**STUDENTS ASK THE QUESTIONS: Kinesiology ADT with Student Host Nick Fabrega & Faculty Lani Ruh Episode 140**

00:00:00 **Nick**

That's another thing that's so nice about majoring in kinesiology, is it still keeps me open for other options. If becoming a physician assistant doesn't necessarily work out, there's other medical jobs I could try and get with my degree. So, that's definitely really helpful.

00:00:17 **Christina**

Hi, I'm Christina Barsi.

00:00:18 **Sun**

And I'm Sun Ezzell, and you're listening to the Magic Mountie Podcast.

00:00:22 **Christina**

Our mission is to find ways to keep your ear to the ground, so to speak - by bringing to you the activities and events you may not have time to attend, the resources on campus you might want to know more about, the interesting things your colleagues are creating, and the many ways we can continue to better help and guide our students.

00:00:39 **Sun**

We bring to you the voices of Mt. SAC, from the classroom to completion-

00:00:43 **Speaker 1**

And I know I'm going to achieve my goals, and I know people here are going to help me to do it.

00:00:48 **Speaker 2**

She is a sociology major and she's transferring to Cal Poly, Pomona. Psychology major, English major ...

00:00:54 **Sun**

From transforming part-time into full-time-

00:00:57 **Speaker 1**

I really liked the time that we spent with Julie about how to write a CV and a cover letter.

00:01:04 **Christina**

Or just finding time to soak in the campus.

00:01:06 **Speaker 1**

To think of the natural environment around us as a library.

00:01:09 **Christina**

We want to keep you informed and connected to all things Mt. SAC, but most importantly, we want to keep you connected with each other. I'm Christina Barsi, Mt. SAC Alumni and producer of this podcast.

00:01:20 **Sun**

And I'm Sun Ezzell, Learning Assistance Faculty and Professional Learning Academy Coordinator.

00:01:26 **Christina**

And this is the Magic Mountie Podcast.

00:01:27 **Christina**

Today's guest, host, Mt. SAC student Nick Fabrega talks with his coach, Lani Ruh. They explore the many pathways and possibilities a kinesiology degree achieved at Mt. SAC can yield. Listen in as we get to know Nick and his special guest, Lani, as they share their own educational and professional journeys.

00:01:52 **Nick**

Welcome to the Magic Mountie Podcast. I'm Nick Fabrega and I'm here with Lani Ruh. Tell me a little about yourself and about your journey.

00:01:59 **Lani**

Well, hi, Nick, thank you for the question. Yep, my name is Lani Ruh, I am part of the kinesiology full-time faculty here. I'm also a coach for four sports on campus: the assistant coach for men's and women's water polo, and men's and women's swimming.

00:02:14 **Lani**

So, my journey getting to Mt. SAC was quite a long and curvy one. I started out as an undergrad in biology at the University of La Verne. I was planning to be a doctor, got into med school, and decided that is not the way to go for me. I wanted to help people, just didn't know exactly how, and started coaching and fell in love with that.

00:02:35 **Lani**

I decided to come to Mt. SAC and take some courses, and while doing so here, I was part of the first women's water polo team that we had. Got to play three years because of that initial year not necessarily counting, it was a new sport, and kind of just stayed here the whole time. So, that's really my journey to get to Mt. SAC.

00:02:54 **Lani**

And I obviously, got my undergraduate degree in biology. I didn't get my master's degree until about 20 years later. So, life happened in between there, got my master's degree, ended up getting two master's degrees, and was lucky enough to get a full-time position here.

00:03:09 **Nick**

Okay. What were your two master's degrees in?

00:03:13 **Lani**

My first one was physical education. I got that done in about a year and a half. And then second one took me a little bit longer. I got that in sports psychology.

00:03:22 **Nick**

How difficult and time-consuming were your majors?

00:03:26 **Lani**

My undergrad major was fairly difficult. It's very challenging. Biology, especially the math portion of that, not my cup of tea, but kind of just fought my way through that. I coached right after that. So, that part of it, leading into getting my master's degrees in physical education and sports psychology was actually, I found easier. I had a lot more life experience at that point in time, and I knew what I wanted to do. It made it more enjoyable.

00:03:54 **Nick**

What was your favorite age group, I guess, to coach? Like high school, club, college?

00:04:01 **Lani**

Yeah, I do enjoy coaching this level, and Nick, you've been a wonderful athlete. It will be sad to see you go this next year. So, I would say I'm happy coaching where I'm at at this point.

00:04:11 **Nick**

What makes you enjoy this level of coaching more than like high school and club?

