

Meet Our NEACSM Past President



NEACSM's 26th President: Dino G. Costanzo

Education: Master of Arts / Exercise Science - The University of Connecticut, Bachelor of Science / Recreational Therapy - The University of Connecticut

Current and most recent affiliation: Director, Tallwood Urology and Kidney Institute, Hartford HealthCare

Honors & Awards: New England Chapter of the American College of Sports Medicine (Service Award, 2015), University of Connecticut (Outstanding Kinesiology Professional Award, 2015), American College of Sports Medicine (Fellow, 2006), New England Chapter of the American College of Sports Medicine (Honor Award, 2003), Connecticut Society for Cardiac Rehabilitation (Achievement Award, 1998).

Professional interests: Human adaptation to resistance exercise, Primary and secondary disease prevention – population health management

NEACSM Service

1. What first inspired you to enter the Exercise Science/Sports Medicine field?

My strong interest in resistance training aligned squarely with a field of study that was just being introduced into college curriculum.

What made you decide to pursue your advanced degree and/or line of research/service?

As I was beginning my graduate studies, my father had coronary artery bypass surgery and enrolled afterwards into a cardiac rehabilitation program. My father's participation in cardiac rehabilitation was transformational. My interest in studying exercise shifted from a focus on sport performance to primary and secondary disease prevention and rehabilitation.

2. As a student, who were your mentors and what role did they play in your professional development?

My first "mentor" in exercise science was my older brother, Dominic who was a genius in resistance training. His classroom was the weight room and his practical in-the-trench knowledge of human adaptation to resistance exercise was extraordinary and served as a foundation to what I would learn in the academic setting. Other mentors included my graduate school lab partners and classmates – Tony Caterisano, John Gonino and Jerry Martin are a few of the many - they contributed to one of the richest and most stimulating learning environments I experienced academically.

As a professional, was there anyone who was also instrumental in your career development?

It would be impossible for me to identify all the individuals who shaped my professional development. David Camaione, Linda Pescatello, Steven Keteyian, Michael Niederpruem, Bill Chapin, Donna Murphy and Elizabeth Lynch are first to come to mind and I could go on-and-on. It would be unfair of me not to acknowledge all of the NEACSM and ACSM leaders that I have worked alongside over the years so apologies to those I did not identify by name.

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

Exercise has been an important part of my life since childhood – it has been my brand – something that I have identified with and what others close to me associate with me. My lifestyle has been focused around health and fitness with exercise as the centerpiece – I would think that others in the field would have similar associations.

4. Why and how did you decide to get involved with NEACSM?

Simply put, David Camaione insisted that all of his graduate students become involved in NEACSM and attend conferences.

How did your service help you grow as a professional?

It was through the NEACSM where I was able to meet and develop lasting and meaningful relationships with difference makers in the field. Volunteering in NEACSM helped me evolve and develop my skills in leadership.

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

- Very late night return trips from NEACSM Executive Committee meetings with Bob Axtell as co-pilot.
- That indoor pool smell of the Boxborough Host Hotel!
- Being the floor marshal at the first NEACSM College Bowl and trying to judge “first ring” among the competing teams – oh those bells!
- Countless memories of working alongside Donna Murphy – a real life NEACSM Superhero – I miss her and think of her every day.

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

- Defining relationship/accountability boundaries with ACSM while exercising local/regional autonomy and self-governance – sometimes a challenge with competing agenda.
- Embracing a changing/shifting membership base that acknowledged practitioners alongside academicians and researchers.
- Accommodating a growing membership and needing to move our annual Fall Meeting from Boxborough, MA to Providence, RI.

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

As a volunteer leader of the chapter, I believe I have carried the NEACSM torch with passion and energy which has had a contagious effect on others. In my capacity as NEACSM Executive Director I believe I have provided strong administrative support to the leaders I have served as well as stability, continuity and historical perspective throughout the transitions of chapter leadership. I have been particularly proud of the diligence Robert Axtell and I have given to contribute to the chapter’s and Camaione Fund’s extraordinary financial growth – which has provided opportunities to fund exceptional programs, scholarships and other valuable tangible benefits to our members.

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

I’d like to think that I had at least a small part in shaping and advancing the field of the exercise practitioner. Some examples of my efforts that had a meaningful impact to the field include:

- being a founder of the Clinical Exercise Physiology Association (CEPA), helping to develop its organizational infrastructure and serving as architect and first chair on its Legislative and Publications committees.
- serving in a number of leadership capacities on ACSM’s Committee on Certification and Registry Boards (including Executive Council Chair) and having a role in helping to define and advance the field of the Clinical Exercise Physiologist.

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

Engage and be aware of the difference you make by what you do and what you don’t do...and be accountable for that!

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

ENGAGE - and follow your passion with purpose and plan.