

Meet Our NEACSM Past President



NEACSM's 19th President: Linda S. Pescatello

Education: B.S. 1977 Biological Sciences; M.A. 1981 Exercise Science; Ph.D. 1986 Exercise Science University of Connecticut

Current or most recent affiliation: Department of Kinesiology, College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources, University of Connecticut, Storrs

Honors & Awards: 1988 Connecticut Society for Cardiac Rehabilitation Achievement Award, 1996 American College of Sports Medicine Healthy People 2000 Physical Activity Promotion Award, 1998 Honor Award, New England American College of Sports Medicine, 1999 Outstanding Sports/Leisure Professional Award, University of Connecticut School of Education Alumni Society, Associate Editor, *ACSM's Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription* (8th ed.). Baltimore, MD: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins 2009 ISBN 978-0-7817-6903-7, 2011 Citation Award, American College of Sports Medicine, 2013 Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor, University of Connecticut, Senior Editor, *ACSM's Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription* (9th ed.). Baltimore, MD: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins 2013 ISBN 978-1-60913-605-5, Advisory Committee Member, *2018 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Fellow, American College of Sports Medicine, Fellow, American Heart Association

Professional Interests: Dr. Pescatello's research focuses on genetic and clinical determinants of the response of health/fitness phenotypes to acute and chronic exercise, particularly blood pressure; the effects of cholesterol medications on blood pressure and exercise performance; exercise prescription for special populations including those with hypertension, obesity, and cancer as well as fire fighters; the adverse cardiovascular health effects of obesity stigma; and physical activity and contingency management as interventions to curb hazardous drinking among college students and enhance treatment adherence among populations with overweight and obesity and HIV positive substance abusers.

NEACSM Service

1. What first inspired you to enter the Exercise Science/Sports Medicine Field? What made you decide to pursue your advance degree and/or line of research/service?

My interest in exercise physiology was partially determined by my father and his love for baseball and sports, and partially by my mother and her love for biology and health care and her belief in the importance of movement in maintaining good personal health. I have always loved athletics and played varsity sports in high school and college. I majored in biology. So when I decided to pursue a graduate degree, there was a new emerging field, exercise physiology, which seemed like a natural career fit for me combining my love for sports and biology.

2. As a student, who were your mentors and what role did they play in your professional development? As a professional, was there anyone who was also instrumental in your career development?

Once upon a time, a very long time ago, I took a postgraduate course and heard Dr. Paul Thompson speak about his 10 Rules of Research. His 5th rule was, "Don't Wrestle With the Gorillas". And his 6th, "Work with Gorillas Instead". I would now like to acknowledge some of the gorillas I have had the opportunity to work with over the years; people I consider instrumental in my career development and success. They include Dr. David Camaione from the University of Connecticut; Dr. Charlie Leach from New Britain General Hospital, New Britain, CT; Dr. Ethan Nadel from the John Pierce Foundation at Yale University; Dr. Priscilla Clarkson from the University of Massachusetts; and Dr. Paul Thompson from Hartford Hospital. Thank you all for your mentorship and inspiring me to do be the best I can be.

3. What is it about Exercise Science/Sports Medicine that still inspires you today?

What inspires me today is the same guiding principle that inspired me to enter the field, the importance of movement in maintaining good personal health upon which I have focused my research career upon. I have followed my bliss as exercise physiology was the ideal career fit for me combining my love for sports and biology for the purpose of improving and maintaining health.

4. Why and how did you decide to get involved with NEACSM? How did your service help you grow as a professional?

I attribute my involvement with NEACSM entirely to my major advisor in graduate school at the University of Connecticut, Dr. David Camaione. As his graduate student, he insisted we get involved in NEACSM as NEACSM would be instrumental to our career success. Thank you Dr. C for your words of wisdom which clearly proved to be the case!

5. What are your most memorable moments from your service to NEACSM?

Eating Dr. Lee Cunningham's zucchini bread as our nutritional replacement for the planning and organization that occurred on the eve of the NEACSM meeting when there was no NEACSM Executive Office; receiving the NEACSM honor award; and the many long-established friendships that I have developed as a result of my involvement with NEACSM.

6. What were some of the main issues confronting NEACSM at the time of your presidency?

The lack of an Executive Office and a minimal cash flow.

7. What do you think are your most meaningful contributions to NEACSM?

It would be best to ask my peers that question.

8. What do you think are your most meaningful contributions to the field of Exercise Science/Sports Medicine?

Pescatello LS (co-chair), B Franklin (co-chair), R Fagard, W Farquhar, GA Kelly and C Ray. American College of Sports Medicine. Position Stand: Exercise and hypertension. *Med Sci Sports Exerc* 36: 533-553, 2004. PMID: 15076798

Associate Editor, *ACSM's Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription* (8th ed.). Baltimore, MD: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins 2009 ISBN 978-0-7817-6903-7

LS Pescatello and SM Roth (eds). *Molecular and Translational Medicine Series Volume: Exercise Genomics*. New York, NY: Humana Press 2011 ISBN 978-1-60761-354-1. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-1-60761-355-8>

Senior Editor, *ACSM's Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription* (9th ed.). Baltimore, MD: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins 2013 ISBN 978-1-60913-605-5

My work in postexercise hypotension that has evolved into the following honor: LS Pescatello (editor). *Effects of Exercise on Hypertension: From Cells to Physiological Systems*. New York, NY: Humana Press 2015

9. What advice would you have for future leaders of NEACSM?

10. What advice would you give to students who are looking to pursue a career in Exercise Science/Sports Medicine?

My answers to #9 and #10 can be taken from an article I wrote for ACSM entitled, *ACSM Fellows Offer Advice to Students Succeeding in Graduate School*. These rules are very generalizable to overall career success, particularly my concluding comments.

- Above all, be committed to your pursuit of graduate school. You must really want your degree because you will have to earn it. There will be many ups and downs and reasons to quit if you are not committed to your goal of finishing graduate school.
- Choose your graduate program carefully, being certain to follow your intuition and professional interests. Graduate school is a long, arduous process. At times what keeps you going is simply the passion for the research you are involved with and the experiences you are acquiring along the way in your internships and affiliations. Therefore, it is important to be working on projects and taking courses which interest and intrigue you.
- Choose your major advisor carefully. Your success in graduate school and beyond will most likely be predicated on the success and accomplishments of your major advisor. A helpful hint is that when your major advisor is interviewing you for enrollment into graduate school, take advantage of the opportunity to interview him or her at the same time. Make certain your advisor displays a passion for their work, is productive yet mentoring, and that you are compatible, as you will be spending a great amount of time together over the next several years.

- Network with your peers and professionals in the field. Go to professional meetings and their affiliated social gatherings. I cannot overstate the importance of networking for establishing a presence in the field. One of the best vehicles to interact with successful people is to become active in the ACSM regional chapters. Volunteer to serve on a committee. Go to the regional and national ACSM annual meetings. Attend the social events offered at these meetings. Get involved with the ACSM interest groups.

Lastly, adhere to my five Ps for success in graduate school—planning, practice, preparation, pliancy, and perseverance for “The time to prepare isn’t after you have been given the opportunity. It’s long before the opportunity arises. Once the opportunity arrives, it’s too late to prepare”. (Wooden, J., and S. Jamison. *Wooden A Lifetime of Observations and Reflections On and Off the Court*. 1997.)