00:04:16 **Lani**

High school, I enjoyed because it was four years. I got to work with an athlete and really see them develop over those four years. But this level is a little bit ... I guess it's more challenging, we only get two years. But it's fun to see the progress in those two years and how come in kind of maybe a little bit naive at first, as far as life and school and athletics and how it all works together. And then we see you transform: you're getting jobs - it's a different, I guess, a different transformation.

00:04:44 **Lani**

We see you as young adults, moving out and figuring out what you want to do. And also, the sport psychology side of it, it seems like at this age group, it's a little bit easier for the athlete to understand than let's say, a 12-year-old that doesn't really get what I'm asking them to do, versus a 19-year-old that kind of understands the concept has a good sense of self.

00:05:04 **Nick**

Yeah, I get what you're saying with the two-year transition period. Because I personally feel like that's how it worked for me. Coming into Mt. SAC, I wasn't exactly sure what career or what route I wanted to take. So, these past two years really helped. Like it gave me a chance to figure things out before I transferred out to Mt. SAC.

00:05:22 **Lani**

That's fantastic to hear. And I know I've heard a lot of those stories. We've had students that have come in, yeah, I want to be a dentist. They leave wanting to do botany, something completely different. So, it's interesting how that happens through the courses that you get to take here.

00:05:35 **Nick**

So, what made you want to decide to change your career path?

00:05:40 **Lani**

Well, it was kind of set out for me from when I was young that you need to be a doctor. You need to be some sort of a professional in that realm. I'm the first person in my family to finish college between my mom and my dad. So, there's a lot of pressure as far as what they put on me to do ... like to choose something of that nature. Unfortunately, look down on teachers, which is kind of funny because now my mom is a teacher.

00:06:05 **Lani**

So, I guess what really prompted me first to choose biology was the fact that I wanted to make them happy. But then in the long run, it wasn't making me happy and I knew I just wanted to teach and coach. That was kind of what I gravitated towards. My mom said even when I was little, I would make up my own sheets of homework to do, to give to other people to do because I wanted to grade it.

00:06:29 **Lani**

So, it's just something I just wanted to ... I think that I felt like that natural, I want to help somewhere, but I didn't know how to help. So, I guess I just kind of always gravitated towards it. So, when I had to make the choice to go to med school, do I really want to do this for four more years? And the answer was no, I'm not happy. I was dreading it. Then I knew I have to make a switch.

00:06:47 **Lani**

So, changed and went into coaching. I really enjoyed that and then found a love for teaching. Coaching and teaching are not that different, just different modes of I guess explaining information. So yeah, that's what made me want to switch was the coaching aspect of it first.

00:07:05 **Nick**

Is the pressure what pushed you to go into like the doctor on the first place? Or was there a point in time when that is genuinely what you wanted to do?

00:07:13 **Lani**

I thought that's what I wanted to do, but I think it was more pressure because that's all I heard my whole life from the time I could remember. It was you need to choose something like this, like doctor, lawyer, dentist. And I was like, oh, okay, that's kind of a narrow scope. So, I chose doctor.

00:07:27 **Lani**

The end of it all, I wanted to be a medical examiner. That's really what I was kind of pointed towards, because I didn't want to have to deal with malpractice. And I just wasn't sure about the whole thing. I wasn't really committed to it. I think it was more pressure from the family, more than anything else.

00:07:43 **Nick**

Do you think if that pressure wasn't there, would you have followed that route, or was at this point when you realized that this was definitely not what you wanted to do?

00:07:52 **Lani**

That's a good question. I probably would not have followed that route. I probably would have gone with teaching or something different at the beginning. Obviously, I am who I am, I'm where I'm at now for a reason. If I hadn't gone through all those things, I wouldn't be where I'm at now with the experiences. But had I not had that pressure, then I probably would have chosen something along this route to begin with. And hopefully, I'd gone along the same route.

00:08:18 **Nick**

Do you have any regrets along your educational path?

00:08:22 **Lani**

I don't have any regrets. I wish I would've done better my freshman year of undergrad, a little bit lazy. But I wish I would've done better in those years and really, yeah, just proven to myself that I could do it from the get go . It took a lot of coercing from - well, inner coercing to get back on track. So, I wish I would've done better.

00:08:41 **Lani**

But I'm not upset about the route I chose because like I said, those experiences have helped shaped who I am, and I can share those experiences with people like yourself, incoming students who maybe aren't sure what they want to do. So, I think I wouldn't have changed much.

