On July 2, 2021, USA Today, reported that “swimming caps designed to encourage Afro swimmers with long, thick and voluminous hair that may be styled in dreadlocks, to pursue their sport without barriers have been banned for use in the upcoming Tokyo Olympics. FINA said the caps do not “fit the natural form of the head and to their best knowledge the athletes competing at international events never used, neither require caps of such size and configuration”.

FINA (Federation Internationale de Natation) (https://www.fina.org/) is the governing body that oversees the rules for swimming.

They have rules to cover the types of swim gear that athletes can wear at international competitions, such as the Olympics.

We all know organized sports have rules. Three strikes and you are out. Starting a race before the gun. Fouling out through...
aggressive behavior. These are all examples of rules governing how players behave in games. Organized sports also have very strict rules about the equipment that is used. Over the last 25 years, especially, technology has produced great advances in all types of sports equipment. Running shoes, golf clubs, swimsuits, bicycles, and tennis racquets have all been modernized substantially from their predecessors. These advances, have helped athletes continuously achieve higher levels of performance.

The referenced caps are known as SOUL CAPs (https://soulcap.com/) and their byline is “Big hair deserves big care”. Two college students in England met at the gym and decided they wanted to learn how to swim. As they took up swimming they befriended a woman with an Afro natural hairstyle, who complained that swim caps did not fit well and did not protect her hair. They clearly recognized that Black hair is very different and requires different attention. So, the two friends decided to go into business and find a solution. After many designs, they came up with the SOUL CAP – see photo from their web site. They have to date sold more than 30,000 caps to people all over the world. Alice Dearing is the first Black female swimmer on Team Great Britain at the Olympics. Accordingly, she is in a position to understand the value of the SOUL CAP, and she endorses them (https://soulcap.com/editorial/gb-swimmer-alice-dearing-partners-with-soul-cap-to-break-down-barriers-for-bame-swimmers).

I found some references on the internet that explained the differences between Black, Caucasian, and Asian hair structure. I also found several popular texts on how to specifically take care of Black hair including one called “The Science of Black Hair” that starts by explaining the structure and form of Black hair, hair chemistry including water issues, on through management and treatment of Black hair. While I visually recognize that my White hair is different, I learned more about some of the specific issues that are different with Black hair that need specific attention.

SOUL CAP recently posted the following announcement on their website: “Thank you for your overwhelming support. We’re seeing a huge number of new orders coming in – and it could take an extra 14 days to get your SOUL CAP. We’re doing everything we can to get your caps out to you as fast as possible – so please bear with us!”

A concern from many in the swimming community is that if the ban continues, it may negate positive steps to remove a barrier to participation among Black swimmers. This in turn will reduce the number of successful Black swimmers who can serve as role models and promote the sport among underrepresented groups. In effect, it might create a negative selection bias against Black athletes. FINA has received backlash about their decision and issued a statement that they are reviewing the claims of racial bias and the use of the cap “understanding the importance of inclusivity and representation”. A petition has been started and already more than 50,000 people have signed in favor of permitting SOUL CAPS.

To date, there appears to be no evidence that the SOUL CAP produces an unfair competitive advantage and the ban...
is therefore not based on issues related to swimming performance. I encourage you to become active in any way you can to help support positive change.

I wanted to learn a little more about the SOUL CAP issue from an individual actively involved in the swimming community. I was referred to Dr. Asherah Allen, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Kinesiology and Recreation Administration at North Carolina Central University. Dr. Allen conducts research on aquatics in Historically Black Colleges and Universities. She is also the HBCU Council Chair for Diversity In Aquatics, Creator of the blog called Black Girl Swim, and an advocate for overall health and wellness through physical education.

Have you had any experience with SOUL CAPS and what is your impression of their effectiveness?

Yes, I have worn Soul Cap and other swim caps that are from Black-owned companies and that are more accommodating to black people and our hairstyles, like Swimma Caps and swim scarf. I believe that they are very necessary and contribute to the self-efficacy, self-esteem, and motivation of black swimmers, especially black women. They are quality caps and do a good job of creating a barrier between the chlorinated water and our hair. Not only do we have to take into consideration the differences in our hair type (coils and porosity) but we often time spend lots of time and money on hair styles like braid and locs. We want to be able to participate and engage in aquatic activities without messing up our hairstyles quicker than we would like.

If the caps are banned, what influence do you think that might have on young Black children and their involvement in swimming?

The ban on swim caps that are specifically made with black hair in mind would be detrimental, in my opinion. Throughout history, Black people and our customs/culture have been after thoughts, not being allowed in the mainstream. Those systematic barriers and rules have historically been put in place with the purpose of keeping us out. This situation is no different. The FINA ban has the potential to send a message telling Black swimmers that there is no space for Black swimmers to swim competitively and on elite levels due to our differences. Many people in the Black community and Black swimming community experience these barriers constantly, which have contributed to the high percentage of black adults and children not being able to swim. Over the last few years, there have been improvements made, which has been due to ongoing research and programming efforts from people in organizations like Diversity In Aquatics and Swim1922, and on social media pages like Black Girl Swim, My Swim Village, and Afro Swimmers. I do believe that we will continue to work towards inclusion, as well as creating our own spaces where we can have adequate and accurate representation that will help us to continue to flourish in aquatics.

What would you suggest should be done to demonstrate that the SOUL CAPS do not provide an unfair advantage?

I would suggest that FINA and Olympic officials take the time to do intentional research with Black swimmers and with these Black-owned companies. Have conversations to really try and gain understanding as to why these caps are needed in the first place. More Black people are gaining interest in swimming and are phenomenal at it! With that progression comes change and FINA, USA Swimming, and other organizations should be open to learning and making accommodations.

Readers are also directed to the Diversity in Aquatics website. https://www.diversity-inaquatics.org/. “The mission of diversity in aquatics to educate, promote and support swimming, water safety, and healthy aquatics activities for vulnerable populations.”

