

Meet Our NEACSM Past President



Name: Paul M. Gallo, Ed.D., FACSMT

Education (please list all degrees and institutions): B.S., Athletic Training, State University of New York at Cortland College, Cortland, New York; M.A., Exercise Physiology, Adelphi University, Garden City, New York; Ed.D., Applied Physiology, Teachers College Columbia University, New York, New York

Current or most recent affiliation: Director of Exercise Science and Wellness, Norwalk Community College, Norwalk, Connecticut; Associate Adjunct Professor, Biobehavioral Sciences, Teachers College Columbia University, New York, New York

Honors & Awards: Honor Award, NEACSM; Fellowship, ACSM; Educational Excellence and Distinguished Service Award, Norwalk Community College; NISOD Excellence Award, National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development; Merit Award for Outstanding Service, Norwalk Community College

Professional Interests: Resistance Training, Older Adults and Neurodegenerative Disease

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?

During high school, I played football and sustained an injury that required rehabilitation and a return-to-play strength and conditioning protocol. This was my first time working with an athletic trainer and strength coach. Through this experience I developed an interest in sports medicine as well as a respect for the significant impact exercise and rehabilitation have on human performance.

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?

Throughout my studies and professional career, I have had many mentors and coaches along the way. It is important to recognize that as our academic and professional goals, work settings or areas of focus change, so may our mentors and coaches. Several key mentors and coaches are listed below.

As a student: Jim Hokinson, Ph.D., was my undergraduate exercise physiology professor, who opened my eyes to clinical exercise physiology and provided me with my first lab-assistant role in a testing laboratory. Robert Otto, Ph.D., FACSMT, was my graduate advisor and the first person to introduce me to research and the American College of Sports Medicine®. Through my work with Dr. Otto, I was able to teach my first college-level course and realize that I had a passion for teaching and working in higher education. Carol Ewing Garber, Ph.D., FACSMT, was my doctoral advisor and has taught me countless lessons in research, academia and life. Over the years, Dr. Garber's mentorship has been critical to my professional development and growth.

As a professional: Professor Peter Ronai, M.S., FACSMT, and Mr. Dino Costanzo, M.S., FACSMT, have been tremendous role models and mentors with regard to developing my teaching philosophy and organizational leadership skills, respectively.

3. What is it about exercise science/sports medicine that still inspires you today?

In the field of exercise science and sports medicine, we are able to provide education, information and services to all people for the betterment of their lives, health and/or performance. There is nothing more gratifying at the end of a day than knowing you helped somebody or shared the knowledge that your instructors, mentors and coaches took the time to share with you!

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

During my first year of employment at Norwalk Community College, Professor Peter Ronai, M.S., FACSM, asked me to attend the 2004 NEACSM Fall Meeting. When Sean Walsh, Ph.D., FACSM, was president, he asked if I would be interested in serving as the Connecticut state representative for the NEACSM's Executive Committee.

Over the years of work on the chapter's executive committee, my leadership skills have grown exponentially. Involvement with this chapter has also allowed me to generate a strong professional network in the New England region, helped advance me to fellowship status with ACSM, and has provided additional opportunity at the national ACSM level.

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

One of the most memorable moments of my service occurred during my president-elect year at the conclusion of the 2019 fall meeting, which I was a lead proponent in planning. I felt an overwhelming sense of fulfillment knowing that the program offered high quality, evidence-based sessions and education to so many professionals and students in our service area. I am also proud to have been able to plan and coordinate our first-ever virtual spring meeting in 2021, as past president of the chapter. Online programming has been a long-term goal of mine so we could expand our reach and accessibility of programming.

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

During my presidency, we were faced with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States and quarantine-related shutdown. This resulted in the cancellation of the Spring 2020 Meeting and so many unknowns with how to proceed with chapter operations.

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

- Being a part of two strategic planning meetings for the chapter;
- Working with the Executive Cabinet to create the State Representative Committee, which led to the startup of an outreach and advocacy project;
- Introducing the Volunteer Interest Booth at the fall meeting to help generate professional and student volunteers;
- Creating and offering the Leadership Workshop for the development of professional members new to their work role or career;
- Co-chairing the sponsorship committee which had one of the most successful years in chapter history with regard to generating sponsorship funding; and
- Working with the Executive Committee during my presidency to implement the Diversity, Technology and Ethics Committees, which are still functioning in the chapter today.

8. What do you think are your most meaningful contributions to the field of exercise science/sports medicine?

Mentoring, coaching and teaching my students; providing support to my peers; and helping clients and patients through clinical services or research

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

Be present every day, and make every day count! The only way to make change is to get in the game. NEACSM provides an excellent opportunity for professional growth and a wonderful network of colleagues and friends that you can rely on. Get involved with the chapter today!

10. What advice would you give to students who are looking to pursue a career in exercise science/sports medicine?

Do not be hesitant with getting involved with an organization that shares similar interests as you. Your studies and academic experiences not only shape your professional career but are a part of that trajectory. Get involved when you can, and have fun while doing it!