



Gil Reeve

President's Report

Let's Achieve Our Vision of Kinesiology as a Unified, Well-Respected Discipline

*By Gil Reeve
Department Chair, Kinesiology
Louisiana State University*

This new year represents a significant milestone for the American Kinesiology Association (AKA). Since its inaugural meeting in February 2007, AKA has established itself as a nationally recognized organization that promotes kinesiology as an academic discipline, unifying our various subdisciplines, and supports the academic departments that focus on the study of physical activity through their programs of teaching/learning, discovery, and engagement. AKA works with member academic departments and affiliated organizations to accomplish its purpose.

In his recent farewell letter to member departments, outgoing President Jerry Thomas outlined AKA accomplishments over the past two years. The list is impressive, including the recruitment of 113 member departments, establishing affiliations with 13 national organizations, conducting two national workshops, appointing an executive director (Dr. Shirl Hoffman), and creating a Web site to inform members of AKA activities and position vacancies in kinesiology. Dr. Jerry Thomas, founding AKA president, and Dr. Roberta Rikli, founding AKA vice president, are to be commended for their leadership in the establishment of the American Kinesiology Association. Also, as Jerry noted previously, AKA would not have been successful without the guidance and generous support of Rainer and Julie Martens through the Human Kinetics Foundation.

The next two years will be critical for AKA. As a new organization, we must determine how best to accomplish our mission and achieve our vision of kinesiology as a unified, well-respected academic discipline. This task will be challenging for AKA given the economic conditions within the country. Universities are being forced to reduce and eliminate degree programs and departments. AKA must establish the services and support activities that will ensure the continued growth of kinesiology departments. We need to determine how to take ad-

What's Inside . . .

Executive Director's Corner . . .	2
AKA and the Future of Kinesiology	4
Interview with Janet Harris and Scott Kretchmar	10
Department Head's Viewpoint	14
Workouts Boost Brain Activity, Test Scores	17
Fitness Requirement at Lincoln Rescinded in Face of Torrent of Criticism.	19
AKA Produces First Position Statement	20
Nittany Lion Researchers Find Cheetah-esque Anatomy in Sprinters	22
AKA Welcomes Four New Board Members and New Officers	24
AKA Career Book Project to Feature Member Departments	24
Member Dept. News	25
Deadline for AKA Scholar Award Nominations Is Near	26

vantage of the emerging national focus on assessment, accreditation, and accountability. AKA is well positioned to be the organization that facilitates kinesiology departments' efforts in responding to demands that they document their effectiveness and efficiencies in delivering their academic programs. Our challenge is to determine the most effective activities and resources needed to promote kinesiology and the academic departments. AKA is only now beginning to establish these ongoing programs and services.

Ultimately, AKA's success in all of its ventures will depend upon our member departments becoming engaged in our efforts not only to sustain but to advance the field of kinesiology. I look forward to working with Dr. Waneen Spirduso, incoming vice president; Dr. Jim Morrow, who is continuing as the AKA secretary; and Dr. Shirl Hoffman and Kim Scott, both of whom manage many of the ongoing activities of AKA, the Board of Directors, and our member departments and affiliates. Please contact me if you have suggestions regarding the programs and services of the American Kinesiology Association.

Executive Director's Corner

Time for AKA to Speak Out on the Matter of Coaches' Salaries?

By Shirl J. Hoffman

A swell of public outrage from academics and social critics is being directed at the lords of banking, those beneficiaries of the public purse whose salaries and bonuses continue to pile up in spite of pernicious unemployment and national economic distress. According to the Economic Policy Institute, top CEO pay has grown from 24 times the pay of average workers in 1965 to 275 times in 2007. Arguments that these executives actually earn their fat salaries by reaping enormous profits for their companies have not carried the day, especially among those impacted by the economic downturn. Calling it "economic injustice," Vice President Biden told officials of the AFL-CIO, "It's just not right, it's just not right, and everybody knows it — it's just not right."

It is surprising —no, make that amazing— that similar cries of injustice haven't come from faculty and staffs of colleges and universities when, in the face of the most severe entrenchment to hit higher education, coaches' salaries continue to escalate. Looking over a recent *USA Today* study on football coaches' salaries, any reasonable person has to conclude that "it's just not right, and everybody knows it." In 2006,



Dr. Shirl J. Hoffman

Board of Directors

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

T. Gilmour Reeve, President
Louisiana State University
tgreeve@lsu.edu

Waneen W. Spirduso, Vice President
The University of Texas-Austin
Spirduso@mail.utexas.edu

James R. Morrow, Jr., Secretary/Treasurer
University of North Texas
jim.morrow@unt.edu

Shirl Hoffman, Executive Director
American Kinesiology Association
shoffman@americankinesiology.org

Kimberley Scott, Business Manager
Human Kinetics
kims@hkusa.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dana Brooks
West Virginia University
dbrooks@wvu.edu

Wojtek Chodzko-Zajko
University of Illinois at
Urbana-Champaign
wojtek@illinois.edu

Jane Clark
University of Maryland
jeclark@umd.edu

Cathy Ennis
University of North Carolina at
Greensboro
c_ennis@uncg.edu

Patty Freedson
University of Massachusetts
psf@kin.umass.edu

Phil Martin
Iowa State University
pemartin@iastate.edu

Virginia Overdorf
William Paterson University
vgo1@optonline.net

David H. Perrin
University of North Carolina at
Greensboro
dhperrin@uncg.edu

Roberta E. Rikli
California State University-Fullerton
rrikli@fullerton.edu

Mary Rudisill
Auburn University
rudisme@auburn.edu

Tom Templin
Purdue University
ttemplin@purdue.edu

Jerry Thomas
University of North Texas
jerry.thomas@unt.edu

Contact AKA c/o Human Kinetics:
P.O. Box 5076
Champaign, IL 61820-2200 U.S.A.
phone (800) 747-4457
or (217) 351-5076, fax (217) 351-2674,
or e-mail kims@hkusa.com

says the report, nine head coaches made at least \$2 million; by 2009 the number had risen to 25. Average pay for head coaches at the 120 institutions in the Football Bowl Subdivision is up 28% over the last two years, up 46% over the last three years. Gator fans might try to justify University of Florida's Urban Meyer's \$4-million annual payoff in cold economic terms by pointing to the benefits football brings to the school, but it isn't quite so easy to justify it in moral terms.

Basketball coaches' salaries have soared in recent years as well, accompanied by similar injustices. University of Kentucky, for example, signed John Calipari to a reported \$31-million contract a few weeks before it fired 20 of its employees in the face of a systemwide budget cut. According to the NCAA, athletic expenses as a whole rose four times faster than overall institutional spending between 2001 and 2003.

Claims that coaches deserve such outlandish incomes because of the money they bring to the university deserve repudiation just as the arguments put forth on Wall Street do. Surely faculty committed to the ideals of social justice would see the injustice in paying a football coach 36% more in salary *each week* than the average household in Florida brings in *each year*. What vision of equity and justice leaves a faculty mum while the football coach at their school is paid nearly 50 times the average salary of professors at their institution?

It isn't merely that these outrageous payoffs come at a time when academic departments and libraries are enduring draconian cuts; in any economic climate, such excess mocks values that have long shaped the soul of the university. When university administrators fail to exercise justice and restraint in their compensation schedules, when they symbolically if not literally declare that commercial interests always trump academic interests, what hope is there for success in teaching students about justice, perspective, and proportion in the programs that they oversee?

