Since 1795, Union College has been a leader and innovator in liberal arts and engineering. Our beautiful campus in Schenectady, N.Y. is home to more than 2,100 students, who enjoy a warm, welcoming community, personal engagement with faculty and stellar opportunities for research, international study and service learning. Our student-athletes, who enrich their Union experience through competition and teamwork, are an integral part of our community.
Female student-athletes have been making history at Union College for four decades, ever since the first women set foot on this historic campus in 1970. Quickly distinguishing themselves in a variety of sports, the Union Dutchwomen have displayed the discipline and determination that are hallmarks of great athletes.

Union’s comprehensive athletic program gives women the opportunity to achieve their personal best while competing among other top athletes at colleges throughout the Northeast and across the country.

Supported by coaches, faculty, classmates and teammates, the Dutchwomen balance their athletic and academic commitments with an array of community service and campus activities. And, in keeping with the NCAA Division III philosophy of promoting a holistic education, Union is dedicated to developing students who are well-rounded.

“Sports at Union gave me an edge, an opportunity to be part of a team and develop leadership skills, which I continue to draw on in my professional and personal life.”

MARISA M. SILVERI ’95, PH.D.
- VOLLEYBALL
- BEHAVIORAL NEUROSCIENTIST • ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF PSYCHIATRY, HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL
- ASSOCIATE RESEARCH PSYCHOLOGIST, NEUROIMAGING CENTER, MCLÉAN HOSPITAL
Union sponsors one varsity team at the Division I level and 12 in NCAA Division III. The large majority of Dutchwomen teams compete in the Liberty League along with Clarkson, Hamilton, William Smith, RPI, University of Rochester, St. Lawrence, Skidmore and Vassar. Ice hockey competes with other Division I programs in ECAC Hockey, including Brown, Clarkson, Colgate, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, Princeton, RPI, St. Lawrence, Quinnipiac and Yale.

The women’s soccer, lacrosse, volleyball, basketball and softball teams have competed in the NCAA Tournament. Swimming and diving, track and field and cross country also have sent qualifiers to the national championships.

Women’s teams have represented the College in the NCAA tournament nearly 40 times.

13 varsity sports for women
36 wins by the volleyball team in 2008, setting a school record for single season wins by any team in Union’s 150+ year history of team sports

25% of female students compete in intercollegiate athletics at Union

3.2 Average GPA for women’s sport programs during terms in which they are competing

1 NCAA national champion, Julie Benker (O’Brien) ’93 in the 100 meter backstroke

Union’s first female All-American, Courtney Lynch ’89, graduated as the College’s all-time leading scorer in women’s lacrosse.

Nearly 30 female student-athletes have been named All-Americans.

Union has recruited, trained and graduated female student-athletes who have been among the most competitive in the nation. Union women’s basketball, field hockey, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming and diving, track and field and volleyball have produced All-Americans.

Two-time Liberty League Player of the Year and Academic All-American Julie Gawronski ’06 steps up to bat at Alexander Field.

“Even with three seasons of sports, I was able to study abroad because of the flexibility of our trimester schedule. In the winter, I spent four weeks on a mini-term in Paris, where I studied at the Louvre. At Union, I have time to study, compete and have a life beyond school and athletics.”

ALLISON CUOZZO ’10
- SOCCER, INDOOR TRACK, LACROSSE
- PRESIDENT, STUDENT-ATHLETE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
- ALL-AMERICAN
- WATSON FELLOWSHIP NOMINEE

9 women have been inducted into the Union College Athletics Hall of Fame for their performances and contributions to their teams.
PLAY BY PLAY
TRACKING TOP UNION MOMENTS

1970
Women admitted to Union, which had been all-male since its founding in 1795.

1974
The tennis team debuts April 4, 1974, becoming the first Union women’s sport to play a varsity event.
Softball wins the first game played in program history, at Siena.

1975
Lacrosse debuts.
Volleyball wins its first match in program history.
Softball wins the first game played in program history, at Siena.

1981
Cross country’s first season features a win at the Capital District Meet, hosted by Siena.

1982
Soccer kicks off, and the first goal in program history is scored at Colgate.
Outdoor track and field’s inaugural year highlight is a 9th place finish by Janice Glidden in the Pentathlon at the NCAA Championships.

1983
Swimming has six New York state qualifiers in its debut season.
Indoor track and field begins, with second place finishes in the Union and Plattsburgh meets.

1988
Women’s athletics celebrates its first female All-American when Courtney Lynch is named to the NCAA 2nd Team All-American list for field hockey.
The swimming and diving team becomes the first Union women’s program to send multiple qualifiers to the NCAA Championships.

1991
Robin Romer ’92 (Chudy) is the first player in Union women’s basketball history to join the 1,000 point club, scoring 1,738 points in her career. In 2002, she becomes the first woman to be inducted in Union Athletics’ inaugural class of Hall of Fame nominees.

ABOVE: With offense from players like Kelsey Powers ’11, the Union College field hockey program increased its number of wins for five straight seasons.
“I had a lot of growing up to do when I arrived at Union. Thankfully, I learned a lot from my older teammates. They showed me how to juggle sports with a demanding course load. The most valuable thing being a student-athlete taught me was to genuinely enjoy what I do.”

NICOLE (SILVESTRI) KELLY ’95, PH.D.
- VOLLEYBALL, SOFTBALL
- ASTROPHYSICIST, RESEARCH ASSOCIATE, UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

“I was in the Union pre-med program. My athletic experiences and interaction with trainers on campus played a big part in my career choice, orthopedic surgery and sports medicine. The coaches were great role models for sportsmanship and leadership.”

