



Dr. Chuck Layne

Greetings and welcome to the Fall 2008 HHP TODAY newsletter. It has been a busy time since our last edition. The end of the spring semester was an especially exciting time for HHP. We honored our outstanding undergraduate and graduate students in a ceremony at Shasta's Café in the Cameron building; we participated in the College of Education's "Showcase of Stars" where more of our students were honored for their achievements, and the next day we graduated 145 students with bachelor's degrees and around 20 with graduate degrees in our spring convocation ceremony. The following weekend we hosted the Great Strides walkathon to benefit the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. Over 500 participants raised around \$750,000 with the goal of finding a cure for cystic fibrosis.

Perhaps the highlight of the spring semester was a visit, to the College of Education, by our new UH Chancellor and President Dr. Renu Khator. During her visit she met with students and faculty and had the opportunity to learn about the many exiting events and accomplishments of our department. Finally, in late May, we signed a contract to utilize space in the National Center of Human Performance in the Texas Medical Center. We anticipate an increase in collaboration with many medical and health-related organizations that will enhance both our research productivity and the experiences of our students.

In this issue you will read about Dr. McFarlin in our Faculty Spotlight section, the Texas Tobacco Prevention Initiative, HHP's initial steps to use Second Life for education, and our featured alumnus. I would like to remind you that we have added an HHP Alumni link to our main web page, <http://hhp.uh.edu/alumni>. I invite you to take a look and update your contact information so that we can be sure you are receiving the most up to date information about HHP.

You can follow all the excitement in HHP by checking the Current Events page on our website at <http://hhp.uh.edu/Currentevents/currentevents.cfm>. If you or another HHP alumnus you know is doing something that you think would be interesting to your fellow alums please let me know and we may just feature them in our next Alumni Spotlight. Please e-mail me at clayne2@uh.edu. Have a happy and healthy fall. Go Coogs!

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Several significant changes in HHP personnel have occurred since the spring. We will move into the future without two outstanding faculty members, Dr. Max Kurz and Dr. Jill Bush. Both professors left HHP to accept positions at other institutions. We wish them the best of luck. Despite the departure of Drs. Bush and Kurz, our exceptional faculty was further enhanced with the additions of Dr. Rickie Simpson and Dr. Bill Paloski. Dr. Simpson is a highly skilled physiologist whose research will focus on obesity and exercise-related issues. He comes to us from Napier University, Scotland. Dr. Paloski is joining us after a long, distinguished career at NASA-Johnson Space Center where he worked in the Neuroscience Laboratory. Dr. Paloski will investigate posture and locomotion issues including those of patient populations and astronauts.

Another exciting development is HHP's venture into the 3-D immersive world of Second Life. Second Life enables your avatar (your digital representative) to navigate buildings and parks, attend concerts, chat, spend and earn Linden dollars (Second Life's own currency) and take education courses just like you would in real life. The university recently funded several HHP professors to develop courses that will be delivered through the Second Life medium. We have also been awarded funding from the Second Life and Public Good Community Challenge to promote obesity literacy. This project is being sponsored by our Texas Obesity Research Center. We have already built a virtual campus, modeled after some of America's great Ivy League campuses, including a bell tower and a Quad area. We are very excited about this new venture and hope you will join us in Second Life soon. When you enter Second Life at <http://secondlife.com/> search for Earnest Thorne and I'll give you a tour of our HHP at UH campus.



Scene from Second Life

understanding, developing and promoting a healthy lifestyle



Dr. Brian McFarlin

Q. Your undergraduate degree is in Exercise Science and you received your MS and Ph.D. in Exercise Physiology. Did you choose nutrition for your post-doc work based on your knowledge of exercise science?

A. I chose nutrition for a post doctoral specialization because many of its core concepts are extremely important to the understanding of the body's physiological response to exercise.

Q. In both 2007 and 2008 you earned the UH Teaching Excellence Award. What is your favorite proven method for engaging students? Do you use a combination of face-to-face teaching and technology?

A. It is truly an honor to be the first professor in the university's history to receive the prestigious UH Teaching Excellence Award two years in a row. All of the courses that I teach have a heavy dose of technology that is designed to facilitate and enhance learning. I've also published two program evaluations that prove my approach improves learning of complex material. I think a unique aspect of my approach is that, despite high enrollment numbers (150+ student per class), I believe that I have been fairly effective in providing unique, customized learning experiences to my students.

Q. You are a proponent of using technology in new ways as a teaching tool. Tell us about the different ways you are currently using it and in what direction you'd like to steer it in the future.

A. The key is not necessarily the technology, but rather what it accomplishes. I often try out new things; if the students like them I keep using them, if not, I discard them. Right now I am using a lot of podcasting (via the iTunes store) and efforts to produce content that can be viewed on mobile phones. I also have a grant from the UH office of educational technology and university outreach to develop the Second Life virtual world as a medium for teaching. The SL project is currently in the development stages and our first trial modules will be in place by January 2009.

Q. Much of your research deals with obesity. Is it primarily nutrition based or a combination of nutrition and exercise science and physiology?

A. I am very lucky to have a hard working group of graduate students that make all of our research efforts possible. With that said, our research combines aspects of nutrition, physiology, and immunology. By blending skill sets from these fields we are able to answer a variety of novel and important research questions.

