

Meet Our NEACSM Past President



NEACSM's 29th President: Deborah Riebe

Education: B.S. Physical Education, Springfield College; M.S. Physical Education, University of Rhode Island; Ph.D. Exercise Science, University of Connecticut

Current or most recent affiliation: Associate Dean, College of Health Sciences, University of Rhode Island

Honors & Awards: ACSM Fellowship 1997, NEACSM Honor Award 2004, NEACSM President 2001, elected member of ACSM's Board of Trustees 2013-2016, University of Connecticut Outstanding Kinesiology Professional Award, 2006.

Professional Interests: Physical activity and health, obesity

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 love of athletics inspired me to pursue an undergraduate degree in physical education. At the time, I had never heard of exercise science and there were relatively few academic programs in this new discipline. Exercise physiology was my favorite class during my undergraduate program, and upon graduation, I worked in the area of adult fitness. I learned that I really enjoyed research while completing my master's thesis, and decided pursuing a Ph.D. was the best option for me.

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?

Dr. Tom Manfredi, Dr. Bob Sonstroem, and Dr. Bo Fernhall introduced me to research and encouraged me to complete a thesis. Dr. Manfredi continued to be a mentor for 18 years at URI, where I was lucky enough to be his colleague until he retired. Dr. Dave Camaione, Dr. Carl Maresh and Dr. Larry Armstrong were important in helping me develop professionally and as a scientist in my doctoral program.

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

Every day, we learn more and more about the importance of physical activity to good health. The breadth of health benefits from regular exercise inspires me to spread the word to as many people as I can. The physiological mechanisms responsible for the health benefits continues to intrigue me.

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

I had never heard of NEACSM until my major advisor in my master's program told me that I had to attend the annual meeting. It ended up being one of the best things that I have ever done. Over the years, I have held many different positions with NEACSM, ranging from being the processing coordinator to the president. I have been able to apply everything I learned in those committees to other aspects of my career. Being involved with NEACSM also introduced me to many individuals who supported me and helped me get involved with ACSM on a national level.

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

What is most memorable are the friends and colleagues that I have met through NEACSM. There have been so many great times and a lot of laughs over the years. I particularly remember the "stuffing" parties where the executive committee prepared for the conference by filling up portfolios for attendees and had a lot of fun at the same time.

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

When I became president, the Chapter was in a very precarious financial position. Dino Costanzo and I worked together to turn things around.

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

I would have to say that it is my long term commitment to the Chapter. I have not missed a meeting since 1989 and served on countless committees and in various positions.

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

Being the senior editor of the tenth edition of *ACSM's Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription* and leading the expert panel which resulted in major changes in ACSM's pre-participation health screening are two highlights. Chairing the Committee for Certification and Registry Boards where we laid the groundwork for uniting degreed exercise professionals under the title of exercise physiologist was important for practitioners.

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

Don't hesitate—get involved. Know that the passion and work that you put into the Chapter will help you in the long run. At the same time, you will be inspiring students and younger professionals to be active in the field.

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

Be passionate about what you do and don't be afraid of hard work. Get involved in the field while in school—participate in a research program, volunteer as a strength and conditioning coach, or work in the faculty and staff fitness program. Talk to faculty—they want you to succeed. Get certified.