Harlem Lacrosse Has a Mission to Change Lives

By Amy Rose, KT Staff Writer

The mission of Harlem Lacrosse is “to provide opportunities, relationships, and experiences that activate the skills and traits to put youth on a path to success as students, athletes, and citizens”. This is a simplified statement of what this school-based, non-profit organization does for the student athletes and staff involved in that mission. Their vision statement is “to empower the kids who are most at risk for academic decline and dropout to rise above their challenges and reach their full potential.” By using the sport of Lacrosse as a starting point and a common bond, Harlem Lacrosse is impacting the lives of over 1,000 students nationwide. They support 19 programs across five major cities.

Michael Levin, Chief Executive Officer of Harlem Lacrosse, says the programs reach “many students whose needs are not being met by the schools they are attending.” The program directors act as coaches, mentors, advocates and tutors to the student athletes at practice, on the field and in the classroom. Levin, who was a two-time All-American player at Brown University and won two Major League Lacrosse championships, says the program creates a unique bond that helps the students not only with sport development, but with social-emotional growth, behavior skills and academic success.

Cities currently served by Harlem Lacrosse are New York, Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia and Los Angeles. The structure of the program involves a boys’ and girls’ program director in middle schools within each city. Two to three middle school programs feed into a high school. A local executive director manages the program at an organizational level for each city. There are also paid assistants and volunteers that help with the programming in the schools.

Bart Farinholt, a graduate of AKA-member Denison University, has been a program director in New York City for four years. He says Lacrosse is the hook to get kids involved in the program, but it is really more of an intervention program. “We wouldn’t have this big of an impact if we weren’t involved in the schools. We are part of the community,” Farinholt said.

Lacrosse is introduced in gym class at the middle school level. Not many of the kids in these inner city schools get a chance to play organized sports, so this gives them an opportunity to have the experience of being on a team and the expectations and accomplishments that come with that. “It gives them a chance to be a part of something bigger than themselves. They don’t
have a lot of opportunities for that,” said Farinholt, who played Division III Lacrosse at Denison and made the NCAA tournament three times.

Farinholt says his teams mainly practice on handball courts, which is great for training at the middle school level. They play a form of Box Lacrosse, which is popular in Canada. To play on a field, the team must travel to Randall’s Island, which is hard to get to from their school. “People don’t realize what our kids go through just to find a place to play”, he said. After practice, the team has study hall and tutoring with the coaches. The Harlem Lacrosse staff members are not only expected to be competent at teaching the game of Lacrosse, but they also receive training in skills such as controlling classrooms, social and behavioral interventions, neuroscience and trauma-informed coaching. In the school system, the coaches really act more as a guidance counselor than a teacher, says Levine.

Davon Johnson, who now plays Division I Lacrosse at the University of Albany, is a just one example of the many success stories for Harlem Lacrosse students. The program filled a need for him to stay focused and have accountability. “They used the school-based model to help keep me focused in school, while building a relationship with me. They used lacrosse as a carrot to incentivize me to stick around. Then once I loved lacrosse, they used it as an incentive to do better in school. This is where the accountability piece comes in for me. If I didn’t go to class or do my homework, I couldn’t practice. If I didn’t show up to study hall, I couldn’t practice. It made me want to do better in school and as a result, I did,” Johnson said. “The program has helped me grow and develop in my personal and emotional life more than anything. Outside of lacrosse, it gave me things to aspire to, a fire and drive to be positively productive for my future. It gave me people that had different experiences the opportunity to share their stories with me, exposing me to new ideas and opening my mind.” Johnson often comes back and shares his struggles and experiences with current students to motivate them to achieve their goals. “Harlem Lacrosse does not invest just lacrosse sticks and tutors for our kids. They collectively invest their own time, emotions, resources, love, and support. A large majority of our program directors start working with us in their early to mid-teens, just as we grow up with them - they grow up with us. They become our big brothers and sisters we can look up to and trust, some even become father and mother figures. It is really something to be a part of and I can’t imagine my life without them,” Johnson says.

There is no cost to student athletes to participate in the Harlem Lacrosse program. They are not expected to purchase equipment or uniforms and do not pay travel expenses. The program is supported by financial sponsors, such as New Balance,
and receives generous donations of equipment and other needs from supporters. “The lacrosse community at large has been supportive,” says Levin. “The longer we are around, the more people are aware of us and that has led to some great opportunities for our kids.” Some kids are offered scholarships to summer camps and boarding schools to work on their Lacrosse over the summer and gain valuable life skills. “I was very naïve before I started working for Harlem Lacrosse,” said Farinholt. The student athletes served by the program have many daily struggles that many are unaware of, which makes their commitment to the sport even more impressive. “People don’t understand the obstacles our kids go through,” he said. The coaching staff helps to prepare the athletes for various situations that might arise during matches and tournaments, including teaching them how to navigate in a predominantly white environment. “We want them to know that we have their back and we will withdraw from a match, if they are being mistreated.”

Levine and Farinholt both feel that the involvement of Harlem Lacrosse athletes has been a positive growing experience for the Lacrosse Community as well. Levine sees Harlem Lacrosse as an advocacy agent to help break down racial and economic divides within the sport. “There has been some conflict, but over all that is how progress is made,” he said. Levine hopes to take those experiences and push towards more progress. He also sees Harlem Lacrosse developing their program to provide more long-term support for their alumni, including college counseling and career development.

A Harlem Lacrosse team in New York City

To find out more about Harlem Lacrosse and how you can support the program, visit their website at www.harlemlacrosse.org.
Displeasure With the Olympics in Japan

By Penny McCullagh, Ph.D., KT Editor

In the Fall 2020 issue of KT, I wrote an article based on the enthusiasm of Dr. Bruce Kidd for the upcoming Tokyo Olympics. Dr. Kidd is a professor and expert on the Olympics and public policy. The KT article was a follow-up to one published in The Conversation, and Kidd expressed hope that the Japan Olympics could help affirm internationalism and intercultural understanding. He expressed hope that the International Olympic Committee would work with the World Health Organization to ensure that the vaccine would be available and help protect the participants. He envisioned that the games would help bring people from around the world together and demonstrate that the Olympic movement opposes discrimination of all kinds.