For the most part the silence of faculty and staff on the issue has been, well, deafening. Even more so has been the silence of those in kinesiology departments, many of which sponsor academic offerings in the study of sport. If any academic unit in the academy has a responsibility to speak out against such nonsense, one would think it would come from the unit that prepares people for leadership in sports. So far our major professional and academic societies have been silent as well. I have yet to see a position statement on the matter from either the International Association for the Philosophy of Sport, the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport, AAHPERD, or NAKPEHE. All of this makes me wonder if it might be time for an organization that represents, in a broad sense, the interests of all such groups—the AKA—to go on record opposing such injustices. No illusions here, of course, that a position statement by a fledgling organization can stem the mounting tide, but maybe it's time kinesiologists be heard as a matter of principle on the issue. What do you think? Write us at shoffman@americankinesiology.org.

"Claims that coaches deserve such outlandish incomes because of the money they bring to the university deserve repudiation just as the arguments put forth on Wall Street do."

"It isn't merely that these outrageous payoffs come at a time when academic departments and libraries are enduring draconian cuts; in any economic climate, such excess mocks values that have long shaped the soul of the university."



Hal Lawson

The American Kinesiology Association and the Future of Kinesiology

By Hal Lawson, PhD

(Editor's Note: *Kinesiology Today* asked Hal Lawson to offer some observations about AKA and the future of the field of kinesiology. Lawson is well equipped to the task, having had a distinguished career in kinesiology before his current assignment as pro-

fessor of educational administration and policy studies and professor of social welfare at the University at Albany, The State University of New York. He has taught in five universities in the United States and Canada, including three years as program chair at University of British Columbia and eight years as chair of the Department of Kinesiology and Health at Miami University of Ohio. Lawson has been a prolific commentator on the problems besetting the field, and we are delighted to publish here some edited highlights of his essay. (We recommend reading the complete manuscript at www.americkinesiology.org.)

I've been asked to comment on the roles, responsibilities, and missions of the American Kinesiology Association (AKA) within the broader context of the field of kinesiology. What are AKA's opportunities for leadership? Why should leaders and their organizations join the AKA? Why is mere membership insufficient, and what kind of action is needed?

My answers to these questions begin with the following claim: The American Kinesiology Association (AKA) is a professional association. This claim does not deny AKA's scientific and scholarly essence, and it is not intended to invite outdated discipline versus profession debates. Professions and their modern counterparts are organized in specialized professional associations to achieve goals that no one member can achieve alone. One of these is to gain *economic authority*, which is manifested in state-protected and lay-enforced labor markets. The second is to gain *cultural authority* over meaning and experience, i.e., to earn the title "expert" based on advanced knowledge and understanding gained through research, scholarship, and accomplishment. Cultural authority, achieved through the development and widespread recognition of expert scientific and scholarly knowledge, is the basis for claims in support of specialized expertise.

All professions compete for both kinds of authority. At the most fundamental level, then, kinesiologists are involved in an economic enterprise in which the labor market in higher education and in the broader consumer sector is up for grabs. Clearly, the stakes are high.

Mission of AKA

Our mission through the American Kinesiology Association is to see kinesiology mature into adulthood as a leading discipline in academe. In doing so, the AKA wants:

- *to represent and advocate for kinesiology at academic, governmental, and professional events, both nationally and internationally*
- *to serve the needs of kinesiology departments (our members)*
- *to assist all scholarly societies associated with kinesiology*
- *to facilitate communication among academic departments, scholarly societies, and professional associations affiliated with kinesiology*
- *encourage cross-disciplinary study in kinesiology as well as cross-disciplinary application of knowledge to problems in the physical activity field.*
- *promote kinesiology in academe and to the public*

What then, should be the American Kinesiology Association's role, responsibilities, missions, and opportunities for leadership? More specifically, how can the association organize and mobilize its members for collective action focused on a strategic agenda? To borrow from the terms used in a recent Carnegie Foundation report on doctoral education, how can AKA's members be prepared, persuaded, and supported to become stewards of their discipline?

Influencing Public Policy

For the majority of professional associations, a core purpose is to influence public policy. Some obvious examples indicate the importance of public policy. Examples include: (1) required school physical education (PE) programs, along with requirements for certified teachers; (2) requirements and protections for athletic trainers; and (3) emergent initiatives aimed at credentials and state protections for other kinesiology specialists (e.g., sport psychologists, cardiac rehabilitation specialists, ACSM-certified clinical exercise physiologists, etc.).

Today's kinesiology was founded in large part on protected labor markets created for PE teachers in schools. Once huge, these school PE labor markets now are in decline, and the cause can be traced to a decline in public policy support. If school PE is worth saving—in whatever form—then it can become a new target for collective action by professional associations and activist leaders. Another example is indicative of the potential power and influence of AKA, even though the achievement it represents belongs to the American Academy of Kinesiology and Physical Education. The achievement is formal recognition of kinesiology by the National Science Foundation as a legitimate discipline, especially one eligible for NSF funding. This is a signal achievement, and it indicates the kind of public policy work needing (and waiting) to be done.

Producing Public Goods

Professions (and disciplines) develop, operate, and advance in self-interested ways. One way might be considered narrowly selfish—the “take the money and run” approach. The second is forthrightly a moral enterprise, manifests altruism, and is grounded in firm ideals about social responsibility. The operative construct here is *enlightened self-interest*. The profession's members and association are certainly committed to benefiting themselves and the field at large, but not at the expense of their social responsibility. Their social responsibility is to produce tangible and symbolic benefits (“public goods”) to society. Arguably, some kinesiology scholars and many kinesiology practitioners routinely produce such public goods, albeit not always by design, and too frequently, these outcomes are among society's best-kept secrets. *Part of the agenda, then, is making explicit the public goods the field prioritizes and creates and then promoting and marketing them.*

AKA's Opportunities for Leadership

The sketch that follows is based on two realities: (1) Kinesiology is a newcomer; and (2) so is AKA. Each fundamentally depends on the other, and it is not an exaggeration to claim that their destinies are intertwined. *The implication, perhaps obvious, is that these destinies*

Welcome New AKA Members

Calvin College
Department of Health, Physical
Education, Recreation, Dance
and Sport
LeTourneau University
Kinesiology Department
Oakland University
School of Health Sciences
Occidental College
Department of Kinesiology
University of Texas-Arlington
Department of Kinesiology

For a complete list of AKA members,
go to:

[http://www.americkinesiology.org/
ShowArticle.cfm?id=5](http://www.americkinesiology.org/ShowArticle.cfm?id=5)

*“For the majority of
professional associations,
a core purpose is to
influence public policy.”*

can be shaped by outsiders and external forces, or leaders can strive for influence and control over the field's and AKA's destinies. Proactive planning is required in the latter case, while the strategy of being shaped by others requires nothing more or less than "business as usual."

Absent a strategic public policy and social marketing and promotions agenda, which presents the field as a unified front, kinesiology is disadvantaged in the competition for economic authority (labor markets and jobs) and cultural authority (recognized, specialized expertise). *The point is, other fields are organizing and mobilizing strategically, and raw competition among professions in communities and disciplines in colleges and universities is an inescapable reality. Today's economic crisis intensifies the competition and frequently results in a zero-sum game.*

So, when kinesiology, via the AKA, is not organized and mobilized strategically for collective action, every colleague is at least somewhat disadvantaged, and the fate of every member institution stands to be influenced. The situation is akin to picking a team for a pick-up game only to find that the competition has been playing regularly in an organized, top-tier league and has been using paid professionals. When these circumstances prevail, we can't and won't win. Since the consequences of losing the game threaten the entire field, it is in members' enlightened self-interest to get organized and mobilized via AKA to win regularly.