00:08:58 **Nick**

Yeah. What I like about Mt. SAC and I guess just college in general, is it's like a fresh start from high school. Like my high school GPA it doesn't matter anymore. So, I knew my first year going to Mt. SAC, I was like, okay, well if I want to have a high GPA, this is where I could start doing that. And for the first year, I had really good GPA. And now, with this online learning, it's taken a little more effort to try and keep that up and stay motivated.

00:09:21 **Lani**

Yeah. Oh, I understand, I a hundred percent agree. And I've seen that with a lot of students that it's difficult, the engagement isn't there. And I think especially with athletes, you're very hands-on people and you like to have that interaction. You're in sports, that's what you kind of do things for. So, I get that part.

00:09:37 **Lani**

And it's been tough on the teacher side of it as well. I think we also miss that engagement with our students to really see how you guys look and how you perceive something, the body language that students use - when you're face to face, we don't get that option now. So, hopefully, in the fall, it'll be a little different.

00:09:59 **Nick**

Yeah, I would definitely consider myself a hands-on learner. Like whenever we would do activities in class where we would be doing labs or moving things around, I would always find myself learning a lot better than just listening to like a lecture or watching a PowerPoint and taking my own notes.

00:10:14 **Lani**

Right. And that's kind of the career path you're taking too: more hands-on, you're working with people. I mean, it would be super hard to do over a virtual platform with what you want to do as a PA.

00:10:26 **Nick**

Yeah, I've realized that there's some classes that I found out actually I think worked really well online. Like my math courses, I find just having the notes being presented on screen and me able to take down those notes, that works pretty well for me, especially since math doesn't like have any like hands-on or lab components.

00:10:44 **Nick**

But I realized like my anatomy class right now, that's like the complete opposite where the labs would be hands-on and you would be doing dissections or looking at life-size models and I'm not able to do that. Everything's just looking at images on the screen and that makes it a lot more difficult.

00:11:01 **Lani**

Yeah, that makes a huge difference. I remember my anatomy class being able to see things and actually go, oh, that's this part or, oh, that's this part or that's how it moves. It makes a huge difference.

00:11:11 **Nick**

Yeah. Like when I was in high school, I took sports medicine and we would do like hands-on like stretching or we would have like life-size, like structures and like skeletons. And so, we could bend the bones and like see where the muscles connect and even like with each other, we would like do like stretches on each other and we would focus on like certain muscle groups.

00:11:33 **Nick**

So, that hands-on of like working with another person always like helped me remember it and also taught me how to do it. Well, online, I don't get any practice doing it.

00:11:44 **Lani**

Yeah, absolutely. It makes so much sense.

00:11:46 **Nick**

Yeah. I mentioned regrets in your educational pathway, but do you have any regrets with your career path?

00:11:54 **Lani**

No, I really enjoy where I'm at. I think hopefully I'm contributing in the way I'm supposed to be to help you all, help my student athletes develop and grow and be able to move on and do very, very well on the next level. That's what I'm here for, this is what we're trying to do, especially with academics because no one's going to be a professional water polo player or swimmer in the sports that we're in.

00:12:19 **Lani**

So, my main goal has always been to support our student athletes and just make sure they get to where they want to be and just to be there every step of the way, even after you leave Mt. SAC. I think that's a huge thing for you all to know that we're there still in the future years. So, yeah, no regrets in that at all.

00:12:38 **Nick**

Yeah, and I feel like having a job where you could help people, like you're saying how before you wanted to help and you weren't sure that's why you're considering becoming a doctor, but you ended up doing coaching and so you help - well now, you help college athletes. And I get what you're saying with helping people, because I feel like morally, that like helps you as a person. So, like even if you just helped one person, you gave someone some advice, I feel like it makes you feel good because you're helping others feel good.

00:13:10 **Lani**

It does. And hopefully, sometimes people lose their way and sometimes they do some things that maybe they wish they wouldn't have done when they're younger. And so, we often hear them coming back and saying, "You know, I really wish I would've listened at that time."

00:13:23 **Lani**

So, there's things like that, that don't really hit you until later on in life. And Lord knows, I probably had that several times when I was growing up, but I think that makes a big difference. And just having you, because you as a person and as an athlete, we feel like you got a good path, you've got a lot of good support, but we just always want you, no matter who it is to know that we're still here.

00:13:45 **Lani**

No matter what you need, we're always going to be here. And I think that's a huge part that a lot of people miss, is that they don't have that support system once they're gone from here. So, that's the thing I think we can help out the most with, is just being that support even when you move forward.