Kidd’s enthusiasm back in the Fall of 2020 has been overshadowed by data that suggests that 83% of the Japanese public want the games canceled. Dr. Mark Wilson (2021) of the Department of Urban & Regional Planning at Michigan State University, in his recent article suggests that Japan made a lot of efforts early on to engage the public and there were hopes that the games would help the country recover from a tsunami and the Fukushima nuclear disaster. However, according to Wilson, the Japan embassy issued a statement on May 25, 2021 saying “U.S. citizens are strongly discouraged from traveling to Japan” echoing the concerns of the Japanese public. Much of the revenue from broadcasting (there will be few spectators) will go directly to the IOC. The local economy which typically benefits from hotels, restaurants, and other travel will not occur. Wilson does not think that the opportunity at future sites will be detrimental because many of them will be using venues that have already been built.

Given the potential negativity and receptivity of athletes to Japan, I wanted to follow up with Dr. Kidd to determine his view, given the current situation.

Each country will determine whether their athletes will attend the Olympics. As a former Olympian yourself, how do you think you could reconcile either not attending, or attending but not having a full slate of athletes from all countries to compete against?

Kidd: I understand that there are athletes from various countries who have decided not to compete, athletes who have been prevented from qualifying because of the challenges of COVID, and athletes intent upon going ahead, even though they realize that there may not be a full slate of competitors or Japanese public opinion is so unsupportive. These are very difficult, highly personal decisions, and I think every athlete should be supported as they consider all the issues. I do not criticize anyone for what they decide. If it was me, I think I would still want to be there, to be part of the world sports community coming together for competi-
tion and togetherness at a difficult time. It strikes me as similar to the 1948 Olympics in London, when most athletes chose to compete, even if they suffered food shortages, had to train in bombed-out facilities and knew that competitors from Germany and Japan were barred from the Games. The overarching spirit was to be there with everyone else.

Some countries have had relatively closed borders during the pandemic. For example, Australia and Canada have had strict border restrictions. Fully vaccinated Australians will attend the games but will need to quarantine for 14 days upon return. Canada is still making decisions on attending. Are you aware of anyone who is currently helping the athletes navigate these difficult times?

Kidd: I understand that all Canadian athletes in Tokyo will be vaccinated. I also know that there has been an ongoing discussion about the issues among many athletes in Canada, coordinated by athletes’ leaders such as trampolinist Rosie MacLennan and the Tokyo chef de mission, Marnie McBean. From what I understand, athletes hold many different viewpoints but the overwhelming majority has decided to attend.

I wanted to get an impression from someone who has had a lot of personal professional experience working with elite athletes. I asked Dr. Dan Gould, Professor of Kinesiology at Michigan State University and director of the Institute for the Study of Youth Sports the following question:

Gould: The popularity and worldwide audience for the Olympic Games make them very special for athletes. They are often viewed as the most important competition in one’s athletic career and most athletes have been training for years to have the opportunity to participate in them. In addition, because the Games only occur every four years athletes have only a very limited number of chances to participate in them. For these reasons, not having the opportunity to compete in one’s Olympic Games can be devastating for elite athletes who have devoted so much of their lives to the pursuit of their Olympic dream. Olympic Committees around the world need to provide support systems for athletes who are qualified to attend the Tokyo Games but are unable to do so because of COVID concerns. Social support from their coaches, significant others, sport administrations and /or sport psychology staff (if available) is needed. Expect athletes to be distraught upon learning of the decision and allow them time to
vent their feelings while making sure they understand the rationale for any decisions made. Empathetic and non-judgmental listening is critical. They might be upset, moody and mad at the world for a while. Given how difficult this disappointment is, one meeting will not be enough – let the athletes have some time to come to terms with the decision and deal with their disappointment (which may never completely go away), check in to see how they are coping with the disappointment and then, when they are ready hold additional meetings to discuss the future with them. Do they want to continue their career and train for the next Olympics? Are they considering ending their athletic career and retiring? If retiring, help them identify all the benefits they have achieved from their athletic career, identify the life skills they have learned from participating and how these can be transferred to the next chapter of their lives and provide assistance in helping them make the transition. For those continuing their athletic careers help them develop their plan to make the next Olympic run while stressing other major competitions (e.g., yearly world championships) they can still participate, enjoy and have success in. Finally, recognize the vast individual differences in athletes’ reactions to such a disappointment – some will deal with it more quickly and effectively than others while others may really struggle for some time and need regular support. In any event, support for these athletes is essential.

Wilson, M. (2021). Anger in Tokyo over the Summer Olympics is just the latest example of how unpopular hosting the games has become. The Conversation, May 26.

The remarks above by Kidd and Gould were provided before the Olympics began. Dan Gould provided these additional comments on August 1.

As a postscript to these comments, what we have seen in the first week of the Olympic Games certainly highlights the importance of providing psychological training for athletes, and the coaches helping them, going to the Olympics, especially in this social media age where event importance gets magnified to extreme levels. Our research on Olympic athletes also shows that this training needs to begin at least 18 months prior to the Games to be effective and in my opinion is something we should focus on with all young athletes – helping them learn how to deal with stress and how to handle success and failure. If sport is done right and intentionally focuses on personal development in addition to winning, it can help all participants function more effectively psychologically on and off the field. Additionally, the Simone Biles situation emphasizes the importance of focusing on athlete mental health. This is not only important for elite athletes but young people in general as our research on Gen Z junior athletes indicates that they are reported to be less able to cope with adversity and handle stress. We need to ask what role kinesiology-based knowledge can play in helping young people who play sport develop more effective coping skills. Additionally, as our sociology and philosophy kinesiology colleagues have stressed, we need to think about how we structure sport so winning is kept in perspective and the varied development outcomes for the participants maximized.
Summer is finally upon us! I hope everyone’s spring semester ended well. It was remarkable to see the range of commencement ceremonies that took place across the country. Although our celebrations had a different format than in previous years, it was great to commemorate our students’ successes. I am grateful for the dedication you have shown during the past academic year, and I hope you get a chance this summer to relax and recharge. A lot has been happening in AKA over the past couple of months. The Executive Committee has nearly finished a thorough review of our bylaws and operating codes. We will soon be sending proposed bylaws revisions to the Board. Following that, the EC will finish revising the operating codes. I want to thank everyone involved in the process. It started with input from each of our standing committees and involved work by everyone on the EC.

