Spring 2016                                          Vol. 1                                          Newsletter

Changing Lives One Step At A Time

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The discipline of kinesiology has undergone an explosion in enrollment over the last 25 years. When I started at MSU as Department Head in January 2008, the department was already in the midst of a growth spurt and boasted an enrollment of 850 undergraduate and graduate students. That number had been steadily climbing during the previous decade and continued to do so until the fall 2013 term when it topped off at about 1450 majors. As of the spring 2016 term we are still at a very respectable enrollment of 1300 students, which continues to represent the largest major at MSU. There are many reasons for the quantitative growth the kinesiology discipline has been experiencing nationwide. One important reason is the move towards the end of the 1990s of Physical Therapy from undergraduate education to graduate entry-level education. This meant that students wishing to become PTs needed an undergraduate degree first to be admitted to these programs. Kinesiology has been a major benefactor in that decision.

The Department of Kinesiology continues to have a very strong clinical program (Clinical Exercise Physiology) while our traditional teacher preparatory program (Physical Education and Coaching) has dwindled to only 117 majors at last count (down from approximately 250 in 2008). Again, this has not been a local phenomenon as there has been a nationwide decline in enrollment in all areas of teacher preparatory curricula. We are addressing this downturn for our program and hope to reverse it over the next couple of years. Another star program for the department has been the Sport Studies undergraduate degree option, which now boasts about 225 majors, an increase of over 200% since 2008.

Beyond this quantitative growth, however, our department has taken major strides toward growth in quality by focusing on its graduate programs. The academic year just ended has seen the inauguration of our doctoral program, the Ph.D. in Kinesiology with concentrations in Exercise Science and Sport Studies. We started last August with 5 Ph.D. students and hope to almost double that number by next August.

With the initiation of the doctoral program our department has embarked on its first ever 5 year strategic plan called, Exceptional KINE!. This plan, we hope, will result in significant national recognition in the first half of the next decade. Of course, our goal is to beat Ole Miss in the national rankings of doctoral programs! Our secret ambition is to enter the rankings as a top 25 program. Shhhhh, don’t tell anyone this just yet…

To achieve that lofty goal, the department is busy tracking our strategic plan using the same faculty focus groups that helped create it. Also to this end, we have created our first Departmental Advisory Board with 16 well connected individuals with a stake in helping our department grow in quality. We hope to engage the board heavily in the strategic planning effort to give us guidance as we move forward towards our ultimate goal.

In closing, the vision of the Department of Kinesiology is:

“To achieve national recognition as a premier program for research production, student development, and the promotion of physical activity, health, and sport.”

We encourage interested readers to help us in this effort.

Stanley P. Brown, Ph.D., FACSM
Professor and Head
Department of Kinesiology
Leaders agree, Mississippi State’s new doctoral program in kinesiology represents the long-anticipated extension of the university’s most popular undergraduate major.

The College of Education’s inaugural doctorate-level courses in the study of human movement began in August with the 2015 fall semester. Before the introduction of this program, the highest academic level the kinesiology department offered was a Master of Science degree with concentrations in exercise physiology, sport administration or sport pedagogy.

MSU’s official 2014-15 enrollment totals more than 20,100. More than 6 percent of undergraduate students, approximately 36 percent of College of Education majors, are pursuing bachelor’s degrees in kinesiology.

Those high numbers explain why the university’s addition of the doctoral degree was the natural next step, said department head Stanley Brown. “This Ph.D. program will create a new visibility on campus, the state, region, nationally and internationally,” he said. “There will be even more research being conducted, which will enhance the program as a whole.”

According to college dean Richard Blackbourn, kinesiology is one of the fastest growing higher education disciplines. He said MSU’s leadership in training doctoral-level researchers and instructors will further enhance the department’s national reputation.

“As Mississippi State trains doctoral faculty and researchers who go on to work in other settings, we’re going to have a program where our graduates will be very employable,” Blackbourn said. “Our graduates will be the kind that represent Mississippi State very well on the national and international stage as we continue to spread our influence around the nation.”

