

Our State...Our Department

Sport Administration and Sport Studies Newsletter



Mississippi State University

Department of Kinesiology

Spring 2015

A message from the program

Greetings to alumni, students, faculty, and other friends of our program. As the 2014-15 academic year comes to a close, we are pleased to be able to share many notable achievements with you. We are excited to announce that the Department of Kinesiology will begin offering a PhD program in the fall of 2015 with concentrations in sport studies and exercise science. In this edition of the newsletter, you will find two stories pertaining to the new PhD program. You will also find updates about the career achievements of a number of our alumni as well as other announcements about points of pride from the program. This newsletter serves an important role in helping us connect with our alumni. If you have any updates or information to share, or if there is anything we can be of help with, please feel free to contact any of our faculty members. Hail State!

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New MSU Kinesiology Doctoral Program Begins with Fall Semester

Leaders agree, Mississippi State's new doctoral program in kinesiology represents the long-anticipated extension of the university's most popular undergraduate major.

The College of Education's inaugural doctorate-level courses in the study of human movement begin in August with the 2015 fall semester. Before the introduction of this program, the highest academic level the kinesiology department offered was a Master of Science degree with concentrations in exercise physiology, sport administration or sport pedagogy.

"The new Ph.D. program in kinesiology will strengthen a department that already is strong and growing," said Jerry Gilbert, provost and executive vice president. "We expect to see

additional graduate students as well as increased grant funding and research productivity as the new graduate program is implemented.

"It will be a great addition to the doctoral programs of the university," Gilbert emphasized.

MSU's official 2014-15 enrollment totals more than 20,100. More than 6 percent of undergraduate students--approximately 36 percent of College of Education majors--are pursuing bachelor's degrees in kinesiology.

Those high numbers explain why the university's addition of the doctoral degree was the natural next step, said department head Stanley Brown.

"This Ph.D. program will create a new visibility on campus, the state, region, nationally and internationally," he said. "There will be even more research being conducted, which will enhance the program as a whole."

According to college dean Richard Blackburn, kinesiology is one of the fastest growing higher education disciplines. He said MSU's leadership in training doctoral-level researchers and instructors will further enhance the department's national reputation.

"As Mississippi State trains doctoral faculty and researchers who go on to work in other settings, we're going

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Mississippi State University's kinesiology department will begin offering doctoral degrees in the fall. Here, master's-level students collect data to assess the oxygen cost of stationary cycling.
(Photo by: Russ Houston)

Doctoral Program: Continued from Page 2

to have a program where our graduates will be very employable,” Blackbourn said. “Our graduates will be the kind that represent Mississippi State very well on the national and international stage as we continue to spread our influence around the nation.”

Graduate students interested in teaching or research careers may focus their doctoral studies in exercise science or sport studies, said Adam Love, associate professor of kinesiology.

“These two concentrations are quite different,” he said. “The focus of the exercise science doctoral concentration is the scientific study of how biophysical aspects function during physical

activity, exercise and sport, and the sport studies doctoral concentration encompasses such fields as sport management, sport pedagogy, sport sociology, and sport philosophy,” he explained.

Whether they become postsecondary teachers or continue their work in research centers, kinesiology doctoral program graduates will contribute to the expanding understanding of health and human performance, Love said.

“With the growth and increasing numbers of students in the field--not just here at Mississippi State but also across the country--there’s an increasing demand for people and programs to train those students at the doctoral level.”

Former Sport Admin Students Offer Perspective on New PhD Program

Prior to the initiation of the Department of Kinesiology’s PhD program in the fall of 2015, MSU kinesiology alumni seeking to obtain doctoral degrees had to look elsewhere, including students like Colin Cork.

Cork, who is currently a PhD student at the University of Arkansas, is one of many students to pursue a doctoral degree after graduating from the MSU sport administration program.

“The experience of attending the sport administration program at MSU is one that set me on my current path,” Cork said, who completed his master’s in 2014.

“My instructors really challenged me with both my coursework and in thinking about my future. Their guidance throughout my two years was crucial to the success and experiences that I am having now.”

Dr. Wonyoung Kim is another former MSU sport administration student. After earning his master’s degree in 2009, Kim went on to complete his PhD at

degree in 2009, Kim went on to complete his PhD at the University of Southern Mississippi. Today, he is an assistant professor in the sport management program at Wichita State University.

“Pursuing a doctoral degree is quite different than a master’s degree,” Kim said. “Studying in the master’s program was more focused on developing research projects that added to the collective knowledge base of the field of sport management.”