Gaining Consensus on the Essence of Kinesiology

Like the election platforms for political parties in an election year, a larger agenda needs to be set. Amid desirable diversity in the field, what is the unifying narrative that holds it together and makes it invaluable to society's members, especially its elected leaders? Fundamental agreement on the core curriculum is part of this agenda, and the planning discussion at the AKA Orlando conference that led to this agreement no doubt included important narratives. But "the heavy lifting" is not yet done and stands as an urgent priority.

More fundamentally, what value is added by kinesiology, and why does it matter? Who benefits? And what are the returns on public investments? An integrated response to these questions provides the core, defining elements in the field's narrative: a powerful, compelling, and unifying statement that encompasses its missions, purposes, responsibilities, and desired outcomes. One way to approach the problem of achieving unity is by returning to the foundational elements of every profession and academic discipline such as the problems the field solves, the needs it meets, and the aspirations it achieves. Arguably, resources are provided for fields when the problems, needs, and aspirations they address are important, urgent, and, left unsolved, costly to society. Policy leaders increasingly use economic terms when they make hard choices about what and who to support using two calculations: cost-of-failure analysis (the sum total of all costs for not solving the problem or meeting the need) and return-on-investment analysis (the sum total of all savings and even earnings when success is achieved).

"Absent a strategic public policy and social marketing and promotions agenda, which presents the field as a unified front, kinesiology is disadvantaged in the competition for economic authority and cultural authority."

A public health-oriented narrative (in its most expansive sense) for kinesiology offers the most promising opportunities and advantages. It is timely and is responsive to another requirement in today's policy environment. This rational-instrumental frame is not the only way to develop a field's narrative, but it is a good and important alternative, if for no other reason than it focuses on what outsiders, particularly powerful, pragmatic ones, need to know in order to support kinesiology. But the main need remains: The need to identify, describe, and announce to outsiders the value kinesiology adds when the field and its members are duly supported and receive sufficient resources. What are the important problems kinesiology solves, what needs does it address, and what aspirations does it help individuals and society achieve? In short, what is the field's agenda, and how can it unify members and their organizations, enabling collective action?

So, there's work to be done. AKA can and should lead this work, but it cannot and will not succeed without active member engagement and commitment. The work of advancing the field via AKA is not a spectator sport.

Unifying the Professional Associations

The elephant in the room is AAHPERD. What is AKA's relationship with it? Can the agenda proceed without AAHPERD? What are the consequences of ignoring and neglecting the elephant? Is it possible and desirable to join forces on some issues and priorities? Moreover, today's kinesiology has its own subdisciplinary associations. They reflect the field's growth and its endemic specialization and potential fragmentation. Every one is a potential asset and resource. On the other hand, each also is a potential constraint or barrier.

What's to be done with these associations? Who will do the work? How will AKA organize itself to get it done? Who will draft the unifying policy statements and provide a preliminary agenda for joint action? Where will the resources come from to enable face-to-face meetings to resolve differences and reach basic consensus?

All such questions are pragmatic and action-oriented. They indicate the conditions needing to be established for kinesiology, via AKA, to organize and mobilize for collective action. By raising these questions, I hope to contribute to AKA's development and advancement. Only members can answer them.

Finding Resources for Leadership

AKA's ability to help the field become organized and mobilized for collective action depends on leadership. Leadership cannot be vested in one person or body. That said, an executive director and a supporting Executive Committee and Board of Directors can be instrumental in establishing leadership structures and operational processes for the work ahead. But they cannot do this work alone. The work requires experts who know which questions to ask and who have garnered experience in developing a strategic agenda and tailoring leadership designed to ensure success. AKA's members include many gifted and talented people. Mobilizing them is timely, and providing reminders about the changing context is essential.

"What are the important problems kinesiology solves, what needs does it address, and what aspirations does it help individuals and society achieve? In short, what is the field's agenda, and how can it unify members and their organizations, enabling collective action?"

"The work of advancing the field via AKA is not a spectator sport."

The New Context: Risks and Opportunities

The old rules, formulas, and action strategies for higher education are losing their traction. The fast-disappearing context starts with the prestige-driven structure of higher education, one in which Division 1 status in sport also signals top-tier research universities, doctoral programs, and their exceptional faculty and students. Risking oversimplification and even distortion, for most of the 20th century, an implicit but well-understood system developed. In this system, sameness was a core value. Each discipline or professional program was able to model itself after peers in peer institutions. Leaders referenced each other and used each other as program reviewers.

Where professional programs were concerned, accreditation controlled by a professional association was a powerful mechanism for more type-casting and overall isomorphism. Leaders of departments, schools, and programs being accredited were able to persuade university officials that their status as a peer unit, indeed their rise to the head of the class, depended on these new resources. More often than not, they were successful because resources were more plentiful and universities were viewed as encyclopedic.

No more. If the 20th century research university was like a department store, the 21st century one is more like a specialty boutique. It is proceeding with a conflation of private sector economics and public sector planning. This change is occurring rapidly, and it is occurring worldwide. Kinesiology is being shaped profoundly in this new context, and no doubt examples can be provided of how kinesiology's leaders are shaping this context in their home universities. The point is, sameness no longer has the same currency locally or in the national and international university systems. Prestige still matters, but indicators of prestige are changing too. As public fiscal support continues to erode, prestige inheres increasingly in external grants and contracts, and university rankings give expression and legitimacy to this new economic orientation and attendant influences.

In this changing context, it may behoove a local kinesiology department to extol its own values and virtues, essentially making the case that it is unique and special and therefore merits investments. In other words, rather than referencing sameness with peers, the strategy is one of distancing oneself from peers by offering signature quality markers and aspirations. *Whatever benefits this strategy may provide for the local unit, however, it is potentially disastrous for the field at large.*

And it is here that another elephant in the room—departments with names other than kinesiology—merits mention. Although the name game (as I call it) offers local assets, it also produces national headaches for a professional association such as AKA. Multiple names are indicative of a field divided, one without a compelling narrative that unites it and a strategic public policy agenda as a fieldwide priority. Such a “live and let live” may be a good life raft in today's stormy budgetary seas, but it is not a way to get to safer and sounder shores. A field consisting of separate units with different names should not plan too far into the future.

“It may behoove a local kinesiology department to extol its own values and virtues, essentially making the case that it is unique and special and therefore merits investments”.

Concluding Thoughts

When I was an undergraduate student majoring in health and physical education at Oberlin College in the 1960s, kinesiology was a required undergraduate course and nothing more. Today, Kinesiology (with the big K) describes an entire field of inquiry and practice, and it has a new professional association—AKA—with more than 100 member institutions. In the life of universities and disciplines, often described as proceeding at glacial speed, this is a spectacular achievement, and it is one that has occurred in record time.

Amid celebration, an important driver of this amazing accomplishment must be recognized. We managed to get where we are today by individuals and groups organizing themselves and mobilizing for collective action. Although they may not have identified and extolled the public goods Kinesiology produces (or has the potential to produce), a careful reading of the related literature indicates that some of Kinesiology's pioneers were wholly mindful of social responsibility, enlightened self-interest, altruism, and an ethic of service to society's members. *In short, this "toward a discipline movement" and its ultimate successes are indicative of engrained capacity and collective efficacy.* More than this, this successful developmental journey offers powerful lessons learned about how best to organize and mobilize for collective action from this point forward, especially how to develop a unifying agenda (without sacrificing diversity) and an integrative narrative for it.

Setting future directions with the aim of actually doing the work, monitoring progress, and making "in-flight adjustments" is hard work, and it is risky business. The alternative is to do nothing more or less than what already has been done, but the risks are even greater with this alternative. Active direction-setting enables colleagues, via AKA, to actively shape their own destiny. The "stay the course, business-as-usual approach" effectively enables other forces, factors, and actors to shape Kinesiology's future.

