

KINESIOLOGY

“MOVING AT THE SPEED OF LIFE”



DEPARTMENT OF KINESIOLOGY STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2019

➤ **EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY**



➤ **RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP SYNERGIES**



➤ **ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP TO IMPROVE HEALTH**



Kinesiology Strategic Plan 2014-2019-Short Version

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* (2008) identify the strength of science supporting the health benefits of regular physical activity across the lifespan (1). The physical activity objectives for Healthy People 2020 highlight that more than 80% of U.S. adults and adolescents fail to meet the guidelines for aerobic and muscle strengthening activities (2). A key strength of the Department of Kinesiology is our multidisciplinary approach to the study of human movement and physical activity. This makes our department central to the College's mission and well-positioned to continue to play an important role in advancing human health. Defined as "any bodily movement that involves skeletal musculature and increases energy expenditure above rest," the physical activity spectrum involves single limb movements to activities of daily living as well as exercise for improvement of health and well-being, rehabilitation from injury, disability and disease, and training for athletic performance. Optimal physical activity function includes all aspects of this spectrum, and limitations of activity along any part of the spectrum are associated with health problems, functional deficits, and declines in well-being.

Our strategic plan is organized around three themes: educational accountability, research and scholarship synergies, and engaged scholarship to enhance student health. Educational accountability translates into a departmental focus on making our resident instruction curriculum efficient and flexible for our students, while facilitating the empowerment of students to make smart choices throughout their matriculation. We will also focus on providing more student support around issues of professional and ethical conduct, connections with alumni, and student health and well-being. We will also revise our Kinesiology Physical Activity Program to position it to play an important role in the new general education curriculum, particularly around the issue of student health. These latter efforts to revise our undergraduate offerings and our degree of student support in an effort to increase our "accountability" are underscored by the fact that our department influences more Penn State students' lives than any other academic unit apart from the World Campus. Kinesiology enrolls more undergraduates at UP than any other major, provides general education courses to over 8000 students per year, and offers courses at 19 Commonwealth Campuses and on the World Campus. Our goal is to optimize our curriculum for this large number of students and in doing so respond to the growing pressures on higher education to increase accountability for success in learning and improve affordability (3).

Regarding research and scholarship synergies, we recognize that our research funding has declined in recent years, and we will be proactive in strengthening our internal research culture while seeking to capitalize on opportunities that create research synergies with other units within and outside HHD. A key strength that we hope to leverage in these efforts is our expertise in the neural, physiological, biomechanical, and behavioral sciences as they pertain to human movement, physical activity, and health. We will also make concerted efforts to improve our top rated graduate program by using new recruitment strategies, expanding professional development and curricular opportunities, and seeking additional funding sources.

Our service and outreach efforts will emphasize engaged scholarship (4) to enhance student health. Building on our existing unique offerings through our Kinesiology Physical Activity Program (KPAP) and Continuing Education courses that highlight out of classroom experiences, we will seek to grow and interconnect our Exercise is Medicine (EIM) and Center for Fitness and Wellness (CFW) efforts with other units within and outside CHHD with the goal of increasing service learning opportunities for our students while directly impacting the health of the Penn State and surrounding community.

To enhance the visibility and sustainability of our accomplishments, the Department will play a more proactive role in working with the HHD Communications and Development offices to promote our research, teaching, and outreach activities and accomplishments to society and to key stakeholders. We seek to improve connections with our alumni and foster the development of increased philanthropic opportunities.

Educational Accountability

GOAL:

Recognizing that our department influences more UP students' lives than any other academic unit as Kinesiology majors and through general education, we plan to optimize educational experiences in Kinesiology for the 21st century learner using a student centered approach that emphasizes educational accountability.

