



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2025 PACIFIC NORTHWEST UNIVERSITY BUTLER-HANEY HALL

*Unite For
 Good*

FOTI PANAGAKOS PNWU SCHOOL OF DENTAL MEDICINE



This week's program has us traveling to Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences to hear a presentation by Dr. Foti Panagakos about their new School of Dental Medicine, inaugural class, and a tour of their state-of-the-art dental simulation lab.

The mission of Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences is to educate and train health professionals with an emphasis on service to rural and underserved communities, primarily in the Northwest. Established in 2005 by a group of visionary community leaders, it opened its doors within the College of Osteopathic Medicine in 2008 and has grown to include a Master of Arts in Medical Sciences (2021), School of Physical Therapy (2022) School of Occupational Therapy (2023) and School of Dental Medicine (2025).

Dr. Panagakos has been the Founding Dean of the School of Dental Medicine at PNWU since May 2022. He received his DMD from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (now Rutgers University School of Dental Medicine) and his Ph.D. in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (now the Rutgers University Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences) in 1992. He received his Master's in Education from Seton Hall University in 1999 and his Master's in Business Administration from Lehigh University in 2007.

Prior to coming to PNWU, Dr. Panagakos was a full-time faculty member at New Jersey Dental School for 13 years, holding several administrative positions, including Group Practice Administrator, Director of Environmental Safety, and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs; all while maintaining a private dental practice in Westfield and Newark, NJ. In June 2005, he joined the Colgate Palmolive Oral Care Clinical Research Department as an Associate Director. He worked at Colgate until September 2017, serving as the Global Director of Scientific Affairs from 2010 until he departed. In August 2018, Dr. Panagakos joined the West Virginia University School of Dentistry as the Associate Dean for Research, where he led the institution's research efforts and served as interim dean from July 2020 until May 2021.

He has authored or co-authored over 90 peer-reviewed scientific research articles and co-edited three dental science textbooks. His areas of research interest include the role of inflammation in oral and overall health, the impact of nutrition on oral health and wellness, the impact of improved oral health on overall wellness, and dental-medical integration.

We will begin the meeting at Butler Haney Hall with lunch and a presentation, followed by a tour at the MultiCare Learning Center.

FUTURE PROGRAMS

October 23rd – Vocational Scholarship Awards
October 30th – Dr. David Knight, School Finance
November 6th – Angelena Campobasso, Arts Washington Tribal Cultural Affairs
November 13th – Command Sgt. Maj. Anton Ruffin, Veterans Day Program

OCTOBER SECOND CHANCE SOCIAL

Wednesday, October 15th
Second Street Grill
5pm to 6pm

Mark your calendar and join us for some great bites, the best conversation, and a favorite drink in hand. Rotary's covering the snacks, you bring the good vibes.

YOUTH EXCHANGE INFORMATION NIGHT



October 13, 2025 • 6:30pm – 8:00pm
Selah Civic Center, Legion Room
216 S 1st Street, Selah
Bring your parents!
RSVP to Jheri Ketcham 509-307-9097

rotary
youth
exchange



REVIEW

This week was the culmination of our month-long recognition of National Hispanic Heritage Month. There was incredible energy with our program speaker Jackie Cruz, the Davis High School Mariachi Band who serenaded us with some incredible music, and Lupita Carrillo's inspirational message celebrating the rich traditions of Hispanic culture. President Sheri took a few minutes to welcome our guests before turning the microphone over to Rodrigo Renteria-Valencia for Jackie's introduction.

Jackie's life changing role came with the portrayal of Marisol "Flaca" Gonzales on the Netflix series *Orange Is the New Black* for seven seasons. Her journey to stardom was just as compelling as her on-screen presence. Born in Queens, NY, her early years were spent with her mother in the Dominican Republic. She knew from the age of six, what she wanted to do after seeing "The Bodyguard" with her mom; she wanted to be just like Whitney Houston. Her mom told her, "Let's see what you've got." She had enough and began music, dance and acting classes. At the age of 15, they moved to Hollywood where they lived in a 400 square foot studio apartment. Her bus ride to school at the Hamilton Music Academy took an hour and a half. In the evenings she worked at a club where she befriended a 16-year-old girl who had her own apartment and car (funded by her mom) and was doing everything Jackie wanted to do. She invited Jackie to live with her. Her mom allowed her to go "adulthood." Eventually the friend's mom stopped funding them and they became homeless. At the age of 17 Jackie's life changed when her friend decided to race another vehicle causing a near-fatal car accident. Jackie was thrown from the car resulting in brain surgery and a coma for 72 hours. The first time she looked in the mirror was devastating. She couldn't walk; half of her face was paralyzed; she didn't want to live. A small girl she met at rehab helped her to believe in herself again. Jackie left rehab on her 18th birthday with the attitude that pain isn't the opposite of purpose, sometimes it's the path to it. She went back to Los Angeles and worked hard on her career receiving her SAG card in 2006 after a small role on "The

Shield." Most of her subsequent parts were victim roles; they were stereotypes that never gave the "back" story. At one point she quit acting to focus on a singing career. At the age of 20 a producer said for \$10,000 and a move to Miami he would help her produce her music. She got a loan from her mom and lost it all; it was a scam. She went back to working at a club to pay her mom back. Another music producer told her to move to New York; he helped her with her first EP and music video. It was while working at the restaurant in New York that she found her inspiration for the character in the "Orange is the New Black." The first 2 seasons the pay wasn't great, so she still had to work at the club. The show filmed 7 seasons in 8 years. She loved the role – it wasn't just a victim role, it told the "back" story. It celebrated diversity, empowered women, and gave a platform to Latinas.

The show's success allowed her to buy her first home in L.A. Covid hit and things came to a halt. She and her husband sold their home, packed everything into their car, and drove to Oaxaca, Mexico. They purchased land and built a home. It was a time of reflection, a moment to appreciate life, and to start building a family. Today they are parents to 3-year-old twins and a 3-month-old baby. As a parent, her dreams are much bigger. Why? How can she tell her children to live their dreams, if she doesn't live hers. Her ending message was to fall in love with yourself. Whether you come from a Hispanic, Latino, or any other heritage, it's okay that we all look different and have different skin tones. Don't let anyone tell you your dream is over because you were met with failure - trust in the passion in your heart. It was a wonderful presentation!

While in Yakima, she also traveled to Heritage University and Central Washington University to talk to students there. A special thank you to our sponsors who made it possible for Jackie to visit: CWU, Heritage University, OIC of Washington, and YWCA Yakima.