The journey toward the future thus needs to begin. Here it might be helpful to listen to leadership guru Jim Collins, who describes the journey from good to great as involving four essential elements. The first is a map of the desired destination; a strategic agenda does this. The second is a compass; it helps us navigate toward a more desirable future. The third is sufficient resources. And the fourth is a "Big, Hairy, Audacious Goal."

One such goal can be derived from the preceding analysis. The goal is to organize and mobilize for collective action to achieve common purposes, produce public goods, and influence public policy in ways that are in Kinesiology's enlightened self-interest. AKA is positioned to facilitate this work. The future of Kinesiology depends on it. Ideally, it is a future that my colleagues will join forces to shape and create.

"The goal is to organize and mobilize for collective action to achieve common purposes, produce public goods, and influence public policy in ways that are in Kinesiology's enlightened self-interest."

An Interview with Janet Harris and Scott Kretchmar

We talked to Scott Kretchmar, professor of kinesiology at Penn State University, and Janet Harris, professor and director of the School of Nutrition and Kinesiology at San Diego State University, about Lawson's perceptions of the challenges confronting the field. Readers are invited to contribute comments, reactions, and differing points of view as well for the next issue of Kinesiology Today.)

Kinesiology Today: Lawson's essay is framed around the perception of AKA as a "professional" association, in essence distinguishing it from "academic associations" such as the American Academy of Kinesiology and Physical Education, the American College of Sports Medicine, The North American Society for Sport History, and most of the other specialized groups in the kinesiology network. Historically, academics have had little interest and experience in the types of political activities that Lawson says are vital to the survival and flourishing of kinesiology. What do you think are the prospects of an organization like AKA mobilizing the field for action?

Kretchmar: In order to avoid impotence in kinesiology, we need an organization, Lawson says, that will command economic and cultural authority, one that will organize us, speak for us, monitor us, and aggressively promote our best interests. He understands that such authority is grounded, at least in part, on sound principles—specifically, on a coherent narrative about what we do and how we can best meet society's needs. He recommends a public health-oriented account, one that promotes movement through a rational instrumental framework. Collective action, according to Lawson, requires a degree of consensus about the essence of kinesiology.

All this sounds well and good. But I think that AKA's responsibilities are even more fundamental than Lawson envisions. Before AKA can move us toward consensus and collective action, it needs to regenerate the conversation itself. Our problem is not so much disagreement as apathy. It is not that too many voices are calling for different things but that so many voices are quiet.

I would argue that we actually have a fair degree of unity in the field. We are, at least tacitly, an allied health department on most



Scott Kretchmar and Janet Harris

*"I would argue that we actually have a fair degree of unity in the field."
—Scott Kretchmar*

campuses. And in many places we are flourishing . . . at least if the number of majors counts as the primary metric for success. But did we move there collectively and intentionally . . . or did we get moved there by students who have found kinesiology to be the major of choice? Perhaps the coherent narrative will come after the fact. We just have to hope that it is the right one.

Harris: I agree with Scott that the main problem is apathy on the part of kinesiology faculty members. Most kinesiology faculty at the 100-plus AKA member institutions probably won't even read the record of this conversation as it appears in *Kinesiology Today*. Among those few who do, most who agree with Lawson that we should rise to the occasion and "do something" will probably shrug and hope that "someone else" will take care of this.

Most university faculty, maybe especially kinesiologists because of the newness of the field, are not trained or experienced in matters of public policy. Instead, they have devoted their careers to teaching, and to some valuable but often rather narrow research topic. For AKA to mobilize for action, I think it will take a few people who are astute and experienced in public policy politics (especially public health policy politics) to lead the way. This might be someone in kinesiology who has been in a position such as a former president of ACSM (in my opinion, ACSM has been rather successful in public public policy arenas), or someone connected closely with the CDC, or with someone active on various prominent boards and panels dealing with health policy. Or perhaps others could learn from them and take lessons from them.

KT: Lawson suggests that unifying the efforts of professional associations in our field is critical for advancing/sustaining the field of kinesiology. He specifically mentions AAHPERD, to which we might also add NAKPEHE and perhaps the American Academy of Kinesiology and Physical Education, both of which concentrate on issues and problems in higher education. Do you agree, and if so, do you have any suggestions as to how this can come about?

Harris: It will be very difficult to "unify" the professional associations. Many overlap in various ways, so there are at least a few areas where joint efforts might proceed, but (rightly so) they all have their own special, extensive agendas. I don't believe that the leadership of these various groups would see enough commonality to forge major unifying links. Most of these other groups (including AAHPERD) have professionals with many different backgrounds in their ranks, only some of whom are kinesiologists. I think that the AKA must take the lead on moving ahead with whatever strategies it deems most important for advancing and sustaining the field of kinesiology.

Kretchmar: Residing as I do at an R-1 institution, it is difficult for me to envision the unification of our disparate elements. The divisions (dare I call them chasms or rifts) between performance and theory, applied and basic, professional concentrations and disciplinary curricula, even science versus all the squishy subjects—these divisions still seem to keep us largely in our separate pigeon holes: co-existing,

*"For AKA to mobilize for action, I think it will take a few people who are astute and experienced in public policy politics (especially public health policy politics) to lead the way."
—Janet Harris*

but not genuinely collaborating, and perhaps more importantly, not truly respecting and valuing those on the other side of perceived fences. But we truly need each other, or so I believe.

If AKA can get elements of AAHPERD, NAKPEHE, and the ACADEMY all pulling in a similar direction in a respectful, collaborative way, it will have achieved a great deal. How to do this? I think that society is telling us loudly and clearly that they need us. I think that society is also asking us to get our act together, get out of our silos, communicate with one another, and as a result, make some really important progress on human well-being. So perhaps the first step for AKA in working toward unification is simply to get everyone to listen.

Harris: I think the AKA should invite/welcome the other groups to join in such efforts, and it should certainly keep the other groups informed of its efforts and progress. However, in my opinion, attempting to unify them will not be fruitful, and in fact it will waste valuable energy that instead could be devoted toward advancing/sustaining the field. Let me add this regarding Lawson's comment that AAHPERD is the "elephant in the room." I would be more inclined to view ACSM in that light. Although ACSM tends to be focused on exercise physiology, it also has strong contingents of other biologically and psychologically focused kinesiologists among its members. This group actively pursues a variety of strategies aimed at policy change and highlighting in public forums the importance of physical activity, for example, its "exercise is medicine" campaign in the last several years.

KT: Lawson suggests that the future is brightest for departments that develop their resources around special niches rather than attempting to do all things well. Yet, as we have seen over the last decade, when departments narrow their scopes, department titles are often also changed to reflect the narrower emphasis of the unit ("Exercise Science," "Nutrition and Exercise," "Health and Sport Studies," and so on, rather than "Kinesiology"). Ironically, Lawson views this wide diversity in department titles as working against efforts to unify the field and mobilize it for the kind of political action he feels is necessary for sustaining and advancing the field. How important do you think it is that the field rally around a single title? Do you see problems emerging when departments are called by various titles or are organized around a different name than the larger field of study?

Harris: Even though "kinesiology" is used in more and more department titles, there are several reasons why a department might select a different name. For example, academic units that encompass two or more disciplines (e.g., nutrition and kinesiology) usually want to give recognition to this in their title. As you mentioned, a department that has a narrower focus—a smaller segment of the broad scope of kinesiology—often selects a name that reflects this. And specific names may be more congruent with certain colleges or schools than others (e.g., physical education might be more appropriate in a college of education). Perhaps what is most important is not that all departments be called by the "K" name, but rather that when a

"I think that the AKA must take the lead on moving ahead with whatever strategies it deems most important for advancing and sustaining the field of kinesiology."

