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# KAREN PETERS

DEPUTY ATHLETIC DIRECTOR/SENIOR WOMAN ADMINISTRATOR



If you make it out to a University of Portland sporting event this fall, maybe a volleyball game at the Chiles Center or a soccer match at Merlo Field, say hello to Karen Peters. UP's Deputy Athletic Director will be glad to catch you up on Pilot sports—past, present, and future.

Approaching 17 years on The Bluff, Peters is a go-to resource for Pilot athletics. In May and June, she led a 50-day celebration of notable women and teams in Pilot sports history to mark the 50th anniversary of Title IX. She'll be among the first to celebrate when the UP women's rowing program she helped launch 10 years ago moves into its new boathouse on the Willamette River. And Peters is proud to talk about the University's ramped-up academic and mental health support for student-athletes.

Just don't ask her to rank her favorite Pilot squad or an all-time winning moment. "I tell our athletes when I meet them in the fall—I don't have a favorite team," Peters says. "How can you? They're all just so great."

In addition to serving as lead sport administrator for the Pilots' 16 varsity programs, Peters is vice-chair of the NCAA Nominating Committee. In 2013, she was recognized as Women Leaders Division I Administrator of the Year.

"My jobs have always been a combination of the logistical and the personal. I like to build systems and work side-by-side with our coaches and staff to maximize how we support our student-athletes," Peters says.

"We want our student-athletes to have a meaningful experience in the classroom, a competitive experience in their sport, and an opportunity to be a part of the larger UP community. The academic accomplishments of our kids have been remarkable, especially facing the challenges of the last couple of years."

The annual turnover of graduating student-athletes and new recruits always puts a fresh spin on the demanding work. Peters says, "I am very conscious of the role I play" as a role model for young women, particularly as a working mom whose son has grown up on UP's campus. She is especially fond of the "teaching and learning" pillar of the University's mission.

"We get to be around students when they're figuring out who they are. Watching our student-athletes graduate—seeing their development personally, academically and in their sport—that's a rewarding part of our jobs."