**MSU ON THE MOVE RECOGNIZES HEALTH HEROES**

Two current and one former Mississippi State staff members are being recognized for achievements at the university to encourage healthy lifestyles through regular exercise and healthy eating habits.

Michelle Gerhart, Janice McReynolds and Annette Woods recently received 2014-15 Health Hero awards from the MSU on the Move program for their hard work and dedication to overall health improvement on campus.

Gerhart is a business manager in the athletic department, while Woods is a senior extension associate in the agricultural communications department. McReynolds retired in June as an administrative assistant in the forestry department. All are MSU alumni.

Supported by the Jackson-based Blue Cross Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation, MSU on the Move involves a series of yearlong activities designed to give participants the skills to modify lifestyle habits and improve overall health.

In 2014, a second-year foundation grant supported a free comprehensive health and fitness program for the MSU community and beyond. In addition to measuring and monitoring participants’ progress as part of a pre- and post-program assessment, the $250,000 award enabled the College of Education’s kinesiology department to establish the Health Fitness and Wellness campaign, an extension of the existing MSU on the Move program.

“These standout participants are exemplary of the meaningful impact we hope to achieve with MSU on the Move,” said Megan Holmes, assistant professor of kinesiology.
WENDY JOLLY

**What was the title of your degree and when did you graduate from MSU?**
1990 - B.S. in Education, Physical Education, Health, Recreation and Dance
1993 - Master in Sports Administration

**What are the main responsibilities of your job?** I teach K-2 Physical Education at Sudduth Elementary and coach the softball team at Starkville High School. It is also my responsibility and goal to help children find a variety of ways to enjoy being physically active so that they will be able to get all of the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social benefits that come from someone who is physically active and physically educated.

**How did your education at MSU help prepare you?** My educational experience at MSU provided me with the knowledge, skills and real world experiences needed to succeed in providing students with a quality physical educational program.

**What advice would you give to current students about how to be successful in your field?** Establish and create a positive, fun and orderly learning environment to help your students find enjoyment in physical activity that will impact their lives for a lifetime.

STEVEN MCCORKLE

**What was the title of your degree and when did you graduate from MSU?**
2004- Physical Education, concentration in Fitness Management
2006- Master in Exercise Science

**What are the main responsibilities of your job?** I’m fortunate in that I have two incredible jobs in this field. I am an Assistant Professor of Health & Kinesiology at Mississippi University for Women. Additionally, I have been a Fitness Specialist at OCH Regional Medical Center for 12 years.

**How did your education at MSU help prepare you?** I think the most powerful preparation I had was learning to appreciate and approach exercise physiology as a medical and science field instead of an allied health field.

**What advice would you give to current students about how to be successful in your field?** Two things jump into my mind as I read this question. You can never stop learning in this field. The second thing that comes to mind is that whatever path you follow, and there are dozens of paths in exercise science, you must carry with you a profound respect for the power of exercise and for the people you work with in your career.
FACULTY SPOTLIGHTS

**Dr. Chander**
Dr. Chander is an Assistant Professor of Biomechanics and the Co-Director of the Neuromechanics Laboratory. Chander’s research efforts are focused in areas of biomechanics of human factors and industrial ergonomics, with special emphasis in human balance, gait and slips, trips and fall prevention in the workplace. His research area also focuses on occupational footwear biomechanics, cognition in occupational tasks, work related musculoskeletal disorders, muscular fatigue and response to postural perturbations. Chander’s research applications include occupations such as firefighters, heavy industry workers, hospital employees and the military. His secondary research emphasis comprises biomechanics of athletic human performance and injury prevention.

**Dr. Pan**
Dr. Zhujun Pan is an Assistant Professor of Motor Behavior in Mississippi State University’s Kinesiology Department. This past fall she was invited to be a keynote speaker at the Sports-Neuroscience symposium in Beijing, China. It is hosted by the Capital University of Physical Education and Sports (CUPES), with topics of "in vivo analysis applied in sports-neuroscience" and "neuroplasticity induced by Sports."