DOROTHY “DOT” SCARPINATO ’80, M.D.
- FIELD HOCKEY, BASKETBALL, SOFTBALL
- CO-CHIEF OF ORTHOPEDICS, NORTH SHORE PLAINVIEW HOSPITAL, LONG ISLAND

1993
Julie Benker (O’Brien) ’93 wins the 100-meter backstroke at the NCAA Swimming and Diving Championships, becoming the first female student-athlete to bring a national title to Union. The team finishes 8th in the nation — the highest in history for that program. It goes on to win the state meet the following season.

Crew launches; Union women win first race against William Smith at home

Women’s ice hockey begins, competing in Division III. Five years later, the program transitions to Division I, becoming the first and only Union women’s team to compete at that level.

Dutchwomen soccer receives its first bid to the NCAA Championship, beginning the program’s perennial presence in the national tournament.

2002
The Union College Athletics Hall of Fame is created to honor outstanding former student-athletes, coaches, administrators and alumni. Four years later, the first female coach is honored; Susan Basnett was recognized for eight seasons at the helm of the women’s and men’s swimming and diving programs.

With 32 wins, Dutchwomen softball becomes the first team in Union Athletics history to surpass 30 wins in a single season.

Erika Eisenhut is named a national finalist for the NCAA Woman of the Year Award. The following year, Eisenhut wins the Woody Hayes National Scholar-Athlete Award.

2007
Allison Guzzo ’10 becomes Union’s first female student-athlete to qualify for the NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships. Guzzo returns to the national championships the following season, placing 2nd in the 800 meter dash and becoming the first two-time All-American in Union women’s track and field.

2008
Volleyball wins 36 matches, setting the school record for wins in a single season by any team in the illustrious history of Union athletics, which began in the mid 1800s.
Our athletes practice, compete and train in top-notch campus facilities, from various fields, courts and tracks to the Messa Rink at Achilles Center. Achilles is also home to the Travis J. Clark ’00 Strength Training Facility, a world-class workout space, opened in 2008 exclusively for Union student-athletes. Alumni Gymnasium houses the Breazzano Fitness Center, which opened in 2006, and a 25-meter swimming pool. The beautiful Union Boathouse, completed in 1998, is home to women’s crew. It is located minutes away on the Mohawk River. In addition, Union continues to update and renovate its facilities to provide a home field advantage for all of our student-athletes.
“My professors are encouraging and understanding. If I have to miss class because of a game, they meet with me and review material. I was nervous about balancing a tough academic schedule with my sports, but I’ve learned to manage my time. Being a competitive athlete makes me a better student.”

MARY DONOHUE ’12
• SOCCER, BASKETBALL

The beautiful hardwood court at the Viniar Center hosted its first basketball game in 2004. The center has a seating capacity of approximately 1,000.

“The new Travis J. Clark ’00 Strength Training Facility has greatly helped our program. Having our own designated space to train has made us a physically strong team, and it showed in our success this season. We beat three ranked teams.”

ANNE HANSON ’09
• FIELD HOCKEY

“The Viniar Center is a second home. It’s a special place to play, and a great place for friends and fans to watch our games. I love the atmosphere at the Breazzano Fitness Center. The flat screen TVs keep me going during offseason training. There are enough treadmills for my teammates and me — there are 14 of us — to run side-by-side during early morning workouts.”

LEAH PEPE ’11
• BASKETBALL
The women’s athletics program at Union has become one of the strongest overall programs in the country, with several teams ranked in the top 20 nationally each year.

The progress made on this campus over the last 40 years has been immeasurable, and the overall student-athlete experience for our women and the success they have achieved in the classroom, in the community and on the playing fields have been nothing short of remarkable.

With your assistance, I am confident that we can achieve even greater levels of success. Please consider joining me in support of these programs so we can continue to provide a first-class experience for the young women who make all of us proud when they compete on behalf of our College.

JIM McLAUGHLIN ’93
- DIRECTOR OF UNION COLLEGE ATHLETICS

As our women’s athletics program has made significant strides in recent years, I’ve seen first hand the positive impact intercollegiate athletics has on our female students.

My daughter Keri’s participation as a student-athlete was one of the highlights of her Union experience. Beyond the pure joy of competing against the top athletes and programs in the country, competitive sports gave her valuable life lessons, such as the importance of a strong work ethic, time management skills and teamwork. In recognition of my daughter’s experience and of my experience as an avid spectator, alumnus and proud parent, my wife, Colleen, and I have created three endowments and challenges supporting women’s athletics at Union.

The success of our program depends upon the connection to our graduates, friends and fans. Only with your ongoing support can we enhance our athletic opportunities, carry on the tradition of excellence set by women who have competed for Union—and reach even greater heights within our league and at the national level.

FRANK L. MESSA ’73
- CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND PARENT OF KERI MESSA ’08
Since the beginning of women’s athletics at Union, the Dutchwomen have established themselves on the national stage:

- Academic All-American
- All-American
- All-ECAC
- All-Liberty League
- American Women’s Hockey Coaches Association Scholar
- D3hoops.Com All-East Player Of The Year
- ECAC Division III Robbins Scholar-Athlete
- Liberty League Player of The Year
- NCAA National Champion
- NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship
- NCAA Woman of The Year Finalist
- Patty Kazmaier Finalist
- Woody Hayes National Scholar-Athlete

“Even in the infancy of Union’s athletic programs for women, as student-athletes, we gained much from that experience. Now, I hope that as alumnae, other women will give back to women’s athletics at Union just as it has given us a sound foundation for our careers and life after graduation.”

LOUISE DUNN ’76, ESQ.
- FIELD HOCKEY, BASKETBALL, LACROSSE, OUTDOOR TRACK AND FIELD
- ATTORNEY, ALLSTATE INSURANCE COMPANY