For students entering the doctoral program in the fall, Cork offers some advice from his own experiences of adjusting to doctoral studies.

“The adjustments made from a master’s program to a doctorate can be tremendous when not taken into perspective,” Cork says. “One of the most crucial adjustments that I had to make was handling the additional responsibilities that come with being a doctoral student and teaching assistant. I like to equate being in this position as

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Lee Receives Graduate Teaching Assistant of the Year Award

It has been said throughout the years that hard work pays off. Tanner Lee is a primary example.

Recently, Lee earned the Donald Zacharias Graduate Teaching Assistant of the Year Award, the only one of these awards given at the master's level.

Excitement was obviously the first reaction for Lee, who has worked as a graduate teaching assistant in the Kinesiology department since the fall of 2013. However, he also notes a more personal and less obvious reaction to being awarded this accomplishment.

"I just know that this is a stepping stone to where I want to be in life," Lee said. "It was an honor to win this award, and it serves as a distinct reminder for me that who I am becoming in life is on task with the capabilities I wish to have one day to really impact lives and the world for Jesus."

Prior to his time as a graduate student, Lee also earned his Bachelor's in clinical exercise physiology at MSU. However, he didn't want to stop there.

"I chose to pursue my Master's simply out of the desire to master the ideas involved in this type of field," Lee said. "I enjoy the information and wish to be as well rounded as possible, in order to provide as much positive value in life for others. This will simply serve as one avenue for that, as



Tanner Lee (left) with the Zacharias Award.

will many other interests that I want to learn about."

While working on his Master's, Lee has taught several other classes, including Emergency Health Care, Health Trends and Topics and Strength Training. All of these have helped him learn to manage additional responsibilities, both as a student and an educator.

"If you really want to learn something, teach it to others," Lee said. "I have grown to be very competent in the material I have been taught through the years, as well as having to teach it numerous times. It has also instilled a larger level of confidence in me. The more responsibilities that I have taken on, the more confident that I have grown. That has really helped me continue to step out of my comfort zone and try new things."

Though he has certainly

had success so far, Lee doesn't consider himself "lucky" and feels that success is earned by becoming a leader.

"To me, successful people in life do not get 'lucky,'" Lee said. "Success comes from years of personal development and obsessive amounts of dedication to a purpose. I can say, in all confidence, that the best leaders are never born, they are made. I hope one day to become one of those types of leaders. I haven't always been who I am today, but it has been a consistent work in progress. For me, this award serves as a monument to my progress, and God continues to bless me in giving me direction in development of my life."

Lee will complete his Master's degree in exercise physiology in May 2015 and he hopes to attend occupational therapy school at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson following graduation, with the goal of obtaining a Master's in Occupational Therapy.

However, Lee is not limiting himself and knows that his future plans can change.

"I take life one step at a time," Lee said. "Plans can always change and I will go wherever God leads me. For now, though, those are my goals and I hope to be as impactful there as I have been here at MSU."

Students Find Opportunities Through Learfield Sports



Throughout the sports industry, there are numerous companies and organizations that provide students the opportunity to polish their skills and build their career. One of those companies is Learfield Sports.

Learfield Sports, an offspring of Learfield Communications, Inc., was started in 1975, when the University of Missouri used the company to operate their radio broadcast network. Today, the company operates sponsorship and marketing rights through over 100 collegiate sports properties.

Several former Mississippi State Sport Studies and Sport Administration students have found work with Learfield Sports and their respective properties, including 2014 alum Kelly Bartlett. Bartlett currently serves as the Sponsorship Coordinator at the University of Louisville's KFC Yum! Center, which houses the Cardinals' basketball and volleyball teams.

"Learfield has a very important role with the KFC Yum! Center," said Bartlett. "That role is to find businesses, organizations, and corporations to sponsor the arena itself. Our partners help keep this arena running while having the chance to get their name and logo out in front of the 1.1 million people who

come through the KFC Yum! Center every year."

While Bartlett has only worked for Learfield since January 2015, she has already gone through several adjustments and changes relating to her career.

"One of the roles I have been given is creating the proposals we present to potential partners of the KFC Yum! Center," said Bartlett. "That is a role that I have never been given before. I am used to picking up the phone all day selling tickets. I now make at the most five calls per day. I enjoy still wanting to talk to people at the end of the day now. Overall, working with sponsorships as opposed to ticket sales is my biggest progression so far."