The EC has also been diligently working on our yearly processes to transition individuals into new leadership opportunities. We have identified a slate of nominees for the Board to fill the five spots that will open next January. The Board is currently considering the slate. With the revisions to the bylaws and operating codes, we have delayed slightly our process related to the nomination of new officers. We expect that will still occur this summer in keeping with our traditional practices. The co-directors of the Leadership Institute, Mary Rudisill and Janet Buckworth, have identified a list of candidates for the next cohort. The EC will be reviewing their recommendations soon. Additionally, the Leadership Institute is continuing its great programming for the current cohort. The 11 participants and six mentors held their first webinar in March. The next one is scheduled for July 29. Topics for September and November have already been identified. I thank Mary and Janet for their tremendous leadership in this important AKA program. I also want to welcome Nancy Williams to the Leadership Institute team. She will be assuming the co-director role with Janet Buckworth when Mary rotates off. Mary served two years as director and then co-director. Her service came at a critical time for the recently conceived program and her leadership gave it the stability it needed to ensure we continue to offer the highest quality mentoring to developing leaders from AKA member units.

I also want to provide an update on some of the Undergraduate Network activities this year. As you might recall, the Undergraduate and Graduate Networks were developed last year under the leadership of Past President Al Smith. The teams led by Steve Petruzello (graduate) and Heather van Mullem (undergraduate) did a fantastic job on the 2021 pre-workshop sessions. The goal was to use the networks to expand connections among members and provide additional learning opportunities throughout the year. The Undergraduate Network recently held their Summer Connect webinar in June and have a second webinar scheduled for July. They are also developing a survey to gather information about career preparation advice for our subdisciplinary areas.

Finally, I want to share some updates about the 2022 AKA Leadership Workshop
in Albuquerque, NM next January. The Workshop Planning Committee – Karen Francis, Lara Duke, Ting Liu, and me – has made good progress on our program. Both the Undergraduate and Graduate Networks are busy planning their respective pre-workshop sessions. Planning is also well under way for the popular Dean’s Forum and the Fireside Chat. The working title for the workshop theme is Leadership for the future: Vision, values, and practice. We are excited to be working on a variety of sessions that we hope will deliver the high-quality AKA experience you have come to expect. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee is working with Members-at-Large Jared Russell and Lara Duke to develop a session and make connections with people who can give us insight into culture and traditions in Albuquerque and the region. Lara Duke and Ting Liu have been working on a session – Promoting Collaborative Leadership through Intentional Dialogue – that promises to get you on your feet and talking about important leadership issues. Their innovative approach will allow you to help shape the focus of the session and will prepare you to carry the results beyond the workshop. Other proposed sessions include a panel on the future of kinesiology and a presentation on forward-thinking curriculum development. As always, I thank you for your continued commitment to AKA, the field of kinesiology, and all those we serve. I am looking forward to seeing you in Albuquerque!

Updates on AKA Business

The Executive Committee has presented a proposal to the Board of Directors to adopt revised bylaws and the vote is pending.

The Board of Directors approved the slate of five new members. We welcome Damon Andrew (Florida State University), Ellen Evans (University of Georgia), Gonzalo Bravo (West Virginia University), Jenny O (California State University East Bay), and Melanie Perrault (SUNY Brockport).
Blood Proteins Could Predict “Trainability”

By Patrick Wade, KT Staff Writer

In another step toward understanding which individuals will respond better to certain kinds of exercise interventions, researcher at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston have identified 147 specific blood proteins that are associated with a person's baseline fitness level and their “trainability.” Although personalized fitness plans based on your blood profile is still a long way away, researchers say, this new understanding of a person's blood-carrying capacity could in the future help us predict how well a person will respond to exercise and help to identify some of their future health risks as well.

The research, published in May in the journal Nature Metabolism, started with the acknowledgement that our understanding of how cardiorespiratory fitness affects the body on a biochemical level and how it relates to long-term health is incomplete. “While the health benefits of exercise are universally accepted, I think it’s fair to say that the precise mechanisms by which exercise – say, those 10,000 steps we’re told to take each day – how that translates into the molecular signals that build muscle or improve heart function or activate heart cells remains very poorly understood,” said Dr. Robert Gerszten, the chief of cardiovascular medicine at Beth Deaconess Israel Medical Center.

Gerszten and his team set out to identify those biochemical pathways that result in the beneficial effects of exercise, with the idea being that this could ultimately bring about new treatments for diseases like obesity, diabetes and heart disease. In addition, the research team wanted to get a better understanding of what might be happening on an individual level instead of generalizing about larger groups. “We know that groups as a whole benefit from exercise. If you were going to take 1,000 people and you look at some effect – whether their blood sugar goes down a little bit or their oxygen-carrying capacity goes up – the overall group is going to benefit,” Gerszten said. “But the variability of responses between any two individuals undergoing the very same exercise regimen is actually quite striking.” Some people might improve their endurance, while others reduce blood sugars, Gerszten said. But there is no way to predict what is going to happen or how pronounced the fitness changes will be.

“If we can predict how you are going to respond to a given exercise regimen, then we could use that information to personalize or tailor a regimen to any specific health need that you might be looking for,” Gerszten said. “Ultimately, what we’d like to do is also find the type of exercise that might confer the type of health benefit you’re interested in.”

To learn more, the researchers started by collecting the baseline oxygen-carrying capacity – known as VO\textsubscript{2}max – in 654 healthy but sedentary adults. The participants were then subjected to a 20-week, supervised endurance training regimen before the researchers measured their new VO\textsubscript{2}max. The researchers also took blood samples from the participants before and after the exercise intervention, and they found 147 blood proteins that emanate from bone, muscle and blood vessels that were strongly associated – either positively or negatively – with how much a person's VO\textsubscript{2}max from beginning to end. In other words, these blood proteins were reliable predictors of a person's trainability.

“This gives us hints that many of these (proteins) may be acting in a hormone-
like manner, as if the exercising limbs are then instructing other parts of the body,” Gerszten said. He added that it is a “parts list” of sorts to understand how the body is responding to exercise on a molecular level.

