?**
I've developed a big appreciation for the outdoors - To be near the Cascade mountains, the coast, the high desert and a bunch of cool stuff in between is pretty surreal. I also have enjoyed meeting great people from all over the country and learning how they ended up here, it’s a melting pot for sure.

**How was the transition to the west coast?**
Fun. Luckily, I had some connections with previous OU alum (Juli and Craig Leon) that made the transition easier but I took moving out here as a chance to do new things, so I also started build community around dancing, hiking and skiing.

**What do you miss most about Athens?** Uptown and all it has to offer - The best collective square mile of food, bars, and coffee in the United States.

**Fun Fact:** I’ve got enough board games to fill a U-Haul truck.
Hometown: Solon, Ohio

Class: 2018

Why Oregon?
During grad school I had no intention of leaving Ohio. I loved southeast Ohio (and still do) and was ready to start my career off there. After a few months of helping out in Dr. Wayner’s lab and taking the advanced running elective course offered by Dr. Wayner I really grew to love treating runners. The class and lab fueled my passion for research and after seeing a presentation from David McHenry I was sold on coming out to TrackTown USA (Eugene, Oregon) to work with runners of all levels. I was fortunate enough to fall into a position working with a therapist who happens to be the PT for the University of Oregon Track and Field and him and I recently opened a new clinic together. I am loving building my skill set here and owe all of my roots to Dr. Wayner and the rest of the amazing faculty at OU.

Additional Work Highlights:
In my setting I am fortunate enough to work with all sorts of athletic individuals. Although my greatest interests are in runners and cyclists. But thanks to Dr. Ashley Crow’s phenomenal passion for vestibular Therapy I have also become one of the few therapists in Eugene who is a go to for those with a variety of vestibular dysfunctions.
What do you like most about Oregon?
For me it’s been the opportunities. I have been connected with very big names and extremely knowledgeable people. I’ve been able to learn from many therapists much smarter than myself and just as Dr. Sindelar taught us have taken little bits of everyone’s information and made it my own.

How was the transition to the west coast?
It was a cinch. I sold off most of my belongings. Built a small trailer. Got my dog and my bikes and hit the road. The Pacific Northwest was an interesting cultural transition, but I now love my home in Eugene Oregon.

What do you miss most about Athens?
Living in Athens was the greatest 3 years of my life. I miss the beautiful scenery, Wayne National Forest, OU faculty and Jackie O’s.

Fun Fact:
I hope to build our new practice around serving the athletic population within our community and get tied in to the community a little more through outreach programs and injury prevention education.

Hometown: Doylestown, OH

Class: 2019

Why Oregon?
I wanted to travel west and knew a couple friends that were settling in Eugene. I applied for a job with TAI and learned about great con-ed opportunities and went for it.

What do you like most about Oregon?
I like the mountains and all the great outdoor opportunities.

How was the transition to the west coast?
It was challenging getting started and traveling but rewarding with new adventures.

What do you miss most about Athens?
Jackie O’s and the PT department.
Hometown: Hudson, OH

Class: 2019

Why Oregon?
I was aware of Dr. Wayner’s connection to Eugene and have always been curious about the area. I have heard only good things about several therapy clinics in Eugene from classmates in prior OU DPT classes. Additionally, a couple of my classmates had gone out to Eugene for their final clinical rotations and had decided to stay for their first jobs. They spoke highly of their experience out west and about the high need for PT’s in this area. I have always wanted to explore the west and this was the perfect opportunity to gain new experiences and start my career as a physical therapist.

Additional Work Highlights:
My current position is primarily a hospital-based outpatient setting in a very rural area of Oregon with a ton of variety in patient population. I also have the opportunity to work on the acute care side at this hospital so there is always something new to see and learn at this job.

What do you like most about Oregon?
I love how close we are to so many different types of areas. No matter if you want to go to the coast, to the mountains, or to Portland, everything is within easy driving distance. There is always something new to explore!

How was the transition to the west coast?
It was definitely challenging moving across the country and leaving family and friends, however it has been amazing to experience the west coast.

What do you miss most about Athens?
Big Mama’s, Jackie O’s, and my classmates.