

HHP TODAY

HEALTH and HUMAN PERFORMANCE

Fall 2013

From the Chair



► I hope you are enjoying fall weather wherever you may be. As our weather slowly changes from those hot Texas summers to the cool, crisp fall, it makes me think of the many changes HHP has

undergone recently. In this edition of HHP Today, you'll see that the department now serves more than 2,000 students seeking degrees in our many programs.

We are the second largest department in the university with only the biology and biochemistry department having more students. Recently, we became the sponsoring department for Adaptive Athletics @ UH, a new student group for those with disabilities to have some of the same opportunities as abled-bodied athletes to participate in sports. During this time of a national obesity epidemic, we have strengthened our physical activity program with the hiring of two full-time professional instructors, and will soon be offering several activity classes in the Campus Recreation and Wellness Center. Although the Houston Astros had a disappointing baseball season, it certainly was not because the players were not in tip-top condition, thanks to HHP student, Brian Bell. This summer and fall, Brian served as the Astros first ever strength and conditioning intern, a relationship we anticipate continuing next season.

I would like to thank each of you who have contributed to our department. Without your support we could not expand programs, award scholarships or provide the many opportunities you have made available to our students.

Although we can only highlight a few of the accomplishments of our distinguished faculty, students and alumni in the newsletter, you can keep up with the latest in HHP by

Breaking Barriers and Stereotypes

► “A lot of times disability is perceived as fragility, that the athletes are breakable...,” said Michael Cottingham, camp director and assistant HHP professor. “The athletes aren’t fragile. It can be physical. It’s OK to be competitive. It breaks a lot of those barriers and those stereotypes.”

Cottingham is referring to wheelchair rugby, which he and the newly organized HHP Athletics Student Organization (AASO)

develop a UH athletics program that will allow students with disabilities to participate in sports similar to wheelchair rugby.

“We want students to experience college life to the full potential, and that means allowing students with disabilities to play sports such as wheelchair rugby,” said student Serjio Brereda, founder and past-president of Adaptive Athletics @ UH. “I am also a student with a disability who



Photo: Thomas Campbell-University of Houston

brought to UH this summer in the form of a camp in June. The successful event was the first of its kind in Houston, and was widely featured in the media. Eighteen athletes of various levels from seven states participated. AASO’s mission is to

took part in the camp. I have big goals for Adaptive Athletics.”

“It’s important to create opportunities for young athletes with disabilities, especially because there aren’t any true, strictly college rugby programs out there,” Cottingham said.

becoming a fan on Facebook at <http://tiny.cc/HHPonFB> and visiting our website at <http://www.uh.edu/class/hhp>.

Dr. Charles Layne
HHP Department Chair

TIRR Memorial Hermann is sponsoring a Wheelchair Rugby Tournament that the AASO will host on the UH campus, Jan. 31-Feb. 2, 2014. There is an eight-team cap, and early registration ends Jan. 3. For more information about Adaptive Athletics @ UH and this tournament, visit <http://tinyurl.com/HHP-PLAY>. ■

Faculty Focus: Daphne Hernandez



Even before graduate school, Hernandez discovered the intersection of poverty and policy, which resulted in connecting her interest in family dynamics with poverty and policy. At UH, she has expanded her research from being population-based to a micro-level focus.

“By collaborating with my colleagues in HHP and focusing on the needs of low-income Hispanics in the Houston area, I am learning about how to design community-based interventions,” she said. “As a native Houstonian, I have a vested interest in the health of the community. I hope that by expanding my “research tool-box”, I will be able to provide a unique perspective to health-related issues in the Houston area.”

Hernandez earned her bachelor's in psychology from Princeton University, her master's in psychology/psychological services from the University of Pennsylvania and her doctorate in applied

developmental and educational psychology from Boston College.

In her personal time, Hernandez, enjoys cooking, exercising and international travel. She was a gymnast until she was 14 years old, then she became a diver throughout college. “In both sports, I competed at the highest levels, and for this reason I think I “enjoy” high-intensity, interval workouts such as boot camp and cross-fit,” she said.

Her travels have taken her to Japan, Mexico, England, Spain, France and Italy. She loves to immerse herself into another culture with the same enthusiasm as she immerses herself into her work. ■

► A dream job for Dr. Daphne Hernandez, HHP assistant professor, is to be a contestant on the Amazing Race, Dancing with the Stars or Cupcake Wars. In the meantime, she is focusing on the field of developmental psychology because she is interested in how family relationships (e.g., marriage, divorce) and children's development at different ages influences children's and families' health and well-being.



Dr. Hernandez shows her diving skills as a teenager.

Student Spotlight: Brian Bell

► HHP kinesiology/fitness and sports major, Brian Bell, was chosen to be the Astros' first strength and conditioning intern in its organization for the 2013 season. Jake Beiting, Astros strength and conditioning coach, brought the idea with him from the Cleveland Indians minor league, where he benefited from the mentoring he received as an intern for a large sports franchise.

Bell has learned that in season, the goal for the athletes is to maintain their condition, rather than pursue a strenuous strengthening program. A look into the behind-the-scenes of the organization has given him an insight that he would not have without the internship. He will graduate in 2014, and his dream job is to be a strength and conditioning coach for an organization like the Texans.

The native Houstonian began his university studies at UH, but left to pursue his passion for music at the Los Angeles Music Academy. He plays the drums, percussion instruments, piano and he has a singing background.