The second important finding was that the proteins were great predictors of how a person would respond to exercise regardless of other factors like obesity, blood sugar levels or pre-exercise fitness. Finally, the researchers found that several of the proteins very strongly associated with fitness were also associated with all-cause mortality in a separate cohort of individuals. “Proteins that were associated with fitness were also associated with death or survival,” Gerszten said. “This highlights the link between cardiorespiratory fitness and long-term health outcomes.”

One of the next steps for the research team will be figuring out how much of this we can control and how much of an individual’s blood protein profile is genetic compared to how much is the result of a person’s environment. Gerszten said that it is premature right now to think that we could take this evidence into a gym and start looking at a person’s blood sample to design a fitness regimen. But it is strong proof of principle that genomic technologies can add to our predictive abilities about how the body is going to respond to certain inputs.

The current study was not designed to gauge what types of exercise might be more beneficial to a person with a certain type of protein. All researchers can say right now is whether your blood profile makes it more or less likely that your endurance will improve after a training regimen. Before we can mix and match exercise regimens for individuals, Gerszten says that future studies must extend his team’s work in larger populations, and ideally populations that have been exposed to different kinds of exercise regimens.

Gerszten said he also believes that this work is an important step in developing a “road map” to individualizing exercise interventions in response to disease and understanding where alternatives may be useful as well. No pill will ever recreate the wide-ranging positive effects of exercise on the body, he said — but on an individual level, clinicians might want to consider how a person will respond. “We’re always going to try exercise first, I’m not going to say that we’re not going to do that,” he said. “But in some individuals who are resistant, it might then tell us that those are individuals who might benefit from exercise plus perhaps an early drug intervention.”

President’s Column

The Induction Period

By Thomas Templin, Ph.D.

Six months have passed since I accepted the role of Executive Director. Not surprisingly, it has been an “action packed” induction period as I have become reacquainted with various activities, events, association bylaws and operating codes, and procedures and duties for not only my role, but the roles of our various leaders. Overall, my decision to accept the position has been reaffirmed. I thank the Executive Committee (EC) and the Board of Directors (BoD) for their confidence in me. I pledge to continue to work diligently on behalf of the nearly 160 member institutions of the association. A number of areas have caught my attention over the last months.

I have been impressed with the commitment and efforts of our leaders on various events and projects. Hardly a day goes by that there isn’t some attention given to the various projects and tasks of the members of our executive committee, our standing committee chairs and members, and most certainly our extraordinary business manager, Kim Scott. There are a few examples:

**Annual Workshop:** This year’s annual workshop under the leadership of President Alan Smith and the workshop planning committee executed a first for the association – a virtual workshop that was conducted flawlessly and addressed various topics of significance to our membership. Thanks to everyone who contributed to the success of this year’s event.

**Membership:** Dan Schmidt and his team have created a wonderful strategy to attract and retain new members as each committee member has been assigned to contact 10 non-member institutions by email and phone. This role has extended to members of the EC and the BoD. We are just starting to see results and so far have increased our membership from 145 members to 152. I ask your help in attracting and inviting non-members to consider joining AKA. I believe the benefits are numerous to the leaders in our field.

**Awards:** Under the able leadership of Mi-Sook Kim, the awards committee conducted its annual process of recognizing outstanding undergraduate and graduate students throughout the country. See our website for a list of this year’s recipients. This year each winner received a medalion to be worn at the individual’s graduation ceremony. This was extended to the nominees for the award as well. Also, in the future each winner will receive a $100 gift card from Amazon. This committee is busy on various other projects as well including conducting a survey of our member institution about the awards process.

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** Led by Harald Barkhoff, the committee is focusing on redefining the rubrics for the review of the association’s diversity award nominees. Also, the committee has teamed up with the Communication and Marketing committee lead by Paul Carpenter, to provide webinars focused on various issues related to DEI.
Publications: Quite importantly and in collaboration with the DEI committee, Tim Gavin and his committee are composing an association position statement on diversity and social justice. Also, the committee, in concert with Past President Alan Smith, is working on the Kinesiology Review special issue featuring various topics from this year’s workshop. This area extends to the work of Penny McCullagh, who does a fabulous job putting together our online magazine, Kinesiology Today. Every issue has topics and news of interest and significance to the field of Kinesiology. See all the issues here.

Bylaws and Operating Codes: Under the leadership of President Jeff Fairbrother, the EC just reviewed and updated our bylaws and operating codes at its annual summer retreat. Subsequently, this extensive set of edits will be presented to the BoD for review and approval. They will serve the association well in directing our various leadership roles and activities.

Overall, in a very short period of time, I have been impressed by the various tangible successes and anticipate future achievements of our leadership teams. The examples above represent just some of the wonderful things happening in AKA. I should note that our Leadership Institute as well as our Undergraduate and Graduate Networks are greatly involved in providing first-rate professional development opportunities for our members.

I have concluded that success is tied to individual leadership and member commitment, teamwork, collaboration and a sense of respect and civility amongst our leaders and members not only for the goals of the association, but for one another. It does take a village to progress and thanks to everyone who has contributed so much to AKA over the year. This isn’t easy as we all balance our responsibilities at our universities and colleges with the work of the association. Again, I pledge to do my best to help contribute to the growth and well-being of the association and its members. All the best!!

Watch Dr. Daniel Burt interview Dr. Jared Russell on Facebook.
STEM Education and Kinesiology

By Penny McCullagh, Ph.D., KT Editor

“The Committee on STEM Education (CoSTEM) was established pursuant to the requirements of Section 101 of the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. §6621). In accordance with the Act, the Committee reviews science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education programs, investments, and activities, and the respective assessments of each, in Federal agencies.”

STEM refers to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. One idea however is that STEM education does not just focus on these four disciplines and in recent years there has been an emphasis on expanding to other disciplines and to looking at the interaction between disciplines as opposed to focusing on a single discipline. The U.S. Department of Education announced in November 2020 that during Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, it invested $578 million to support high-quality STEM education https://www.ed.gov/STEMbackground

Another example of Kinesiology links with STEM emanates from work by Dr. Cathy Ennis. Readers are referred to a special issue of Kinesiology Review that highlights many of her contributions (Kinesiology Review, 2018 -Volume 3 – The Legacy of Catherine D. Ennis). Ang Chen, a professor at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) worked with Ennis for years, and continues to work on teaching kinesiology science in physical education. Their group has been successful in securing NIH funding by intertwining STEM concepts into their curricula.