Q. You are a member of several organizations including The American College of Sports Medicine and the American Physiological Society. Do these connections feed into your research and teaching?

A. Professional membership has allowed me to network with various professional colleagues who share my interests, but work at other institutions. It was through the ACSM 3 years ago that I developed a thriving research collaboration with Dr. Rickie Simpson, who recently joined the HHP department as an assistant professor. I strongly suggest that everyone takes the opportunity to support their field of study.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Christi Window

Christi Window earned her B.S. in Exercise Science with a minor in Business Administration in 2005. She was also one of the founding members of the Health & Human Performance Majors Society, as well as an active member of the Allied Health Professions Society.

During her last semester at UH, Christi participated in the Internship program and worked with orthopaedic surgeon Dr. Walt Lowe, the team physician for Cougar Athletics. She continued working for him while applying to PA school but, because of limited space in the program, Christi was put on a waiting list. She subsequently took advantage of a great opportunity that came up in the meantime. She became a sales representative for the company Arthrex, a manufacturer and distributor of orthopaedic medical devices.

Christi told us, "Many of the companies seeking sales reps in this industry are looking for business professionals, but Arthrex saw it as an asset that I not only had a minor in business administration, but also had knowledge of

human anatomy and would understand what I was selling."

During her interview they asked, "You may not know this, but what are the 4 muscles of the rotator cuff?" She immediately responded, "Supraspinatus, infraspinatus, teres minor, and subscapularis." They were so impressed they hired her right away and, she's so good at her job, within 2 years she became a Territory Manager in a male-dominated field.

Christi's exercise science degree has helped her out tremendously in her career, and she attributes her success to the education she received from HHP. She has been able to relate many of the concepts she learned at UH to the real life situations she faces daily. Her job not only consists of selling equipment and implants used for surgery, but she actually works with the surgeons in the operating room by guiding them in the safe placement of the orthopaedic devices.

Christi told us she plans to remain with Arthrex as Territory Manager for the Southwest region of Houston, and further her education by obtaining her masters degree.

She added enthusiastically, "In the spring I will marry former UH football player Matt Schirmer, whom I met during my first year at UH. GO COOGS!"



School Capacity Building Toolkit

HNETS launches a new School Capacity-Building Toolkit!

Built from a previous website for Texas campuses and regional and state administrators, the Toolkit offers schools throughout the state research-tested tools to assess their capacity to implement alcohol, tobacco and substance abuse prevention programs. The website includes a school assessment survey, a real-time summary report of the campus situation, and dynamic tools for on-line development of an action plan.

All 20 Texas Educational Service Center health coordinators are charged with distributing the toolkit statewide. School health coordinators and School Health Advisory Committees (SHAC), safe drug-free school coordinators, and substance-abuse prevention specialists in the Prevention Network are being recruited as users by Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS), in collaboration with the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Currently TDSHS and TEA are making a film to highlight the new website for Education Service Centers, school districts and individual schools.

Bridge-It is the name of the research-based survey providing the foundation for the website. The original model was funded by the National Cancer Institute. The survey and toolkit have been adapted for statewide use in Texas through funding to Dr. Gingiss and associates in Health Network for Evaluation and Training Systems (HNETS). Eight years of funding to HNETS by the Texas Department of State Health Services' Tobacco Prevention Initiative allowed us to follow participating schools over many years to determine if the model successfully predicted factors contributing to school use of new programs. Multiple research studies have demonstrated that the model is empirically grounded, has demonstrated its reliability and validity in multiple applications, established its field-based predictive validity and the usability of the web-based edition.



Teacher counseling a student

Examples of applications over time have included: 1) A longitudinal assessment of state-funded multi-component school-based health centers; 2) planning and evaluating systems for increasing the use of Heart Health curricula in schools; 3) uses by several Indiana State agencies; 4) a city-wide early childhood immunization program with hospital and community-based components; 5) evaluating readiness for Protecting You/Protecting Me alcohol prevention in elementary schools; 6) the Texas Tobacco Prevention Initiative school-centered programs; and 7) Friendly Families Friendly Schools: A Capacity-Building Bullying Reduction Program in Western Australia.

Our latest research partners in the US, Canada and Europe are applying Bridge-It to identify if the infrastructures and capacities of participating project sites predispose them to successful implementation of a Childhood Obesity Program at Stanford University; a teen drug, sexuality and violence prevention program to be used by schools in all Canadian Provinces, and the readiness of social services to implement an evidence-based program to assist families in Denmark with children suffering from behavior problems such as ADCH, ODD, CD.

Check out the new website:
<http://scbtoolkit.coe.uh.edu/>

For more information about the program and what we're learning from it, contact Dr. Phyllis Gingiss, Professor of Public Health Education, Department of Health and Human Performance at 713/743-9843
pmgingiss@uh.edu

COMMUNITY OUTREACH



Many alumni remember Dr. Andrew “Tony” Jackson, esteemed professor of measurement and pundit of life’s lessons. This year we established the Dr. “Tony” Jackson Scholarship and celebrated its initiation with a bobble head figurine of him. All donations to this scholarship will go to support HHP students and, for your contribution, you will receive the bobble head.

If you are interested in contributing to the fund, or just want to be the first on the block to have your very own “Tony” Jackson bobble head, please contact Todd Boutte at tboutte@mail.coe.uh.edu or call 713.743.0571.



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