

Meet Karlie Gross, DPT Class of 2019: The Road to her DPT

Karlie Gross (standing, in photo) is the daughter of a personal trainer mom and a sports enthusiast dad, and she always had an interest in things medical. She was active in high school athletics, playing a number of competitive sports. However, a torn ACL from playing soccer and subsequent recovery that included physical therapy started her on the road to her chosen career.

She started shadowing PTs in various clinics during her senior year of high school, and enjoyed spending time with patients and watching their progress. “I loved it immediately”, she said. “It’s a lot of problem solving, and I never get bored doing that.” She saw that it was a profession in which “you are constantly learning and challenging yourself.”

Karlie hails from California and spent her undergraduate years at San Diego State University majoring in kinesiology. During this time, she logged around 1400 hours as an aide in various PT clinics (75 are required for the Columbia DPT program). Karlie became actively involved in research, working in the Rehabilitation Biomechanics Lab where she became fascinated with movement. Her undergraduate research involved exploring movement patterns and noting differences between individuals with and without low back pain.



When it was time to apply to physical therapy school, Columbia University was high on her list. She always wanted to spend time in the East. She was impressed with the interview process and the faculty at Columbia, recalling, “I felt at home right way!”

Columbia’s DPT program offers a unique combination of advanced track electives, teaching and research opportunities, and Karlie took full advantage. Karlie’s ultimate career goal has always been to work clinically, conduct research, and teach. Thus, she took every opportunity to enhance her knowledge and skills. She was a TA for Anatomy Lab, Kinesiology and Biomechanics, and PT Management

of Orthopedic Conditions courses where she was able to enhance her teaching skills and develop strategies to work with individuals with different learning styles. She helped develop supplementary materials for [Dr. Lisa Yoon](#)’s PT Management of Pediatric Conditions course. She has also been involved in faculty member [Dr. Jean Timmerberg](#)’s research with adolescent athletes.

For Karlie, the best thing about Columbia’s program was the “amazing faculty and the opportunities that were available”. In particular, she enjoyed the Women’s Health and Vestibular



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electives. She states, "The knowledge gained from these electives has been invaluable during my clinical experiences." She was also involved with programs such as CancerFit, CanWarriors, and Spinal Mobility, which provided patient care experiences supervised by licensed physical therapists outside of the classroom or lab.

In the short term, she hopes to get into an orthopedic residency program in order to take advantage of mentorship opportunities early on in her career, continue teaching and conducting research.

Her goal is to combine the clinical and academic, and pursue a PhD "in a few years" after gaining more hands-on clinical experience.

Her advice to incoming DPT students: "Constantly strive to grow, and challenge yourself to seek knowledge outside of the didactic curriculum through exploring programs like CancerFIT, CanWarriors, and [service learning](#) in Guatemala."

Note: Karlie received the Faculty Award for Academic Excellence and the Mary E. Callahan Award.

Meet Tiffany Maye, DPT Class of 2019, Recipient of APTA's Minority Scholarship Award

Tiffany Maye has been named a recipient of the American Physical Therapy Association's [\(APTA\) Minority Scholarship Award](#). The award recognizes physical therapy students in their final year of study for their professional character and academic excellence.



Tiffany commented, "It is a tremendous honor to be selected as a recipient of this award. The (APTA) has played a key role in my professional development as a student physical therapist through abundant learning opportunities at the local and national level. By attending numerous conferences and networking, I have been able to learn from the leaders of our profession and find a warm community of skilled clinicians to grow with as I start my career. I value the APTA's dedication to supporting diversity and service initiatives among minority communities through this award. Representation truly matters."

Congratulations, Tiffany!



Meet Leah Wylie, DPT Class of 2019: Twin Brothers with Cerebral Palsy Taught Leah Wylie About Movement

Leah Wylie grew up with twin brothers afflicted with cerebral palsy. “I learned about movement from them”, she says, “I saw how they used their bodies to do what they needed to do.” A double major in health science and psychology at Colorado State University, she came to New York after graduation to solidify her educational and career path. She found a job working as a medical assistant to a physiatrist. She was “fascinated with movement,” and loved the idea that physical therapy was a field where you keep learning and growing.



Leah applied to many PT schools, and in fact had known some Columbia graduates at a facility where she worked during her exploratory time in New York.

What “sealed the deal” about Columbia for her was interview day. “I felt respected,” she commented. “My interview with [faculty member] [Dr. Stacy Kinirons](#) was more about, ‘Is this the right place for you?’ It turned out to be a conversation about our passions.” Leah was also impressed that the day seemed driven by the students. “I appreciated the

opportunity to spend a lot of time with them and really learn about life as a Columbia DPT student.”

In terms of career goals, she is passionate about neurology. While she feels she is not quite ready for a residency, in the short term Leah looks forward to working in a hospital setting. She enjoys interprofessional collaboration and counts [IPE Day](#) and [e-linc](#) among her favorite experiences at Columbia. Over the long term, Leah eventually would like to pursue a PhD or EdD, but initially wants to gain a varied clinical foundation so she can discover what research area interests her most.

For incoming DPT students, Leah’s advice is “find something that gives you balance with your academic life.” In Leah’s case, it was playing women’s rugby with the New York Rugby League. She stopped playing in order to avoid injury but remained active in the community and is still involved in the organization. The other thing she advocates strongly is that students should get involved in some of the unique elective and volunteer opportunities to practice what they’ve

learned under the supervision of licensed PTs, such as [service learning experiences](#) in Guatemala, [CoSMo](#), and Stand Tall.

Note: Leah received the Risa Granick Award for Leadership in Teaching and Service.