Ang explained, “Our curriculum interventions are about teaching and improving elementary to high school students’ knowledge about kinesiology as related to national science and physical education learning standards as associated with physical activity and healthy lifestyles. My everyday lives and thus may stimulate science engagement” which is a goal of STEM. While the research did not provide strong evidence for the idea, it did provide some ideas how kinesiology can be linked to STEM. https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1209&context=nwijte

From Mars and human health to wildlife and nature’s cures, discover science explorations happening everyday at UNCG.

Geared for high school and college students, as well as adults with senior parents and nature enthusiasts, UNCG’s Science Everywhere provides a glimpse into collegiate research in the fields of biology, chemistry, kinesiology and more. Learn about exciting discoveries at the virtual, free UNCG Science Everywhere.
current project is a five-year physical education intervention study in high schools. The study targets Next Generation Science Standards such as ‘Construct and revise an explanation based on evidence for the cycling of matter and flow of energy in aerobic and anaerobic conditions’ and satisfies national physical education standards. The curriculum integrates technology use (e.g. an APP) for students to calculate caloric balance to understand nutrition science and exercise physiology on energy pathways. Our work has shown students’ knowledge growth in kinesiology science (Sun et al., 2012, https://doi.org/10.1086/667405) as well as confusions without the knowledge (Zhang et al., 2021, https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2021.1901066) in these areas.”

The project’s website is under development and is being migrated to a different platform. Ang can be reached at a.chen@uncg.edu. Here is a link to the pedagogy research lab at UNCG: https://kin.uncg.edu/research/labs/pk-lab/.

Considering that there is a lot of grant funding available for STEM education, it would seem important that kinesiology departments be active in integrating with STEM programs on their campuses if learning about kinesiology-related topics can help improve the education of students in the schools.

Dr. Chris Rhea is an Associate Professor in one of our member departments at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG). He is also the Director of the UNCG Research and Instruction in STEM Education (RISE) Network. https://rise.uncg.edu/

I wanted to learn a little more about his role and his department’s role in STEM on their campus in the hopes that other departments might value this information.

**How did your department and you specifically get involved in STEM on your campus? Can you provide us a brief history?**

Our department has a long history of interdisciplinary collaboration. I suspect that is the case for many kinesiology departments, as that is the nature of our discipline. Our department’s interdisciplinary connections have led to many formal and informal STEM touch points on campus. For example, our RISE Network started over a decade ago as an organic group of faculty members broadly interested in STEM education. Cathy Ennis was on our faculty when I started and she was part of the RISE Network, as her and Ang Chen’s work focused on creative ways to embed STEM concepts in K-12 physical education curriculum. Cathy encouraged me to get involved in RISE’s events during my early faculty years. RISE’s signature event is the Science Everywhere festival, which is a community-focused event where faculty and students on campus open their labs and put on science demonstrations for 5,000-plus community members who visit campus on a Saturday in April. To participate in this STEM initiative, I provided tours of my virtual reality lab for many years as a part of the Science Everywhere event. I also encouraged my kinesiology colleagues to participate and in 2019 (our last face-to-face version of the event), our kinesiology department had the most demonstrations from any department across campus. It is a wonderful way for kinesiology to highlight our STEM work with the public. We had to cancel the 2020 Science Everywhere event due to COVID and we pivoted to a virtual event this year, but we hope to be back face-to-face in 2022.

**It is my understanding that STEM does not need to be linked to one discipline but is more related to a way of learning? Do only the science sub-disciplines in kinesiology (e.g. exercise physiology, biomechanics and motor control) need to be linked to STEM, or can our entire discipline? Can you elaborate on that?**

Conceptually, yes. STEM is broad and encompasses all aspects of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
Given kinesiology’s interdisciplinary nature, STEM is interwoven in our subdisciplines. The most obvious connections may be the ones you mentioned (e.g., biomechanics, exercise physiology), but I would argue STEM concepts are connected to most of our subdisciplines. I already talked about how Cathy Ennis and Ang Chen connected STEM to physical education pedagogy, for which they were successful in winning grants from NIH and the Department of Education. Motor behavior is well-connected to STEM though its systematic and scientific exploration of how humans control, learn, and develop their movements. The study of sport and exercise psychology also borrows from STEM concepts, especially with the integration of neuroscience in these areas. And the list goes on and on. Thus, STEM can be found throughout kinesiology.

One thing to be aware of is that the definition of STEM varies by agency. For example, the National Science Foundation (NSF) does not typically consider kinesiology as a STEM discipline since we are commonly more aligned with NIH priorities. However, many of our subdisciplines are well-aligned with STEM work, so access to funding mechanisms may depend on your home department. For instance, some sport/exercise psychology and motor behavior faculty are housed in psychology departments, which do qualify for STEM funding from NSF.

**Do you think kinesiology programs should take an active role in getting connected with STEM on their campuses and can you suggest some strategies about how they might do so?**

Yes, absolutely. I see connecting with STEM initiatives across campus as an opportunity to broaden our kinesiology footprint in a reciprocal fashion. It helps by enlightening those who may not be familiar with kinesiology about what we do, but it also brings in research and teaching techniques from their disciplines that might not be widely adopted in kinesiology. Participating in STEM community-focused events also helps ensure that kinesiology is part of the lexicon used by the general public. I viewed accepting the Director position in RISE as a way to continue pushing kinesiology forward into a broader space on campus and connecting unit leaders who may not have a good understanding of what we do. This was also a growth opportunity for me to learn more about STEM in a variety of spaces. If you are interested in the portfolio of event’s that we put on to support RISE’s mission, I invite you to look at our 2019-2020 Annual Report.