—Janet Harris

department selects a name, the faculty are able to point out how that name and the mission are part of the overall discipline of kinesiology. I also think that most if not all departments include only parts of the discipline of kinesiology anyway, rather than the whole discipline. I think we would be hard pressed to find a department anywhere in the country where all aspects of the discipline are fully represented. Of course this is probably also true in disciplines that rarely have “name problems.” For example, departments of history differ considerably in the areas of history they choose to emphasize, but most just use the title “history.”

Kretchmar: I agree with Jan that there may well be local reasons for different titles. But I believe that “kinesiology” has become the coinage of the realm. Unless there are absolutely compelling reasons to call a unit by another name, I think it would be politically and strategically foolish to do so. Kinesiology is a comfortable umbrella for a wide variety of programs. It has proven palatable to those who want to move in a medically related direction, and this has produced both more and higher-quality students for our departments.

Furthermore, there is strength in numbers. We were excluded from National Research Council recognition until just recently because, in part, the NRC folks “could not find us.” They could not locate us, they said, because we call ourselves so many different things. So, I am a fan of unification under a single title. Genuine unification under a clear commitment to common goals and values, as Jan points out, is another matter and, in my opinion, is likely to come only later.

KT: Lawson contends that the field’s survival depends upon its members uniting around a single narrative, and he suggests that “a public health-oriented narrative (in its most expansive sense) for kinesiology offers the most promising opportunities and advantages.” Taken at face value, this seems to intimate that the study of sport, which has a long history in our field, should be de-emphasized or eliminated all together. It would seem to raise similar questions about the study of skilled motor behavior. While there is little question that the field has moved decidedly in this direction, the question is raised as to how a department can fit a study of sport and sport-related subjects and the study of skilled motor behavior into a public health-oriented kinesiology.

Harris: I agree that the public health narrative is central to kinesiology. Whether or not there should be only one narrative is something worth debating, but there isn’t space to do that here. I think it is possible to include the study of sports and skilled motor behavior within a central public health narrative. Some argue that many people would engage in more, and perhaps more intense, physical activity if they had higher levels of motor skill. It may also be the case that higher levels of fitness would lead many people to develop higher levels of motor skill. So I think there is room for both in the public health narrative. We know that adherence to exercise regimens is difficult for many. There is a flurry of new memberships in health clubs in January due to people’s New Year’s resolutions, but usually this drops off in the next

“Kinesiology is a comfortable umbrella for a wide variety of programs. It has proven palatable to those who want to move in a medically related direction, and this has produced both more and higher-quality students for our departments.”
—Scott Kretchmar

few months. After decades of research, we still do not have solutions to this problem. Sports are certainly not the only answer, but many people enjoy participating in sports, and I think it could be argued that the fun and social connections they make in sports lead many to be more physically active than they might be otherwise. Related to my previous skill/fitness comments, it may also be the case that people with higher levels of fitness are more apt to take part in sports.

Kretchmar: I share your concerns about Lawson's recommendations. In some ways the public health narrative rubs against the grain and limits the scope of our educational interventions. I don't like conceptualizing ourselves primarily in terms of utility and, of course, the health focus does that. So conceived, we are fundamentally a means to other ends. This is unfortunate, I contend, for two reasons: one philosophic and the other more pragmatic.

The philosophic reason has to do with ignoring the power of the intrinsic values of sport, dance, and other forms of culturally tethered movement. These movement forms make our days go better. They provide arenas for play. They are meaningful, exciting, even inspiring. It would be too bad, in my judgment, to detract from this liberating facet of our field.

The pragmatic reason has to do with dangers that come with marching to the drum of health-related utility. If the need goes away, so do we. In other words, if health objectives could somehow be met without sweating and exercising, we would become redundant. Some will argue this will never happen. I'm not so confident. But even if my worries are misplaced, I move because I love to move. I think that joy needs to play a central role in our narrative. And as an important aside relative to our duty to promote health, people who love to move are also likely to be pretty healthy.



William Harper

Department Head's Viewpoint

The Gate of Janus

By William Harper, PhD
Department Head, Health and
Kinesiology
Purdue University

"The basic reality, for the university, is the widespread recognition that new knowledge is the most important factor in economic and social growth. We are just now perceiving that the university's invisible product, knowledge, may

be the most powerful single element in our culture, affecting the rise and fall of professions and even of social classes, of regions and even of nations."

"I move because I love to move. I think that joy needs to play a central role in our narrative."

"Kerr claimed that by the 1950s the university had become something quite different from Newman's idea of a village-like culture of teachers and students."

So wrote Clark Kerr in his classic book, *The Uses of the University* (1964). Kerr's short treatise on the history and future of higher education was based on his three-day Godkin Lectures given at Harvard University in April 1963. I have always thought that Kerr's short book was particularly relevant to leadership issues in kinesiology largely because of the complicated interdisciplinary histories of our fields of interest and study.

Clark Kerr (1911-2003) was the central figure in designing the California educational Master Plan of 1960. At that time he was president of the University of California system, after having served as chancellor of the Berkeley campus between 1952 and 1958. The Master Plan was based on a tracking model that steered the top eighth of California high school seniors into the California university system, the top third into the California state colleges, and the remainder into the junior college system. (Fair warning: In this pecking order, I was a product of the California state college system; the reader should take this fact into account before deciding whether or not to give any more time to reading this brief viewpoint.)

In his Godkin Lectures, Kerr coined the word "multiversity" to describe what the university had become, its basic idea, by the mid-20th century. Kerr traced the longer history of the idea of a university back to Cardinal Newman's notion of the academic cloister, and then more recently to Abraham Flexner's early 20th century description of the university as a research organism, "a graduate school of arts and sciences, the solidly professional schools and certain research institutes." Kerr claimed that by the 1950s the university had become something quite different from Newman's idea of a village-like culture of teachers and students, and different too from Flexner's town-like organism with a central and unified spirit. The modern university, as Kerr described it, is defined by its city-like complexity.

The complexity of the modern multiversity has created inconsistency, Kerr argued. Its inconsistency is a product of the collisions between the often internal competing communities, the visibility of which ebb and flow over time: "the community of the undergraduate and the community of the graduate; the community of the humanist, the community of the social scientist, and the community of the scientist; the communities of the professional schools; the community of all the nonacademic personnel; the community of the administrators." Given the diversity of represented subdisciplines in kinesiology, we also are a community unto ourselves, complete with our own history of inconsistency-producing tensions and collisions.

Furthermore, Kerr wrote, the multiversity's edges are quite fuzzy, for it is also stretched to respond to alumni, retirees, donors, businesses, legislators, federal regulators, private and public funding agencies, and various and sundry organizations and special interest groups. It is well-nigh impossible to balance the multiversity edifice given that "it is so many things to so many people that it must, of necessity, be partially at war with itself."

Kerr thought the multiversity had become by then rather more like a mechanism than a culture or an organism, "a series of processes producing a series of results—a mechanism held together by admin-

*"It isn't too fanciful to see
the modern university
looking more like a
commercial corporation
than anything else,
symbolized at the very
least by the popular use of
management lingo within
the university walls."*

istrative rules and powered by money.” Since Kerr’s time, it isn’t too fanciful to see the modern university looking more like a commercial corporation than anything else, symbolized at the very least by the popular use of management lingo within the university walls: the CEOs, CAOs, CFOs, DEOs, and the occasional UFO.