00:13:59 **Nick**

Yeah, I realize that too, because while I'm here, I understand I could go to you for help. But I feel like with how close we've gone over the past two years, even when I'm done with Mt. SAC and I've moved on, I'll still feel comfortable coming back and asking for your advice or with help with something, even though I'm not currently engaged with you - I still feel comfortable to come back.

00:14:23 **Lani**

Yeah, absolutely. The door will always be open for you.

00:14:26 **Nick**

I feel like that's how water polo is at Mt. SAC too, because you and your husband, Marc, both of you guys, I feel like have helped me a lot through Mt. SAC and will continue to help throughout. Well, I don't even know how long, but I know that there's going to times I'm going to need to come back or like letter of recommendations or just advice in general, I feel like both of you guys will have enough insight to help lead me the right way.

00:14:53 **Lani**

I hope so, or we might be coming to you at some point. So, we'll see.

00:14:57 **Nick**

So, when I was coming into Mt. SAC, I mentioned earlier, I wasn't exactly sure what career I wanted to take. But I had an idea that I enjoyed medical and I think I would like to pursue it. So, at the time, I went ahead and I picked kinesiology as my major, and I wasn't exactly sure what that would entail, but I saw it would have like biology courses, chemistry courses, anatomy courses.

00:15:23 **Nick**

So, like a wide variety of science. So, as I'm pretty much going into like my second year at Mt. SAC, I kind of realized I wanted to become a physician assistant, and doing more research, I realized that kinesiology would actually like work for someone trying to be a physician assistant.

00:15:39 **Nick**

So, I actually got my AA in kinesiology here at Mt. SAC and I plan to get my bachelor's after also in kinesiology. And the reason I chose being a physician assistant, I get like questions when I tell people that. They're like, "Oh, why don't you want to be a doctor or what's keeping you from going that route?"

00:15:56 **Nick**

And I think, well, first of all, what's really nice is it's less schooling. So, I don't have to go to school for eight-plus years. Most PA programs are two years and that's about it. And what's nice about being a physician assistant is it's a lot more flexibility compared to doctors because after eight years of school, you are only really specialized in one field and you know a lot about that field and that's great, but you can't really switch over.

00:16:24 **Nick**

If you start working, you decide this isn't really what you want to do, you're kind of like stuck with it unless you want to go back to school to go to a different field. But with being a physician assistant, it's a little different. And I think right now the path I want to take is when I first be employed, I would like to work in an emergency room.

00:16:42 **Nick**

I've heard that it's high stress, and I feel like it would be a lot of action, so it would keep me entertained. But also, since it's so stressful, I don't know how long I could put up with doing that as my job. So, I would like to start my career in doing emergency room. And then from there, transition out. Where I'd like to transition to, I'm not sure at this point, but there's a lot of different fields I could work with.

00:17:03 **Nick**

Like kids, elderly people, I could work with cosmetics. I don't know where to go yet, but that's what the two years of PA school will teach me and will give me a little bit of each category. And from there, I could figure out what I enjoy and also what categories I don't enjoy and I would not like to go into.

00:17:23 **Lani**

That's really interesting. So, after Mt. SAC, we're going where?

00:17:29 **Nick**

So, transferring to Cal Poly, Pomona for fall of '21. From there, so after I finish my two years at Cal Poly and get my bachelor's, I'm not really going to be picky with which PA school - I'm going to apply to a bunch and hopefully, I could get into any of them. And the reason I chose Cal Poly is because they're the only nearby college that has like a linkage program with a PA school.

00:17:51 **Nick**

They have a connection to Western Medical. And if I take certain courses at Cal Poly, it'll basically let me skip a step in the application process. So, to get in, there's ... it guarantees me an interview, which not everyone gets. Out of all the applications, they're going to cut out big chunk of them, and then the next step is they're going to interview the people applying to the school.

00:18:14 **Nick**

So, going to Cal Poly and taking the required courses and following that for my educational path, that'll basically give me a little bit of a head start and guarantee me an interview and increase my chances of getting in there.

00:18:26 **Lani**

Okay. That's really interesting. I had no idea about that. So, kinesiology is the study of movement. So, what I didn't realize is that you could also be a kinesiology major and be a nurse. You can be a doctor or want to become a doctor and not do pre-med. You could do kinesiology, because you can switch your major later. You'd be a radiologist. So, there's a lot of different fields with PA being one of those fields, which is really cool, cool to learn.

00:18:53 **Nick**

Yeah, and that's another thing that's so nice about majoring in kinesiology, is it still keeps me open for other options. If becoming a physician assistant doesn't necessarily work out, there's other medical jobs I could try and get with my degree. So, that's definitely really helpful.

