PURDUE UNIVERSITY NORTHWEST

College of Engineering and Sciences

Letter of Support for the Formation of the Department of Human Health and Kinesiology

March 12, 2026

Dear Integrative Human Health Faculty Colleagues,

I am writing in support of the proposal to establish a new Department of Human Health and Kinesiology at Purdue University Northwest. This proposed reorganization represents a natural and positive step in the continued development of academic programs that address the growing demand for education and training in human health–related fields.

The Integrative Human Health (IHH) program has experienced significant growth since it was first administratively housed within the Department of Biological Sciences in 2017. Over the past several years, faculty and leadership in the Department of Biological Sciences have played a key role in supporting the program's development. Through their efforts, the program has strengthened its curriculum, expanded its faculty expertise, and increased enrollment to more than 120 students, with projections for continued growth in the coming years.

During this time, the program has also expanded its academic offerings, including the recent addition of a Kinesiology concentration and the development of a proposed Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology. These developments reflect both strong student interest and the increasing workforce demand in areas such as exercise science, public health, athletic training, and rehabilitation. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects continued growth in several of these professions, reinforcing the importance of providing high-quality educational pathways in these fields.

The Department of Biological Sciences deserves recognition for its foundational role in nurturing the Integrative Human Health program. The biology faculty provided administrative oversight, mentorship, and institutional support that enabled the program to develop its identity and demonstrate its potential. In many ways, the program has been carefully cultivated within the Department of Biological Sciences. The proposal to establish an independent department marks the next stage in its evolution, allowing the program to expand its reach and pursue new opportunities.

Creating a Department of Human Health and Kinesiology will strengthen the university's academic structure and enhance the visibility of programs focused on human health, wellness, and performance. A dedicated department will provide a clearer academic home for students and faculty, support program development, and enable the university to communicate its strengths in these rapidly growing fields more effectively.

The establishment of this department will also help Purdue University Northwest remain competitive with peer and regional institutions that already offer departments or schools dedicated to kinesiology, health sciences, or related disciplines. By aligning our organizational structure with emerging areas of student demand and workforce needs, we position the university to expand its academic portfolio and better serve our students and the broader community.

Importantly, the proposal outlines a cost-effective approach that builds upon existing faculty expertise, facilities, and instructional resources. This makes the transition both practical and strategically aligned with the university's long-term goals.

In summary, the proposed Department of Human Health and Kinesiology reflects the success and maturity of a program that has grown steadily under the guidance of the Department of Biological Sciences. The Department of Biological Sciences played an important role in developing the program and providing the support necessary for it to grow. At this stage, the program has reached a level of maturity that allows it to develop as an independent academic unit.

As dean, my priority is to ensure that academic programs are positioned to add the greatest value to the institution and best support student success. I therefore support the creation of this department and believe it should reside within the academic structure that most effectively advances Purdue University Northwest's strategic goals, strengthens program visibility, and supports continued growth in human health–related fields.

For these reasons, I support the formation of the Department of Human Health and Kinesiology and believe it will strengthen Purdue University Northwest's ability to educate future leaders in human health and related fields.

I appreciate the thoughtful work that the faculty have invested in developing this proposal and look forward to the continued growth of these programs at Purdue University Northwest.

Sincerely,

José Rafael Sánchez
Dean | College of Engineering and Sciences
Purdue University Northwest

cc:

Marie T. Mora | Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Curtis Creighton | Chair, Department of Biological Sciences