

HISTORY OF THE NEACSM CHAPTER

From 1973 to Date

The New England Chapter had its roots in the late 1960s and early 1970s when a number of higher education professionals who called themselves the “Exercise Physiology Interest Group”, periodically got together to discuss the recent research topics of the day. Individuals came from such universities as Boston University, UMass/Amherst, Springfield College, Queens College, Brooklyn College, Harvard University, Central Connecticut State College, and Northeastern University’s Sargent College to name just a few. Individuals from clinical settings throughout the many excellent hospitals and research centers also attended. Attendance usually numbered from 15 to 50 during the early period. Some of the names included Skip Knuttgen, Wayne Sinning, Bill McCardle, Ben Ricci, Howard Hartley, Walter Kroll to name a few.

The organizers of the interest group officially applied to the National ACSM for Chapter Provisional Status in 1973 and after a period of three years, the group was granted Permanent Chapter Status in 1976. The first Chapter President, Wayne E. Sinning, Ph.D. Professor and Director of the Exercise Physiology Lab at Springfield College, was elected in 1973.

The 1970s

During the embryonic phase of the Chapter, all meetings of the organization were generally held on college and university campuses for obvious reasons, this is where the leaders were, who had a dedicated interest in sharing their ideas and research. In fact, the first annual conference was hosted by The University of Connecticut. Because there were limited financial resources or a large enough membership to even consider hosting the annual meeting at a commercial conference facility, these university settings were more than adequate to serve everyone’s need at the time. It was also a time in which a great deal of research was beginning to come out of a number of institutions as to the veracity about the benefits of exercise and sport performance.

The 1980s:

In the early years, and as a result of ACSM’s publication “Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription”, an emphasis was placed on the Healthy Adult, due in large to the tremendous growth in the number of fitness type facilities located in a university, private, corporate, commercial, hospital and other non-profit entities. Included during time was the beginning of the statewide Cardiac Rehabilitative groups who championed the offering of CR Seminars which became an important part of the Chapter’s annual conference.

The Chapter during the middle 1980s instituted two significant activities, the first of which was the annual Howard Knuttgen Lecture in honor of Dr. Knuttgen who was a pioneer in not only establishing the Chapter but who had made significant contributions

both regionally and nationally to the profession. A year later the Honor Award was established to be given to a professional who had made important contributions to the chapter in the areas of scholarship and service.

Because of the growth of the chapter, the Executive Committee expanded its voting membership from four members-at-large to six. This was done in part to bring in more people to serve in leadership positions to not only potentially fill the President's position but to chair the increasing number of committee assignments. It was also during this period that the development of Operating Codes for all officers and committee chairs and the updating of the Constitution and By-Laws were significantly changed to coincide with the national guidelines.

It was during this period that satellite type conferences and seminars began to spring up, in fact, The University of Connecticut from 1982 to 1987 hosted an annual spring conference on a variety of topics. Other similar activities found on not only college campuses but in hospital settings as well.

Another national program surfaced during this time when the ACSM Certification office began marketing their newly developed certification and workshop programs for the Exercise Test Technologist, Health Fitness Instructor, Certification Directors, and Aerobic Instruction. UCONN probably hosted the vast majority of these programs from 1980 to 2000.

The 1990s:

This era brought about a partnership with the NE Chapter of the International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association (IHRSA) specifically NEHRSA organization. As a result of this joint venture, conference sessions specifically targeted each group, thereby enhancing the attendance. As an added feature there was a major increase in the number of exhibitors who were an integral part of the practical aspect of exercise and sport science.

The format of the annual conference changed significantly because of the huge success of its program by adding a second Keynote and Special Guest Lectures thereby bringing to the conference a greater number of highly visible scholars in the fields of Exercise and Sport Science.

It was also during this time that a formal office structure was created to run the chapter activities for a period of ten years at UCONN; it was staffed by graduate assistants from the Fitness Management program. The office was later transferred to its present home at The Hospital of Central Connecticut under the Direction of Dino Costanzo

The 2000s:

One of the most significant events occurred in year 2000 when the Camaione Family worked with the chapter to start the David N. Camaione Scholarship Fund that had its

beginnings at the surprise retirement party for Dr. Camaione. Today it is one of the most successful ventures undertaken by the chapter and shines as a beacon for all others to emulate. The support from the membership and Executive Committee for this activity has been overwhelming.