But trend, thank goodness, is not destiny. Corporate realities, after all, are not born of necessity like universities are; corporations form and re-form, grow and contract, come and go, eat and are eaten. On the other hand, the organizing idea of a university is necessarily entailed in its own past history and its continued future existence. In other words, the essential idea of the university’s gate of Janus opens in two directions. You will recall the myth of the Roman god of gates and doors, Janus. In representations of him, he has two faces looking in opposite directions; he was the god of both beginnings and endings. According to legend he was given the gift of being able to see both the past and the future. A most important god to the Romans—some scholars say the highest of the Roman gods—Janus symbolized transitions, movement, change, progressions, and vision. January, the eleventh Roman month, is named after him.

In spite of our own inconsistencies, and in spite of our lively academic skirmishes over time, what makes kinesiology departments essentially different from modern corporations is the responsibility we have to continuously reconcile our past and our limitless future. This is the invisible product to which Kerr refers: the discovery and uses of knowledge. Absent universities, and especially absent the historical continuities of departments like ours, the world is absent know-how, know-what, know-why, know-where, know-when, and know-who. That is why Kerr lectures us that universities are perhaps the most powerful of social agents for both culture creating and culture preservation.

But as Kerr laments, the university “has no bard to sing its praises; no prophet to proclaim its vision; no guardian to protect its sanctity.” Hence, the university is vulnerable to takeovers, hostile or otherwise. In the end, what our kinesiology department leaders choose to do in responding to such threats to our own most vital universes of study within the university, will ultimately determine what the world will do with us.

So yes, for our part, I am bothered by the seemingly thoughtless drifting of our universities toward corporate infatuations. So yes, for our part, I am quite bothered by the language shifts, the increasingly comfortable references to branding, responsibility-centered management, direct reports, strategic marketing, product loyalty, human resources, revenue shares, decision packages, value-added needs, and executive bonuses. And yes, for our part and closer to home, I am really bothered by my official title, Department Executive Officer (DEO).

So for the record, and in my opinion, we who are chairs and heads of kinesiology departments are not executive officers. We are teachers and scholars who are humbled witnesses and willing servants to the historical vision and compelling ideal of a university as such. We are among the many, many thousands who may not be bona fide bards, or prophets, or guardians, but who nonetheless strive to sing, proclaim, and protect while proudly standing at Janus’ gate.

“What makes kinesiology departments essentially different from modern corporations is the responsibility we have to continuously reconcile our past and our limitless future.”

Workouts Boost Brain Activity, Test Scores

By Bill Bowman

Each year around this time, “Get more exercise” is written in bold print at the top of the typical list of New Year’s resolutions. But the goal most people really want to achieve is not the exercise itself but rather one of the many physical benefits exercising provides: weight loss, lower blood pressure, increased energy. Too many to list.

“Get smarter” is not likely to be anyone’s exercise goal. But, according to research at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, aerobic exercise has a significant positive impact on brain activity. And from improved test scores among primary school students to possibly staving off Alzheimer’s disease for older adults, a multitude of brain benefits stemming from physical activity is now coming to light.

“Our research efforts are focused on the relationship between physical activity, the brain, and cognition across the lifespan,” said Charles Hillman, a professor in the University’s Department of Kinesiology and Community Health. “We’ve shown that exercise is good for attention. It’s good for how fast individuals process information, and how they perform on cognitive tasks.”

Hillman’s tests have tracked higher levels of electrical resources being sent to the brain during exercise and speeding up activity in the frontal lobe, increasing what is known as executive control function (ECF). ECF pertains to goal-directed behavior such as planning, working memory, and task coordination. His tests conducted before and after exercise showed that physical activity improved cognitive test results significantly.

Testing the impact of exercise on mental abilities outside of the lab environment can be difficult for subjects in most age groups. Fortunately for Hillman, he specializes in research on the age group that lends itself to the most meaningful analysis: children.

“What’s cool about studying kids is that we get to bridge the results into a real-world setting, looking at the academic achievement test results,” Hillman said. “And the results show kids who are more physically active test higher.”

One of Hillman’s tests examined 259 students in third and fifth grade, matching up their performance in physical education with their Illinois Standardized Achievement Test scores for reading and math. The results: The physically active kids scored best, while high body-mass index had a negative result on test scores. Muscle strength was measured and showed no impact on the students’ cognitive testing

Physically active kids scored best, while high body-mass index had a negative result on test scores.



Charles Hillman

one way or the other.

"The tests show that children need to be active daily," Hillman said. "Several generations ago we were all physically active in order to survive. Today it's common for everyone to be couch potatoes and for kids to just play video games."

As startling as the findings are, one wonders how this has not emerged as a bigger societal issue, given its natural ties to childhood obesity and other exercise-related topics that have taken the nation by storm. Hillman pointed out one possible theory: that kinesiologists' studies rarely cross over to the mental, while disciplines involving brain research typically do not consider the physical.

"There still isn't a rich literature in this area," Hillman said. "There are still a lot of avenues to be explored. The literature is growing, though."

With fellow researcher Darla Castelli, a professor in the Department of Kinesiology at the University of Texas at Austin, Hillman recommends these guidelines for integrating physical activity into primary and secondary curricula:

- Scheduling outdoor recess as a part of each school day
- Setting a minimum for formal physical education at 150 minutes per week at the elementary level, and 225 minutes at the secondary level
- Encouraging classroom teachers to integrate physical activity into learning

Legislators in Texas and Kentucky have already used the team's research to increase the minimum amount of time their schools spend on physical education.

"It's going to take politicians, educators, and the media to make significant societal changes from the research findings," Hillman said. "Schools may be the most underrated factor for getting this started. Children need to be active daily, and that's not happening."

Another underrated factor may be Hillman himself, whose aggressive research goals are being spurred by an obvious passion and belief in increased physical activity for everyone, and kids in particular. The combination of physical and mental benefits from exercise makes it harder for him to stomach the status quo.

"It is important to begin studying individuals during early adulthood, and especially childhood, as early intervention may be more beneficial," Hillman said. "That is, why wait until individuals are older and have been sedentary to intervene?"

"We're talking about quality of life. We're getting older, but we're living less healthy lives," he said. "Those who are physically active will remain more healthy from both a physical standpoint and retention of higher cognitive ability."

Legislators in Texas and Kentucky have already used the team's research to increase the minimum amount of time their schools spend on physical education.

"Schools may be the most underrated factor for getting this started. Children need to be active daily, and that's not happening."

Fitness Requirement at Lincoln Rescinded in Face of Torrent of Criticism

By Shirl J. Hoffman

Concerned about the obesity epidemic among college students, and especially among African-American students, the HPERD faculty at Lincoln University, a historically black university in eastern Pennsylvania, instituted a policy in 2006 that required students with a BMI greater than 30 to enroll in a special Fitness for Life course. (Men with a waist of less than 40 inches or women with a waist of less than 35 inches were exempt. All students at Lincoln already were required to enroll in a general wellness course.) Attendance and participation in the course, which included various physical activities such as aerobic dance, Tae Bo, water aerobics, and weight training, as well as information on nutrition, stress, and sleep, were requirements for graduation. The policy stemmed from two concerns, said department chair Jim DeBoy. Overweight students reported feeling uncomfortable in classes where most students could exercise easily. Also, there was a safety risk, he said. Larger students, anxious to keep up with the pace set by more fit students, would often overextend themselves.

All went well, says DeBoy, until November 2009, when he sent a memo to the university community reminding seniors that their last chance to take the course would be in spring 2010. About 80 seniors (16% of the class) had not yet had their BMI tested and of that, DeBoy estimates that probably about 12 to 15 students would have been required to take the course. A student, writing in the student paper *The Lincolnian*, spoke out against the requirement, sparking a firestorm of criticism that spread from coast to coast and was covered by all the major news outlets. DeBoy was besieged by reporters. The student who wrote the article told CNN, "I didn't come to Lincoln to be told that my weight is not in an acceptable range. I came here to get an education, which, as a three-time honor student, is something I have been doing quite well, despite the fact that I have a slightly high body mass index."