Here are some current funding calls for projects:

Great Recession Impacts On Exercise Could Be Repeated After COVID-19

By Patrick Wade, KT Staff Writer

Job losses among young people during the Great Recession led to a “sizeable” decrease in physical activity, according to a new study. And that finding has implications not only retrospectively, but also today as the country grapples with what the future holds following a global pandemic. The study published this spring in the American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine is one of only a few that examine how the Great Recession affected the physical activity habits of the people who experienced the worst of it. Shamma Alam, an economics professor in the Department of International Studies at Dickinson College and one of the authors of the study, said the stress and anxiety of losing your job can have detrimental effects on your exercise habits.

The Great Recession was one of the deepest recessions in U.S. history, and the longest since the Great Depression about eight decades prior. Young adults took the brunt of the job losses and employment scarcity, and the impact was immense. The unemployment rate specifically for young adults reach 19 percent in 2009. And, as it turns out, the economics of a recession can have a great effect on the exercise and health habits of an entire generation.

Alam said his interest in the topic was borne out of personal experience. He and his co-author, Bijetri Bose, a research associate at the T.H. Chan School of Public Health at Harvard, graduated from college at the height of the Great Recession in 2009. Interestingly, he said, there has not been much research to investigate the intersection of the Great Recession and public health topics. Previous studies, which are few in number, had connected economic downturns to physical activity, but results were conflicting in terms of whether individuals exercise more or less following a job loss, according to the article. It is known that the stress and anxiety that comes with losing a job and not knowing what the future may hold can lead to reductions in physical activity and have negative health consequences. On the other hand, less time at work means more opportunity for leisure time physical activity.

“We have observed closely how that recession had an immense impact on my generation, the millennial generation,” Alam said. “My research interests are at the intersection of economics and health, so I have been always interested in finding out how the Great Recession affected the physical activity and health of this generation.”

To find out, Alam and Bose examined the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) data for young adults aged 18 to 27. PSID is a survey that began in 1968 and has continuously tracked the same individuals and their children throughout the years.

Alam and Bose compared the recessionary 2008 and 2009 survey data questionnaires to other surveys completed in several non-recession years between 2005 and 2015. Among other questions, the survey asks participants whether they had experienced a recent job loss and also how often they engage in exercise that causes them to sweat or increases their heart rate for at least 10 minutes. The big takeaway from their analysis was that job losses during the Great Recession reduced by 6.3 percent the likelihood of young adults exercising. Alam said that
is a “sizeable” effect when you consider the context.

“Humans are a creature of habit, and a single event does not typically change our behavior as much. Imagine the life-threatening situation like the pandemic, and people refusing to wear masks and vaccinate initially,” Alam said. “So, given people’s general reluctance to change habits, these results are quite interesting because of the sizeable effect that we observe in our study.”

The researchers also broke the data into two groups and were able to look separately at young adults who were living on their own and young adults who were still living at home with their parents. Their reasoning was that those living as the heads of their own households are much more likely to experience the stress of losing an income they need to paying their rent or mortgage, utility bills, and other costs. Maybe unsurprisingly, if a young person lost their job while living with their parents, the job loss did not seem to have any effect on their exercise routines. There also did not seem to be any effect on the young person’s exercise habits if a parent lost a job – likely because the younger person was not directly exposed to the stress of needing to keep up a household.

Considering that economic stressors can impact a person's physical activity, Alam said that has very timely implications today as the country now faces another impactful economic event: the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic resulted in massive job losses, and young people are shouldering the unemployment burden at even higher rates than the millennials of the Great Recession – as high as 33 percent for 16- to 19-year-olds, and 26 percent for those aged 20 to 24.

Couple that with the fact that these same young people were forced to sequester themselves in their homes, away from family and friends which, in turn, can exacerbate stress, anxiety and mental health issues. Alam predicts that the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on exercise can be even more damaging than those of the Great Recession.

“He is hoping that this analysis of the health data can help policy-makers understand two key points: that the health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic run much deeper than the virus itself, and that the pandemic affects different age groups in different ways. In this case, it’s the economic impact on young people that lead to worse health outcomes. But he’s optimistic that proactive measures can attenuate that. “Understanding the health implications will help us to be able to better deal with the consequences through suitable interventions and policies,” he said.

Making Dance Fun in Physical Education

By Penny McCullagh, Ph.D., KT Editor

When I grew up in high school we took physical education class three times a week. For one or two dreaded weeks a year instead of learning sport skills, we learned dance skills. The gym wall dividing the boys’ and girls’ sides of the gym would open up. We were then lined up according to height, and paired off with the boys, who were also regimented according to height. At my lofty height of 4 ft 10 in, you know where I was in the lineup. From there, we were drilled on various routines and were encouraged to practice our skills at a dance held on Friday night. I don’t recall having much fun – although I still like to dance!

Now some physical educators are promoting a new way to engage in dance under the framework of Teaching Dance for Understanding (TDfU) which follows similar to Teaching Games for Understanding that was started in the early 1980’s. The goal is to allow students to build a movement vocabulary and positive feelings towards dance so they can be physically literate and become lifelong dancers.

In a recent article published in JOPERD (Levenberg, Armstrong & Johnson, 2020), the authors argue that dance can “teach students about physical literacy, movement concepts, self-worth, self-expression and relationships”. Melanie Levenberg is founder of PL3Y International in British Columbia, Canada and Tess Armstrong and Ingrid Johnson are faculty members in the AKA member department at Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The TDfU program suggests six steps:

1. Dance as a playful experience – Students are lead through a variety of fundamental movements like walk, tap, and leap using popular upbeat music while students follow the lead of the instructor, they are encouraged to “add their own style” as they move scattered through the space in the gymnasium, not standing in lines.

2. Dance appreciation – During this step, students learn fundamental vocabulary associated with dance, which can mean learning about the elements of dance or about different genres of dance.

3. Developing Connections – Armed with movement vocabulary, students begin to make connections between music, rhythms, emotions, and peers.

4. Creative Exploration – Students have gained enough confidence to begin to move creatively. They use the elements of dance to help create movements to different music, and may experiment with using one dance move (ex. Pirouette) with a variety of styles of music.

5. Skill Refinement – Students now learn to create a dance. They begin linking moves into combinations, using simple 8-count patterns.

6. Dance Performance – The goal is to perform a dance with confidence, whether it be a 32-count sequence, or a dance to an entire song.