However, it's not just former students that have found a role with Learfield's properties. Andy Lockard is a current Sport Administration student at MSU and serves as the manager for the women's tennis team. In between those two roles, Lockard also serves as a fulfillment coordinator for MSU's Bulldog Sports Properties.

"There's a lot of time management and people skills involved," Lockard said. "A seller can come up
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Kelly Bartlett



Andy Lockard

Perspective (continued from page 3)

having three separate jobs with the amount of responsibility that comes with each.”

Kim also adds that obtaining his PhD was definitely a hectic experience, but credits his previous experience at Mississippi State to be beneficial in earning his goal.

“One of the most valuable lessons that I learned at MSU was how to communicate with students and colleagues. Through my graduate studies, I learned how to set specific goals for my professional development and manage time diligently. The diverse learning experiences in the sport administration program at MSU helped me to achieve my goal.”



Wonyoung Kim is one of several former MSU kinesiology students excited about the addition of the new doctoral program. (Photo from Wichita State University)

Learfield (continued from page 5)

to you and say I need a proposal for this client in 30 minutes and this is what it should include. You have to be able to focus and get it done. Failing is not an option. I have been told that I’m past the point of making little mistakes now and that I have to be perfect. It can be a grind sometimes, but in the end it is rewarding.”

As for students who are looking to break into the sports industry, whether with Learfield or another organization, Bartlett offers four pieces of advice – work hard, gain experience, network, and have a good attitude. “Not every step and job will be the most enjoyable,” Bartlett said. “Not every day will be fun, but you need to make it seem like it is the best job you’ve ever had. Employers like a go-getter, and this attitude rubs off on the rest of the office you work in.”

Alumni Updates: Where are they now?

Jan Blaine (B.S. in Sport Communication, 2009) is the Assistant Director of Development for Mississippi State’s Bagley College of Engineering. He is responsible for working with donors and alumni to help support the College of Engineering through private funding and gifts. Blaine says that his time in the Sport Communication program helped him to step out of his comfort zone and get to know a variety of people, which made him more confident in building relationships. He offers five key aspects for current students looking for jobs: Work hard, Volunteer, Set Goals, Treat Others with Respect and Be Grateful.

Adam Germek (M.S. in Sport Administration, 2001) is the Chief Development Officer for Special Olympics Tennessee in Nashville, TN. He oversees all areas of fundraising, including partnerships, sponsorships, special events, cause marketing, direct marketing, and special projects. Germek believes that his experiences in the Sport Administration program were crucial to his success in the sport industry. His advice to students is to network and to not be scared to “pick up the phone to ask people for a chance.” He also says that is important to stay connected with your classmates, professors and other connections that you establish along the way.

Alumni Updates (Continued)

Sarah Layne (M.S. in Sport Administration, 2014) is the Director of Advancement and Partnerships at U.S. Sports Inc./Sports Spectrum in Charlotte, N.C. She is responsible for overseeing sales and establishing relationships with company partners and new donors. Layne says the sport administration program at Mississippi State broadened her understanding of various aspects of the sport industry. Her advice to other students is to understand the importance of internships as a stepping stone to a future career. Layne also encourages students to volunteer with departments at MSU and to not be afraid to step out of your comfort zone.

Ben Price (B.S. in Sport Studies, 2012) is the Assistant Director of Media Relations at Limestone College in Gaffney, S.C. He is the primary media contact for several of the sports at Limestone and am involved with all 25 of the school's sanctioned sports. Price says the sport studies program at MSU surrounded him with people who shared the same desire for working in sports and gave him many fellow contacts. He encourages students to not get frustrated and give up when it seems that their hard work is unnoticed. Price also wants students to not be shy when looking for new opportunities.

Zackary Vosen (M.S. in Sport Administration, 2013) is a Kinesiology Instructor at Mississippi College in Clinton, Mississippi. He says he is very proud of his educational experience at Mississippi State. He appreciates that each professor went to great lengths to ensure that each class prepared students for their futures in the field. His advice to current students in the program is when looking for potential employment opportunities is to be exhaustive and let employers know how you can be an asset to him.

Marlee West (B.S. in Clinical Exercise Physiology, 2010) is a Physical Therapist at Jones Therapy Services in Nashville, TN. She is responsible for providing physical therapy treatment for children ranging in age from birth to 18 who have problems with gross motor activities. She also helps to educate the patient and their families on the best ways to promote the development of motor skills while in their home environment. West says that her education at MSU served as a solid stepping stone to launch my career as a physical therapist and encourages students to never give up on your passion and continue to stay focused.

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