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Cameron Smith

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Student-Athlete Finds that Academics Aid Her On-field Performance

Makayla Fick chose UM exercise science program because of the range of opportunities it offers

FEBRUARY 22, 2022 BY CAMERON SMITH



Makayla Fick, a distance runner for the Ole Miss women's cross country and track teams, has used information she learned in her exercise science classes to help her perform better in competition. The sophomore from California chose the university because of opportunities to challenge herself and grow academically and athletically. Photo by Joshua McCoy/Ole Miss athletics

OXFORD, Miss. – Makayla Fick, a sophomore in the **University of Mississippi's** exercise science program and a student-athlete with the Ole Miss women's nationally ranked **cross country** and **track teams**, discovered early in her college career that her major and her sport have a lot in common.

The information Fick has learned as an exercise science major concerning the body and how to help it recover quickly from exercise help her perform better on the track.

"I think that my sport helps me to remain mentally grounded and reminds me to keep things simple," she said. "Both characteristics are crucial for learning new information within exercise science and for test-taking."

Fick runs the 5-kilometer and 6-kilometer events for cross country and the 800-meter and 1,500-meter for track and field. The Ole Miss women's track and field team tied a program record by **moving up to No. 7** in this week's rankings compiled by the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association.

"Makayla is certainly a really hard worker and someone who is very disciplined in her endeavors," said Ryan Vanhoy, associate head cross country coach and assistant track and field coach for the distance squad at Ole Miss. "As an example, right now she is working back from an injury that has kept her from running for a few months. Her dedication to cross-train – swim, bike, etc. – to stay fit while unable to run has been impressive.

"She's also someone who is very reliable and a really good teammate who would be willing to do anything to help out our program. Even through some ups and downs in her first two years, she has maintained a positive outlook and great attitude to go along with her work ethic."

Fick's passion for sports, research and how the body functions are why she chose to major in exercise science. She said her mom inspired her to choose a major in exercise science.

"She had me reading anatomy books from a young age, which originally sparked my interest in the field," Fick said.

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Civil Engineering Professor Receives Most-Cited Paper Award

OXFORD, Miss. – Peer recognition is a rewarding experience for anyone, but University of Mississippi researcher Amir Mehrara Molan was elated when an article he co-authored recently received the Most Cited Paper Award at the 102nd Transportation Research Board meeting in the nation's capital. The International Journal of Transportation Science and Technology presented the civil engineering

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Young Alumna Gives Back to School of Accountancy

OXFORD, Miss. – Stephanie Jennings Teague, of Chicago, sees her commitment of \$100,000 to the Patterson School of Accountancy's new building at the University of Mississippi as a means of saying "thank you." "It is a way to show a small token of my appreciation to Ole Miss, the faculty and staff, and the accounting

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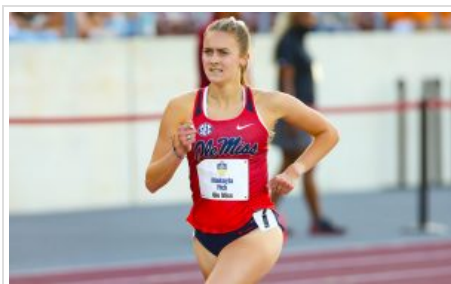
U.S. inflation roller coaster prompts fresh look at long-ignored money supply By Michael S. Derby NEW YORK – The amount of money sloshing around the U.S. economy shrank last year for the first time on record, a development that some economists believe bolsters the case for U.S. inflation pressures continuing to

"I chose Ole Miss because I wanted to attend a college where I knew I would be challenged academically and athletically."

The native of Murrieta, California, also ventured across the country to Oxford because it provided opportunities to grow more as a person.

"I wanted to use college as a way to see different parts of the country," she said.

Exercise science is one of the top five academic majors at UM. The exercise science program prepares students for a broad range of health and fitness-related professions through a curriculum that focuses on the applied science of exercise physiology, biomechanics, motor control and the psychology of exercise behavior.



Ole Miss student-athlete Makayla Fick competes in the 2021 SEC Outdoor Championships. Photo courtesy Ole Miss athletics

Fick's career aspiration, inspired by her love of physical activity, is to pursue occupational therapy, but she is not committed to a specific path yet.

"Once I get into my core courses within my major, I will start to narrow down what I would like to do after my time here at Ole Miss," she said.

Fick considers exercise science an umbrella major because there is a plethora of career options that comes from the field. She said the level of opportunity and professions that come with this major are almost limitless.

Some **career options in the field of exercise science** include athletic trainer, exercise and sport physiologist, professor, medical doctor and physical therapist.

The School of Applied Sciences also has a 4+1 program where students can receive their undergraduate and graduate degrees in five years.

"I will be pursuing this program because I think it is a great opportunity within the HERSM (health, exercise science and recreation management) department at Ole Miss," Fick said.

Kris Brasher, instructor of therapeutic recreation and the internship coordinator for the sport and recreation administration program, said Fick is "the epitome of a truly well-rounded student" who excels in his classes.

"She has shown that she is able to juggle academics and athletics in what, from the outside looking in, an almost effortless manner," Brasher said. "Her smiling face, great attitude and consistent attention and participation in class makes her an absolute joy to work with."

"Makayla is one of a kind, and I know without a doubt that she is going to do big things with her life."

For more information about programs in health, exercise science and recreation management at UM, email Brasher at kbrash1@olemiss.edu or visit <https://hesm.olemiss.edu>.

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