ACTIONS:

- Hire 6 new tenure track faculty and 4 new instructors for resident instruction
- Revise the resident instruction curriculum to include more selective recruitment, increased efficiency, innovative opportunities for active learning, and evidence based strategies to enhance student learning
- Work with the Harrisburg/York, Altoona, and Behrend Campus faculty to ensure a successful P3 process
- Integrate technology in and out of the classroom to enhance student learning and facilitate delivery of the curriculum to UP and campus students (i.e., presence on World Campus, E-Learning Cooperative, Angel and use of technology in practiced based settings).
- Increase Kinesiology offerings on the World Campus
- Develop strategies to facilitate students' responsibility and accountability for their education, professional development, and personal health
- Adapt the Kinesiology Physical Activity Program to play an important role in the new landscape of General Education at Penn State
- Secure resources for a full time website technician to improve accessibility to information about curriculum and educational opportunities
- Secure resources to develop new and existing courses and on-line and to introduce new technology in practice based settings
- Revise our departmental website to feature unique aspects of our undergraduate resident instruction program and our KPAP program, and include consolidated content for specific use by current and future students

Research and Scholarship Synergies

GOAL 1:

Increase our research capacity by building on and leveraging our expertise in the neural, physiological, biomechanical, and behavioral mechanisms underlying human movement and physical activity-induced health benefits by galvanizing our internal resources while capitalizing on opportunities for synergism.

ACTIONS:

- Leverage our unique strength in the study of mechanisms underlying human movement, physical activity, and health interventions to attract new resources and new collaborators
- Hire new faculty that build on existing strengths but bring potential for synergies within and outside our department. Example areas of focus where we have a critical mass include:
 - Physical activity and health across the lifespan
 - Motivation and physical activity behavior
 - Neuroscience/brain and human movement
 - Women's health
 - Aging
- Explore opportunistic faculty hires when there are synergies that will strengthen our research portfolio
- Explore opportunities for seed funding and other support for biomedical research

- Facilitate integration of our faculty with new and existing units in and outside of HHD e.g. HHD Centers, Hershey, Departments of Nutritional Sciences, Biobehavioral Health, Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Management
- Enhance our internal research culture through development of internal peer review, increased recognition of research accomplishments, direction of additional resources to research efforts
- Revise our departmental website to showcase our research strengths to potential colleagues, students, donors, and other stakeholders

GOAL 2:

Further enhance our #1 ranked graduate program to improve research productivity and include more experiences and opportunities that reflect greater integration and enhanced professional development.

ACTIONS:

- Explore and secure new funding opportunities for students through partnerships with KPAP, CFW, reciprocal arrangements with IGDP's, and possibly the HHD Development office.
- Increase graduate student diversity via proactive recruitment efforts (e.g. Healthy People Penn State, GRE database search)
- Increase graduate course offerings
- Enhance professional training and development opportunities by participating in the CTSI dual-title Ph.D. program and by fostering connections with colleagues and Kinesiology alumni in industry and other careers outside academe.
- Revise our department website to feature research accomplishments of our graduate students

Engaged Scholarship to Improve Health

GOAL:

Expanding on our Exercise is Medicine (EIM) initiative and the activities of our Center for Fitness and Wellness (CFW), our service and outreach efforts will prioritize service learning and engaged scholarship experiences to translate new knowledge to improve the health of Penn State students and our community.

ACTIONS:

- Integrate the translation of new knowledge about physical activity and health throughout our service and outreach activities
- Explore opportunities to integrate and expand our EIM and CFW activities to include other University and community stakeholders, including the hiring of an outreach coordinator
- Revise our departmental website to include pages devoted to EIM and CFW, and to feature other unique opportunities for engaged scholarship

References

1. <http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/overview.aspx?topicid=33>
2. US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. 2008 Physical activity guidelines for Americans. Washington: HHS; 2008 <http://www.health.gov/PAGuidelines/>
3. http://chronicle.texterity.com/chronicle/20131101a?sub_id=YiiZ7ceEGmf4#pg6
4. <http://www.outreach.psu.edu/engaged-scholarship/engaged-scholarship-at-penn-state/>