At the conference she gave a speech about the focus of her research: visual-motor modulation in neurodegenerative diseases. She presented her findings to students, researchers and faculty at Beijing University, Beijing Normal University and Capital University.

**Dr. Twietmeyer**
Mississippi State University Sport Studies Professor Dr. Gregg Twietmeyer was invited to be a keynote speaker at the 2015 Global Sport Science Conference in Seoul, South Korea. Dr. Twietmeyer was one of four invited keynote speakers from across the globe. Those attending the conference included faculty and graduate students from Seoul National University.

The focus of Dr. Twietmeyer’s research throughout his career has been the Philosophy of Kinesiology and Sport and Religion. At the conference he presented a lecture titled, “The Hopelessness of Health Centered Kinesiology.”

KINESIOLOGY WINS BIG AT RESEARCH FORUM

Three students representing the Kinesiology department garnered high honors at the 9th Annual College of Education Faculty/Student Research Forum.

Winners from the department were:

- **Jasmine Curtis**- 1st place Research Paper
- **Chris Hill**- 3rd place Graduate Poster
- **Steven Basham**- 1st place Undergraduate Poster
BULLDOG BIKE CAMP COMING TO MSU

Mississippi State is announcing its first Bulldog Bike Camp to teach participants with disabilities how to independently operate a bicycle. The May 23-27 program is being organized by the university’s kinesiology department, in partnership with iCan Shine, a Pennsylvania-based philanthropic organization that helps make possible bike camps throughout the United States. For more on iCanShine, see www.icanshine.org. All activities will be held on campus at the Sanderson Center recreation facility.

Participants must be at least 8 years old, weigh less than 220 pounds and have a diagnosed disability. Additionally, they must have a minimum inseam of 20 inches and be able to walk without assistive devices. Teens and adults are welcomed. A single, 75-minute session will take place daily for five consecutive days. According to organizers, the program has an average success rate of approximately 80 percent. Complete details and a registration form are found at www.bulldogbike.msstate.edu. The attendance fee is $100 per person. A limited number of need-based scholarships are available.

Gregg Twietmeyer, MSU assistant professor of sports studies and sports philosophy, is camp director. He said benefits of the program are two-fold. “On one hand, participants can learn the joys of riding a bike, which can lead to increased self-esteem and confidence,” he said. “Secondly, MSU students volunteering as spotters for the riders will get to see firsthand the important roles of physical activity and play in human well-being and culture.”

KINESIOLOGY REPRESENTS WELL AT ACSM

Mississippi State University Kinesiology Department professors, doctoral, graduate and undergraduate students attended the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) Southeast Regional Chapter conference in Greenville, S.C. (Feb 18th-20th) this spring semester.

The purpose of the conference is to present the latest sports medicine research and attend presentations related to the latest discoveries and strategies in the field of sports medicine. A graduate fair is also held to help recruit potential graduate students to the universities that are represented at the conference. Over 30 universities from across the Southeast attended the conference, including several schools from the SEC such as Alabama, Auburn, Ole Miss, Tennessee, LSU, and Georgia.

Dr’s Adam Knight, Harish Chander and Megan Holmes, doctoral students Brandon Miller and Jeffery Simpson, master’s students Christopher Hill and Ty Stewart, along with undergrad student Katherine Woods each presented research on a variety of topics at the conference.

Some of the research topics our students presented included: Impact of military type footwear and workload on muscle activity in static balance, influence of military boot types and physiological workload on lower extremity muscle activation, effects of event specialty, gender, and leg dominance on the running kinetics of high school track and field athletes and adolescent stress, coping resources, and health in young, high risk students participating in a studio-based summer camp.

“The students did a really good job with their presentations. We were also able to attend a variety of sessions on different types of research being conducted in kinesiology and sports medicine. It was beneficial for all that attended,” Knight said.
PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Faculty & Staff

Mr. Matthew Rye
Dr. Gregg Twietmeyer
Mrs. Erin Grant
Mrs. LeeAnn Joe
Dr. Zhujun Pan
Mr. Glenn Young
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Contributors

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