

# Meet Our NEACSM Past President



**NEACSM's 31st Past President:** Stella Lucia Volpe, Ph.D., RDN, ACSM-CEP, FACSM

**Education:** BS – Exercise Science, University of Pittsburgh; MS – Exercise Physiology, Virginia Tech; Ph.D. – Nutrition, Virginia Tech

**Current or most recent affiliation:** Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA

**Honors & Awards:** 2019 - Selected Honorary Member, CELAFISCS (Centro de Estudos do Laboratório de Aptidão Física de São Caetano do Sul), São Paulo, Brasil, October 3, 2019; 2018 - Selected for the USA Masters Women's Field Hockey Team; represented the United States at the 2018 World Cup, Barcelona Spain, July-August; 2018 - MVP as Associate Editor for the Translational Journal of the American College of Sports Medicine; 2017 - Sports, Cardiovascular, and Wellness Nutritionists' Distinguished Scholar Award; 2017 - Pennsylvania Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Outstanding Dietetic Educator Award, Didactic Program in Dietetics Category; 2015 - Plymouth-Whitemarsh High School Distinguished Graduates Organization Award; 2013 Honor Award, New England American College of Sports Medicine; 2009 - Distinguished Alumni Award, Department of Health and Physical Activity, University of Pittsburgh; 2006 - Anne Keane Teaching Award, School of Nursing, University of Pennsylvania; 1999 - University of Massachusetts Distinguished Teaching Award Winner; 1999 - School of Public Health and Health Sciences College Outstanding Teaching Award Winner, University of Massachusetts; 1997-1998 - Lilly Teaching Fellow, University of Massachusetts

## 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 athletic trainer for field hockey at the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt) told me about a new major called "Exercise Science" that would prepare me for higher degrees, and that I might like it. So, I switched my major to Exercise Science.

I wanted to become a veterinarian or a physician; but, then my academic advisor at Pitt, Dr. Fred Goss, encouraged me to get my MS in Exercise Physiology. He had gone to Virginia Tech, and so I applied there, and went there. While at Virginia Tech, my MS Thesis Advisor, Dr. Janet Walberg-Rankin, had a big influence on me. She has her PhD in Nutrition, but was combining her research with nutrition and exercise physiology, and I thought that would be a great idea! So, after I received my MS degree, I worked a year in cardiac rehabilitation as an exercise physiologist, and then pursued my PhD in Nutrition at Virginia Tech, under the mentoring of Dr. Janette Taper.

I then did a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of California at Berkeley, under Dr. Janet King. There, I learned about using stable isotopes (of minerals) and continued to combine my research with nutrition and exercise.

### 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?

First, my parents instilled a strong work ethic in me (and my siblings).

And, as above – they were: Dr. Fred Goss, Dr. Janet Walberg-Rankin, Dr. Janette Taper, Dr. Janet King.

In my professional career, there have been (and continue to be) so many people, but some include: Dr. Janet Walberg-Rankin (still!), as well as Dr. Janet King; Dr. Priscilla Clarkson (who took me under her wing as soon as I started on faculty at the University of Massachusetts Amherst), Dr. Patty Freedson, Dr. Guy Lanza, Dr. Ferg Clydesdale, Dr. Mary Deane Sorcinelli, Dr. Melinda Manore, Dr. Linda Houtkooper, Dr. Rick Lewis. I could name a lot more people – who continually help me! I am grateful to them all.

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

I feel blessed that I can work at something I really enjoy. Researching the effects of diet and exercise on obesity and diabetes, using various study designs and methods, really energizes me. Mentoring my students in the lab is what is the most fun for me; I love to watch my students becoming independent researchers!

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

I joined ACSM as a senior at Pitt, due to Dr. Goss' influence, because he was very involved in ACSM. While at Virginia Tech, we were highly encouraged to attend Southeast ACSM and ACSM. My first involvement in ACSM was with my regional chapter, SEACSM. My first presentation at national ACSM was in 1988, presenting my MS Thesis research.

ACSM is my "home" scientific organization. I have learned so much from being involved in both NEACSM and ACSM, and have met so many wonderful people. Meeting so many others through my involvement in ACSM has really helped me grow professionally. Some of my closest friends are through ACSM.

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

For me, it was working with Dino Costanzo and Donna Murphy. I felt so blessed to work with them, and they both taught me so much during my time as president. There were so many other memories, but working with Dino and Donna was the highlight!

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

Oh wow, I hope I can remember! Well, I remember working with a wonderful graphic designer to put together the brochure for the NEACSM spring conference. It seemed like that took so long to put together, because revising it was a bit more difficult compared to now!

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

I am not sure how much I contributed from a larger perspective; however, I was happy to serve, honestly. My goal was to involve smaller colleges and universities more, and I hope I was able to achieve that at some level.

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

My areas of research include how diet (including minerals), exercise, and/or environmental changes with diet and exercise affect obesity and diabetes mellitus, as well as sports nutrition. I hope that my research has influenced the field at some level.

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

Definitely get involved, have fun, and stay connected!

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

I would advise them to go for it! It is a great field with wonderful people! It can open a lot of doors for them.