

Kinesiology in the 21st Century: A Preface

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On September 27, 2007, the American Academy of Kinesiology and Physical Education (AAKPE) met in Savannah, Georgia, to discuss the future of kinesiology in the 21st century. In my role as past-president of the Academy, I invited 13 fellows to present their visions of the future. This issue of *Quest* comprises The Academy Papers that represent the formal essays from those presentations. After visiting our past history in the 2005 annual meeting when we celebrated the Academy's 75th anniversary (Morrow, 2006) and examining the present state of the field in 2006 (Reeve, 2007), the 2007 annual meeting's theme completes the trilogy with a conference theme on the future of kinesiology.

For a field that laid down its roots at the start of the last century, we find kinesiology, at the start of this century, a young but quickly maturing scholarly discipline. In 2005, the National Science Foundation published a report that 738 doctoral degrees had been awarded in kinesiology in the most recent 5 years (from 2000–2004), and in 2006, the National Research Council (NRC) included kinesiology for the first time in its taxonomy of graduate programs to be ranked (Thomas et al., 2007). From our early beginnings to the present, recognition by these national scientific organizations bears witness to the establishment of kinesiology as a rigorous, scholarly discipline. In this Academy meeting, we ask then, "What is our vision of the future?" What are the issues that confront us as a field? Where will kinesiology be when the Academy celebrates its centenary in 2030?

Specialization of our knowledge about physical activity and human movement in its many manifestations has been a hallmark of the field's development over the past 50 years. As Scott Kretchmar notes in his opening keynote address "The Utility of Silos and Bunkers in the Evolution of Kinesiology," our excellence in scholarship has won us the respect of scholars across the academic spectrum. Kretchmar voices a theme that is echoed throughout the conference, namely, that as our evolution continues, silos and bunkers will give way to collaboration and interdependency. This theme is summarized well in the conference's concluding paper titled "E Pluribus Unum—From DNA to Social Systems: Understanding Physical Activity Through an Integrated Perspective" given by Brad Hatfield. "E Pluribus Unum"—many into one—captures perfectly the spirit of the other papers presented, as well as the discussions that ensued throughout the meeting.

How do the subdisciplines see the future of kinesiology? In five papers from the perspectives of motor control (Latash), biomechanics (Gregor), exercise physiology (Ji), physical culture (Andrews), and psychology (Weiss), the issues

facing these specializations' development over the next decade are described and thoughtful solutions posed. Rovegno took on the task of visualizing the future for physical education pedagogy. Two papers examine specific societal problems, aging (Rose) and injuries (Guskiewicz), and describe how kinesiology's approach might prove useful in addressing these problems. In a paper that was presented but not submitted for this volume, the importance of kinesiology in improving the nation's public health was also discussed. In addition to these papers on our future research, DePauw addresses the future of graduate education in kinesiology. Benoît Bardy, an international fellow of the Academy from France who gave the Lynn Vendien International Lecture, brings a European perspective to kinesiology's future. More important, this paper reminds us that kinesiology (though often bearing other names) is truly an international field of study that flourishes throughout the world.

Each of the papers in this issue is rich with ideas. Each of the Academy fellows has provided us with expansive and thoughtful views of the future. From their many and unique perspectives, each presents an optimistic view of kinesiology in the 21st century. As you read these essays, I think you will agree with me that the future of kinesiology in the 21st century is bright and our research questions many. Within these papers, the reader will surely find important lessons to take home. And as Hatfield reminds us: E Pluribus Unum.

References

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