00:19:11 **Lani**

Yeah, that is good too. And then if you didn't want to go into medicine, let's say you're like me and said, you know what? I don't want to do it anymore, there are some other options there too, which is also nice.

00:19:20 **Nick**

Yeah. So, outside of becoming a physician assistant, another plan that I kind of am keeping in the back of my mind, I haven't done too much research into it yet - but I just kind of have it sitting there just knowing that that's another pathway I could take. And as you mentioned, it would be nursing.

00:19:34 **Nick**

And I understand Mt. SAC has a nursing program. Since I'm more focused on physician assistant, I haven't really looked into it or gone to take the classes for it, but I know it's there and if that is what I decide I want to do and physician assistant doesn't work out, then I can always come back to Mt. SAC and do my nursing program over here.

00:19:54 **Lani**

Yeah, there's also research. You could do like kinesiology research or sports medicine research. Kinesiology has a lot to do with sports medicine. You know, our athletic trainers, a lot of them started off as kinesiology majors. I was looking up how many different career paths there were. And I think I found about 26 so far that could be done just with a kinesiology AA.

00:20:16 **Lani**

Obviously, there's certain ones that need more certifications or a bachelor's degree, but just knowing that there's so many different paths you could take can be very helpful, especially if you change your mind along the way, you're not wasting time.

00:20:30 **Nick**

That's what I've been focused on. Trying to take all the right classes and not waste any time. So, I've already gone ahead and I look forward ... like the class I have to take for the linkage program from Cal Poly, those aren't required for the kinesiology degree, but I'm going to like try to weave those in there so I could get both done at the same time.

00:20:53 **Lani**

Yeah, that's outstanding. Yeah, you definitely don't want to waste valuable resources. I mean, time is a valuable resource in itself, but there's obviously, you know, there's money is a huge resource, so you don't want to waste that either. But yeah, it's good. The path you're taking is really, I think very positive.

00:21:09 **Nick**

And even here at Mt. SAC, like the math class I'm taking right now, it's not needed for me to take right now, but this is going to be a class I'm going to have to take some time before I get my bachelor's. So, I figured I had the space open to my schedule to do so right now, so I went ahead and I squeezed it in. And as I mentioned earlier, math is ... I feel like I learned pretty well online learning with math. So, I feel like this is a good time for me to take it too.

00:21:35 **Lani**

And you've been probably one of the most successful online students we had as far as the sophomores go. So, I think that's saying a lot about you to be able to adjust and to do as well as you're doing is outstanding.

00:21:48 **Nick**

Yeah. I think a big part of that is motivation. I have something to motivate me and that's with me knowing that I would like to be a physician assistant and knowing that I have to go to PA school and I have to keep my grades up for that. So, that's helped me maintain my motivation pretty well, I think. Because if I didn't know what I wanted to do after Mt. SAC, I feel like I'd be very unmotivated and it'd be a struggle to keep up with my classes. Because I wouldn't have any reason to be pushing myself for such a good GPA.

00:22:16 **Lani**

Right. No, that's very true. I think that's hard on a lot of people that maybe don't know what they want to do at this point. But yeah, if they can kind of focus and figure out, or at least maybe hone it into a couple different things, then that makes it a little bit better.

00:22:30 **Nick**

Yeah, and especially with going to a community college, I feel like there's a lot of people here who they're not exactly sure what path they want to take and that's why they're here. So, they could figure that out for themselves.

00:22:41 **Lani**

Right, no that's true. And there's some that are very motivated and they know exactly which way they want to go. And they're trying to save their time and money and get things done. And our classes are able to do that, which has been good: small classes, we get them in - especially being athletes, you guys get the priority. So, that helps out a lot too.

00:22:59 **Nick**

Yeah, definitely. That's definitely something I'm going to miss out on having priority when I go to Cal Poly because they don't have a team over there, so I have no team to play for.

00:23:09 **Lani**

I know, that's going to be so different for you. Well, a different team, your physician's assistant team. You have to find a team somehow.

00:23:17 **Nick**

I don't think they give priority registration, sadly.

00:23:23 **Christina**

Transferring from Mt. SAC to university to earn your bachelor's degree has countless benefits and opens the door to many opportunities. Learn how to do so with an associates of arts or associate of science transfer degree like we highlighted in this episode by using transfer resources, such as the counseling department or the transfer center. Just go to mtsac.edu/counseling or mtsac.edu/transfer.

00:23:50 **Christina**

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