While some health experts applauded the intent of the requirement, they found its execution troublesome. For example, Mark Rothstein, director of the bioethics institute at the University of Louisville's School of Medicine, told the *Grio* Web site that policies that force students to disclose health information are "at least awkward and often distasteful," and pointed out that imposing health goals on people often doesn't lead to the intended results.

As opposition to the policy continued to mount, a special meeting of Lincoln faculty and administrators was convened at which dissenters called the fitness class placement policy "an anathema to the HBCU legacy that prided itself on providing a 'safe, nurturing environment.'" Others claimed that "students' sense of worth is brutally assaulted by any practice that separates out—a practice that champions 'deficiency' models." Still others thought the requirement raised the specter of

A student, writing in the student paper The Lincolnian, spoke out against the requirement, sparking a firestorm of criticism that spread from coast to coast and was covered by all the major news outlets.

“benevolent paternalism.” DeBoy and his faculty held their ground, arguing that the climate engendered by such identification process may be onerous for some but contended that it was a necessary step in order to achieve the end result (student empowerment, increased sense of internal locus of control). The goal, they said, far outweighed any initial discomfort associated with placement.

The meeting culminated in the elimination of the old policy. In its place a revised policy stipulated that on the basis of measures of blood pressure, BMI, weight/circumference measures, percentage body fat, and dietary analysis (some tests are still under development) over a 15-week period in the long-established required wellness course, students whose health-risk appraisals suggest that they may benefit from an additional fitness for life course will not be required but will be urged by faculty to consider taking it. “Faculty will advise students that ‘based upon these assessments we believe you are at risk and that you will benefit from this class,’” said DeBoy. At the same time he made it clear to the university community in a carefully worded statement that “the goal of reducing health risks that could detrimentally affect students now and in the future remains,” and reminded them that “while the placement method may have changed, the learner outcome has remained constant: empower students with the requisite knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits of mind to reduce or eliminate the ravaging effects of hypokinetic disease.” In driving home his point, DeBoy promised that if “the concordance rate (between faculty recommendations for additional coursework and students’ acceptance of those recommendations) does not achieve an ‘acceptable level,’ the HPERD faculty would be back with another placement policy in 2011.”

Under the new policy, students whose health-risk appraisals suggest that they may benefit from an additional Fitness for Life course will not be required but will be urged by faculty to consider taking it.

AKA Produces First Position Statement

In response to a request for assistance by a member department threatened by a reorganization scheme that would have dispersed part of its programs to other university units, the Executive Committee released the following position statement:

Kinesiology on the Move: One of the Fastest-Growing (But Often Misunderstood) Majors in Academia

In universities across the country, kinesiology programs continue to expand and evolve as they address some of society’s greatest concerns, with larger departments often enrolling well over 1,000 majors. Kinesiology, the academic discipline that studies physical activity and its impact on health, society, and quality of life, has emerged in recent years as the undergraduate degree of choice for many students seeking careers in a variety of allied health/medical fields, as well as in more traditional areas such as fitness, health promotion, physical

education, recreation, and sport.

Enrollment patterns in a number of institutions confirm the heightened interest in kinesiology as an undergraduate major. The more than 11,300 kinesiology majors in the California State University system, for example, reflects a 50.5% increase over a 5-year period compared to a 6.5% increase in overall enrollments, with similar increases observed in other states. A positive outcome of the growing interest in kinesiology in recent years, and of the field's significantly expanded science base, has been its official recognition in 2006 by the National Research Council as an academic discipline in the Life Sciences and its inclusion in the Taxonomy of Research Doctoral Programs.

The Multi-Faceted Scientific Nature of Kinesiology

A key factor in kinesiology's unprecedented growth and increased popularity as an undergraduate degree choice has been its expanded scientific basis and its increased professional application opportunities. Kinesiology departments are generally comprised of several specialized areas of study such as biomechanics, sociocultural foundations of sport, sport and exercise psychology, exercise physiology, motor behavior, physical education teacher education, athletic training, sport medicine, and sport management, all of which are viewed by the American Kinesiology Association as either fundamental building blocks of the field or professional applications.

These specializations have a synergistic relationship with each other, in that all derive from a common study of physical activity. This is especially true at the undergraduate level where students often are required to take courses in each of these curricular areas as part of their degree programs, either as complementary or prerequisite knowledge. As such, a kinesiology department is not unlike an anthropology department, which may be segmented into cultural anthropology, physical anthropology, linguistics, and archeology, or a psychology department with specializations in social, industrial, clinical, experimental, and physiological psychology.

Kinesiology Draws its Strength from Integration

The integrated and multi-faceted nature of kinesiology programs has contributed to its success and has served students well. The disciplinary synergy of kinesiology programs is weakened when one or more of the specializations are transferred to other units in the college or university. Prior experience has shown that in the cases where a kinesiology department or units thereof have been transferred, the result can work to the disadvantage of both the transferred faculty and to the departments to which they have been moved. Kinesiology faculty may discover that they have little in common with other faculty in the unit to which they are transferred, and the receiving unit may find it awkward to integrate kinesiology into its existing specializations. Several years after disassembling various specialized areas of study and sending them off to other organizational units, both the University of Tennessee and the University of Georgia found it nec-

A key factor in kinesiology's unprecedented growth and increased popularity as an undergraduate degree choice has been its expanded scientific basis and its increased professional application opportunities.

essary to recombine them into one department. At the University of Texas, the physical education-teacher education unit was moved to another department in the School of Education. After several years it was moved back into a comprehensive department of kinesiology. Although the American Kinesiology Association recognizes that local issues always affect institutional planning, and that sometimes this requires a shuffling of departmental units across disciplinary lines, we strongly believe that students, society, and an institution's best interests are served by retaining the subunits of this multifaceted field in one department, named kinesiology.

Nittany Lion Researchers Find Cheetah-esque Anatomy in Sprinters

By Bill Bowman

When sprinter Usain Bolt separated himself from the pack at the 2008 Summer Olympics, smashing records for both the 100 and 200 meters, jaws dropped worldwide. Not only had his times never been reached before, but no one had seen an elite sprinter of his size. The strapping Jamaican lightning bolt stood a full 6-foot-5 and carried 210 sculpted pounds across each finish line. Sportswriters worldwide pondered if the accepted ideal mold for sprinters—for men, compactly built at around 6-foot-0—would soon become a thing of the past.

Generating much less press, the 100M bronze medalist was 5-foot-9 Walter Dix of the United States, who takes 47 strides—compared to Bolt's 40 or 41—in the 100 meters. Instead of headlines theorizing giant sprinters may be the wave of the future, perhaps the better supposition would have been that, barring extremes, height does not matter much at all.

But in fall 2009, Penn State researchers revealed two anatomical measurements that really do appear to matter for sprinters and which make a significant difference in the speed of two athletes who otherwise share similar height, weight, and musculature. These two keys: short Achilles tendon moment arms and long toes.

"Both of these findings surprised us," said Stephen Piazza, associate professor of kinesiology, who with fellow researcher Sabrina Lee published the findings in the *Journal of Experimental Biology* in November 2009. "And while we didn't expect what we discovered about the toes, the short moment arms was in fact the exact opposite of what we expected to find."