Provided by Tess Armstrong.
It is recognized that many physical education teachers do not feel comfortable teaching dance units in their classes. I wanted to learn a little more, so I asked Tess Armstrong from GVSU to provide some further information.

How did you first become involved with the PL3Y?

I was attending the SHAPE America national conference in Boston, MA when I took a DANCEPL3Y session that focused on the first step of the TDFU model. I was in this session with at least 100 people smiling and confidently moving to playfully choreographed dances. I instantly knew that this way of dancing would appeal to all levels of students, from young children to adult.

How have you transformed the way you help train teachers to teach dance?

Absolutely! Prior to this experience I taught traditional forms of dance that one would see in a physical education program: folk, square, line, and aerobic. These were the types of dance with which I was familiar. These dances all have value, and they all have a place in a physical education program. The TDFU model, however, introduces students to dance in a way where they cannot make mistakes. Students typically move in a scattered formation around the gym, so no one stands in the front and no one stands in the back corner – it is inviting and low risk, which helps build confidence.

What are your impressions of how students react to this approach and have you collected any data from students?

Since I began using the TDFU model in our teacher prep program, students have expressed how they were fearful about dance at the beginning of the semester, but that dance can be a lot more fun than they first thought. They are more empowered with the movement vocabulary that they gained during the “Dance Appreciation” step. Students also make great connections between TDFU and TGfU, which was one of our goals in the program. This teaching for understanding approach has helped our students develop the skills to teach with confidence in the future.


Gaga Dance for Dancers and Non-Dancers

I would like to also inform readers about a unique dance form developed by Ohad Naharin in Israel. Naharin "has developed Gaga an innovative and constantly evolving movement language that is available to both dancers and non-dancers. Gaga has emerged as a growing force in the larger field of movement practices worldwide."

Readers are referred to the website at [https://www.gagapeople.com](https://www.gagapeople.com) to learn more about this unique dance form designed to appeal to all -PMc
A New Podcast for People Who Love Sports

The Power of Sports Podcast is a place to explore how and why sports play such an instrumental role in so many people’s lives. The main goal is to demonstrate the power of sports by interviewing guests who share Miller’s passion for sports, as players, coaches, administrators, and as fans, and to have a great time in the process. Sports can also serve as powerful tools of positive and progressive social change, which is why he interviews the people who are making that change reality.

https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-power-of-sports/id1574997548

TPOS Podcast Episode 1 – Jeremy Medovoy (“The Loyal Sports Fan”)
TPOS Podcast Episode 2 – Robert (aka “Bob”) Whiting (“The Bestselling Baseball Writer”)
TPOS Podcast Episode 3 – Tara VanDerveer (“The Legendary Coach”)
TPOS Podcast Episode 4 – Prof. Andrew Billings (“The Scholar of Olympic Media and Identity”)

Aaron L. Miller, PhD (Oxford) is Lecturer in the Department of Kinesiology at California State University, East Bay. Adjunct Faculty, Department of Kinesiology, St. Mary’s College of California, and host of the podcast, “The Power of Sports”. A trained socio-cultural anthropologist, he is the author of Discourses of Discipline: An Anthropology of Corporal Punishment in Japan’s Schools and Sports (Institute for East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley), a translated version of which was published in Japanese by Editorial Republica (Kyowakoku) in June 2021, and dozens of other essays, articles and chapters about education, sports, culture, power, violence, and social justice. www.aaronlmiller.com. Aaron Miller was my office mate at Cal State, East Bay for a few years. He was not formally trained in kinesiology, so we had lots of conversations about the history and development of kinesiology in its broadest sense. I enjoyed our interactions. He teaches a host of classes in the humanities area in our department. (from Penny McCullagh).

Psychologist Bandura Leaves a Profound Impact on Field

By Penny McCullagh, KT Editor

Albert Bandura, one of the most cited psychologists of all times passed away on July 26, 2021. He was born in Canada and came to the United States to complete his graduate degrees. Bandura had a profound impact on many researchers in kinesiology, especially those in sport and exercise psychology. He is famous for his bobo doll experiments that demonstrated that we can learn aggressive behaviors from watching others (observational learning). His social cognitive theory and the development of self-efficacy are primary constructs that serve as the basis for hundreds of research projects across many disciplines.
**Editor’s One Cents Worth**

**Be Thankful**

By Penny McCullagh, Ph.D., KT Editor

As we continue to move on while the world is suffering from a pandemic, it is important to take a breath and be thankful. Many individuals have faced severe circumstances either in terms of physical or mental health and my heart reaches out to all. It is important during these times that we take a moment to be thankful.

One area of life (in addition to my family of course) that I am thankful for is my professional connections. I am still teaching part-time so continue to have interactions with professional colleagues and students in my department. I serve a leadership role with the North American Society for the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity (NASPSPA) so I engage with colleagues and friends from around the world. I love helping the organization I have belonged to for over 45 years continue to thrive. Finally, I have the great opportunity to work with wonderful colleagues and friends in AKA.

As you read the President’s and Executive Director’s columns you can see the host of agenda items that are being addressed by the Executive Committee, the AKA committees and the continuing progress of the Leadership Institute. We are in a good place.

As you think about your contributions to your professional organizations, I see it critical that we urge all our colleagues to stay involved. It is important to continue maintaining memberships and paying dues to our societies. In some organizations individuals become fair weather friends and may only pay dues if they intend to attend the conference. That is unfortunate because our organizations need financial support to continue their excellent work. In AKA, membership is held by departments. Our membership committee is working diligently to increase our membership, but they could use everyone’s help in doing so. As you meet other individuals in leadership positions in Kinesiology, share your experiences with AKA and urge them to support our discipline. Most individuals who attend our events or workshops are so glad they did so, because it makes their jobs easier. You meet and interact with colleagues, many who face the same challenges as you. Also, many of these individuals will become not only professional counterparts, but lifelong friends.

My impression from almost everyone in academia is that they are working harder than they ever did before so having friends who understand your laments is critical! So be thankful and glad you are part of an organization such as AKA that gives so much back to its members.

KT is always looking for stories of interest for its’ readers. If you have an interesting program or research project, please reach out to the KT Editor at kintodayaka@gmail.com