With the feeling of being stagnant and the desire to finish his degree, he returned to UH. Team sports were a lifelong interest, and he began the sports administration program, where he soon realized that the business side was not for him. He wanted to be involved in the science and functional aspects of sports. Bell set his goal on

kinesiology, which he thought would provide a broad area of focus for a future in the sports industry.

Outside of the classroom, he is continuing to broaden his experience by working as a one-on-one trainer in a gym. In this environment, Bell can practice his knowledge, and hone new skills at serving a broader group of people and their needs.

News from the Astros is that its first strength and conditioning intern has set a standard that he and HHP can be proud of!

Bell's path took some different turns along the way, and he had to take additional classes to make the changes in his degree plans, but the pay-off of his perseverance is only a few months away.

“Finally, here I am in my last year,” he said. “I had to take a couple of steps back in order to go forward.” ■

Go Coogs!

Exchange Program Expands



Brett Siders, Ryan Lafley, Rachel Laws, Jonathan Morales, Iain Sutherland and Christiana Gentry are enjoying getting together for the first time.

► Thanks to the McGowan Foundation, HHP's exchange program not only sent two students to Edinburgh Napier University in Edinburgh, Scotland, but two Scottish students from Napier are studying at UH, Rachel Laws and Iain Sutherland. Both are juniors in the kinesiology/exercise science program. Our guests from Scotland sum up their experiences so far in their own words:

Laws: This exchange program has been amazing. The courses are challenging, yet enjoyable, and the entire community feel of UH is like nothing I've ever experienced. This program, as well as the school, means so much more to me than I thought it would, and I am seriously considering returning for my graduate degree. The only negative thing I can say is how hot it was the first couple of months!

Sutherland: The exchange program is important to me because it has allowed me to grow in a way that might not have been possible whilst studying in my home country. Coming to a completely new environment forces you to adapt to all the challenges and opportunities which come your way, whilst soaking

up a new culture and meeting new friends. I feel I have grown more independent, organized, pro-active and open-minded. The exchange program has allowed me to gain a newfound appreciation for the United States and Scotland.

Check back to hear from our students at Napier, Ryan Lafley and Jonathan Morales. ■

Informational Drop-In

► HHP hosted an Open House: Informational Drop-In Event in Oct. for all HHP students and those interested in learning about the various degree programs, career center resources and research opportunities available in the department. Faculty, advisers and staff were there to answer questions and to assist students in making the right choices for now and the future. Giveaways and snacks were a part of the come-and-go evening. ■



Dr. Josh Yellen listens to a student explain his goals for the future.

WELCOME New Faculty



► Dr. Yoonjung Park joins HHP as assistant professor in exercise physiology. He comes to UH from Texas Tech University, Lubbock, where he held the same position.

He earned his doctorate in exercise physiology from Texas A&M, and his master's from the University of Texas, Austin. Park's bachelor's is from Seoul National University, South Korea. His postdoctoral fellowship was in the division of cardiovascular

medicine at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Park's research investigates the role of physical activity and exercise training to prevent or lessen vascular dysfunction in conditions such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, ischemic heart disease, hypertension and aging (Alzheimer's). Park also seeks to understand the mechanisms in which vascular function is altered by the aftereffects of diseases and physical activity. ■



► Ann Svendsen-Sanchez is a visiting assistant professor in nutrition beginning this fall semester. Her master's degree in nutrition is from Texas Woman's University, Houston, and her bachelor's in nutrition is from Ohio University, Athens.

As nutrition services director for the Houston Food Bank, she oversaw the serving of 18 area counties by providing nutrition education to the community and access to the state program. Sanchez has also been the nutrition services director for the Texas City and the Houston Independent School Districts.

In HHP, Sanchez directs Shasta's Culinary Workshop, a student-operated cafe on the UH campus that serves and delivers lunch three days a week. She also teaches nutrition classes in Commercial Food Production, Food Service Systems Management and Community Nutrition. ■

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Register Now!

▶ HHP will host its second annual Graffiti Run, Sunday, Dec. 8, 2013. The first wave of participants in the family-friendly event will take off at 9 a.m., and groups of runners will be released every 10 minutes. The run will begin and end in parking lot 16D located at Cullen Blvd. and Elgin St. The Graffiti Run organization will again give a donation to the HHP Undergraduate Student Scholarship.

It is expected that there will be a larger turnout than the 4,000 who attended last year. Get a team together and check the details on the HHP Facebook, or visit our website at hhp.uh.edu.



Cake and Mental Health

▶ “Depression is no laughing matter, but it's OK to talk about it... with cake,” according to Jody Stevens with Jodycakes Bakery. Inspired by the original Depressed Cake Shop in London, Stevens held a bake sale to raise awareness of mental health issues and raise funds for the Montrose Center in Houston.

HHP's Caryn Honig and some of her nutrition students participated in the event, where local bakers from 13 restaurants and area chefs donated to the sale with gray baked goods and full-sized cakes. One of Honig's students, Rebecca Qian, made a version of delicious gray cookies from Paulie's Restaurant, where she works.



Walk for the Cure

The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation's Great Strides annual walk for the Galveston Chapter is hosted by HHP on the UH campus. In May of this year, there were 850 participants and \$887,000 was raised to help support life-saving research, quality care and educational programs for those dealing with cystic fibrosis.