Heading into their research, Piazza and Lee expected to find longer-than-normal moment arms, which would give sprinters the same leverage advantage as someone using a wheelbarrow with very long handles. But when they matched up 12 collegiate sprinters with 12 nonathletes of the same height, it turned out the sprinters' ankle structure actually mimicked someone using a wheelbarrow with handles that are unusually short—a full 25% shorter than average. This decreased leverage for the Achilles tendon does prevent sprinters from gliding along the track more easily, but it also permits the calf



Stephen Piazza



Sabrina Lee



An ultrasound scanner is used to make images of the Achilles tendon sliding beneath the skin as the ankle is rotated. The moment arm of the Achilles tendon, which indicates the mechanical advantage of the calf muscles, is calculated from measured tendon movements and ankle angles.

muscles to generate more force. This trade-off results in a greater pull on the heel during push-off with the foot and toes.

And for elite sprinters, that extra force gets additional pay-off in the form of toes that are significantly longer than average.

"At the start of a sprint the only way a runner can speed up is through the reaction force that results from the action of leg muscles pushing on the ground," Piazza said. "Long toes provide sprinters the advantage of maintaining productive contact with the ground just a little bit longer than other runners."

Once the researchers zeroed in on this combination that makes the sprinter's ideal anatomical structure, they saw it matched up quite similarly to sprinters who could leave even Bolt in the dust: ostriches, greyhounds, and cheetahs.

"Look at the cheetah," Piazza said. "It has long feet and is the only cat that can't fully retract its claws. When running, those claws are basically providing extra length to the cheetah's toes."

And while it wasn't a different species of animal that spurred the idea for their research, it was a different breed of athlete: a former wide receiver for the Nittany Lion football team. Now a veteran NFL player, he returned to Penn State seeking help with maintaining his top speed as the seasons piled up. It was when Piazza and Lee measured the lever arms of the receiver's Achilles—shorter than normal, of course—that they knew they had something well worth further research. And now many in the world of competitive sports agree.

"Since the research has gained publicity, I have been contacted by several coaches seeking advice for their athletes," Piazza said. "But I'm not sure the research itself can help with the training they're doing today. What it may have more immediate impact on is taking a closer look at the sprinters' shoes. Sprint shoes are already designed to

This decreased leverage for the Achilles tendon does prevent sprinters from gliding along the track more easily, but it also permits the calf muscles to generate more force. This trade-off results in a greater pull on the heel during push-off with the foot and toes.

"Long toes provide sprinters the advantage of maintaining productive contact with the ground just a little bit longer than other runners."

make the foot and toes effectively longer. Lengthening the rigid plate under the forefoot of the shoe slightly further could have an impact, especially during the acceleration phase of the sprint.”

“But, it’s possible the longer plate could have a negative impact when it comes to maintaining speed.”

One of Piazza’s next goals is to use magnetic resonance imaging to better understand force-generating mechanism in sprinters’ ankles and focus on what part of the toes are longer for sprinters. He also plans to use his findings to help determine why older adults’ ability to walk at a normal pace drops off much quicker for some than it does for others.

AKA Welcomes Four New Board Members and New Officers

December 2009 brought to a close the terms of service of four members of the Board of Directors: Scott Kretchmar, Emily Haymes, Deb Feltz, and Steve Silverman. The membership is indebted to them for their efforts on behalf of the association. Replacing them will be four highly qualified individuals selected from a roster of stellar nominees by the New Board Members Screening Committee and elected by the Board of Directors: Wojtek Chodzko-Zajko, chair of Kinesiology and Community Health at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Mary Rudisill, chair of Kinesiology at Auburn; Tom Templin, professor of Health and Kinesiology at Purdue University; and Cathy Ennis, professor of Kinesiology at University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Winding down two-year terms as charter members of the Executive Committee were Jerry Thomas (president) and Roberta Rikli (vice president), both of whom will continue to serve out their terms on the Board of Directors. They are replaced on the committee by Gil Reeve (president), chair of Kinesiology at Louisiana State University, and Waneen Spirduso (vice president), professor of Kinesiology at University of Texas. Jim Morrow, charter secretary/treasurer, will serve an additional term on the Executive Committee.

Jerry, Roberta, and Jim are largely responsible for getting AKA off the ground and giving shape to the lofty vision of its founders. It has been a Herculean effort that has required enormous amounts of time. We all are the beneficiaries of their talents and hard work.

*Jerry, Roberta, and Jim
are largely responsible
for getting AKA off the
ground and giving shape
to the lofty vision of its
founders.*

AKA Career Book Project to Feature Member Departments

At its last meeting, the Board of Directors approved a career book project that will offer a guide to the most popular kinesiology-related careers and will include a directory of member departments offering each career track. The project, a cooperative effort of AKA and Human Kinetics, will be the first comprehensive career guide in kinesiology.

It will be an excellent vehicle for member departments to showcase programs leading to various career tracks.

The details of the directory portion of the project are still being finalized and will be distributed as they become available. Most likely, it will include an online feature that will provide for updating the list of departments as membership grows. Shirl Hoffman, executive director of AKA, is serving as the editor. Contributors include Dave Anderson, Wojtek Chodzko-Zajko, Marlene Dixon, Warren Franke, Kim Graber, Jolene Henning, Tom Templin, and Diane Ulibarri.

The book is scheduled for publication in fall 2010.

Member Department News

Coastal Carolina Forms School of Health, Kinesiology and Sport Studies

Coastal Carolina University recently established a new academic division. The new School of Health, Kinesiology and Sport Studies (HKSS) replaces the department of health, physical education, and recreation. Beginning in fall 2010, the school will include three departments: Kinesiology (including physical education and exercise and sport science programs), Recreation and Sport Management, and Health Promotion. The school will also include the new nursing (BSN) and Army ROTC programs. The new division is reflective of enrollment and programmatic growth in kinesiology and the health sciences. In addition, the school moved from the College of Education to the College of Natural and Applied Sciences. Gib Darden is the director and associate dean of the School of HKSS.

Stier Named Editor of Two Journals

Dr. William F. Stier Jr., Distinguished Service Professor, College at Brockport, State University of New York, was recently reappointed for another three-year term as editor of two journals: *International Journal of Sport Management* and *The Physical Educator*.

Harper Honored by the American Heart Association

William "Bill" Harper, PhD, professor and chair of the Department of Health and Kinesiology at Purdue University, was honored at the American Heart Association's 2009 Lafayette Heart Ball with the Cor Vitae Award. The Cor Vitae Award is given each year to a member of the corporate community who enhances the quality of life in the community through innovation, philanthropy, vision, and leadership. Harper was recognized for his efforts in directing a local community program (PALS) that provides sports, fitness, and health instruction to area youth.



Gib Darden

Deadline for AKA Scholar Award Nominations Is Near

The deadline for departmental nominations of academically accomplished students for recognition as AKA Scholars is March 10. Nominations must include digital photo of the student and a 150-word (maximum) rationale for the nomination. This is an excellent way to focus national attention on departments' most academically accomplished students. Information regarding the nomination and selection process can be found at the AKA Web site, www.americankinesiology.org.

Affiliated Organizations

American Academy of Kinesiology and Physical Education (AAKPE)

American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM)

APA-Division 47

Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP)

American Educational Research Association (SIG-PE)

International Association for the Philosophy of Sport (IAPS)

National Association for Kinesiology and Physical Education in Higher Education (NAKPEHE)

National Association of Sport and Physical Education (NASPE)

National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA)

North American Society for the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity (NASPSPA)

North American Society for Sport History (NASSH)

The AAHPERD Research Consortium



*Human Kinetics
Newsletter Staff:*

Managing Editor: Amy Rose

Copyeditor: Kristi Turnbaugh

*Graphic Designer:
Sean Roosevelt*