

“Embodying a Healthy Future: HPER in the 21st Century”

Remarks of Michael A. McRobbie
Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Indiana University Bloomington
HPER State of the School Event
125 HPER Building
April 26, 2006

1. INTRODUCTION

Traditionally speaking, the university has concerned itself with the life of the mind. Reinforcing the Cartesian separation of mind and body, this early institutional model imagined scholars removed from the everyday world of physical labors, isolated in their ivory towers as they engaged in research projects, teaching, and other academic endeavors. However, as John Locke, himself a medical researcher and a near contemporary of Decartes, famously explained more three centuries ago, in his work *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* “A sound mind in a sound body is a short but full description of a happy state in this world.”

As we move forward in the 21st century, the university that thrives has, like Locke and many others, recognized the hazards that Cartesian dualism poses both to the individual and to the scholarly community. That university fosters the fusion of mind and body, just as it minimizes the boundaries between its campus community and the world at large.

Indiana University has long been on the cutting edge of the shift from what philosophers of the mind call the dualism of Descartes to the interactionism of Locke. It has done this

by constantly building relationships that challenge the isolation often associated with the academic world.

2. HPER'S GOALS AND VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The School of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, whose sixty-year history we celebrate today, has been a leader in nurturing student minds and student bodies, as University Chancellor Ken Gros Louis has already so eloquently described. However, HPER extends its efforts beyond today's IU students and faculty members. Its programs reach into the future and forge communities that may have never been imagined before.

Any program that concentrates on personal health and wellness is necessarily future directed. Any time we look for ways to increase our longevity, we are thinking about tomorrow. These are simple facts.

Just as the life sciences, in general, are both the sciences of today and the sciences of tomorrow, so too are HPER's multi-faceted prevention programs. HPER is in an excellent position to play an important part in the university's Life Sciences Strategic Plan, focusing on personal wellness and health. More specifically, HPER offers what the strategic plan calls, under Goal 7, "research and education that will help residents of Indiana to lead healthier, better, and longer lives." In fact, this goal parallels HPER's vision statement, which seeks "a world made better by its citizens actively pursuing healthy lifestyles." And HPER is already pursuing both goal and vision through its newly proposed core curriculum, cutting edge research, and outreach to the campus and community.

3. PREVENTION AND WELLNESS PROGRAMS

Rather than concentrating on the prevailing crisis/treatment model that dominates the healthcare market, HPER has recognized the importance of wellness and prevention, offering the foresight of proactive intervention. Beginning with student wellness

programs in places like Briscoe Quad's Fitness and Wellness Center, HPER aims to help young people establish nutritional and fitness behaviors that will lead to healthier and longer lives. Such lifestyle changes benefit not only the current generation but also yield lasting changes that will impact lives for many years to come.

Students and faculty alike can also see the school's pursuit of its strategic goal and its vision in places like the SRSC, where I have exercised happily for over nine years, and the HPER building, where fitness and wellness programs already cater to campus community needs.

In addition to existing services, one of the most exciting developments on the horizon is the Comprehensive Campus and Community Wellness Program, which is being designed to serve faculty, staff, students and the underserved in the Bloomington community. This program is an ideal example of the fusion of mind and body as well as an opportunity to envision new communities that extend beyond the boundaries of IU's campus. A combination of teaching, service, and research, this preventative program will tap HPER's many strengths. It will draw on HPER's three academic departments: Recreation and Park Administration, Applied Health Science, and Kinesiology. Partnering with the Division of Recreational Sports will provide vital service and delivery components.

Some specific changes associated with this new program involve expanding laboratory space and technology. This summer, the HPER men's faculty locker room in Wildermuth will be retrofitted as a "Living Well Wellness Laboratory." It will first serve as the "think tank" area for the faculty task force whose aim is to determine the school's core cognate areas and develop the school's contribution to the Life Science initiative. Later, this space will serve as the center for a pilot wellness program. Provided adequate funds are available, the women's locker in Wildermuth will be converted to HPER's technology suite, which will provide IT support for the pilot program and associated data collection. Finally, HPER's proposed Courtyard Project is designed to be a 278-seat classroom and wellness lab. This \$5 million project will serve as the

nerve center for the eventual Comprehensive Campus and Community Wellness Program. These are ambitious plans that require patience, tenacity, and vision for the future of Indiana University and its community.

In addition to the conventional aims of wellness and prevention plans, HPER's new Comprehensive Campus and Community Wellness Program also includes two additional aspects.

First, it aims to have an economic impact on the campus community through reduced health care costs. And second, it will generate research paradigms that demonstrate the program's efficacy at promoting lifestyle changes that improve health, enhance productivity, and increase longevity. This program will not only improve individual lives, but it will also improve the life of the university.

4. UNIFYING COMMUNITIES

HPER's vision, its strategic goal, and its planned wellness program not only speak to its focus on the future but also to its reimagining what health and community mean in the 21st century. HPER's wellness program model unites Indiana University's disparate communities in a way that views the individual as an active agent in educational, service, and financial realms. The very notion of community shifts in this model to become more inclusive.

Little wonder, then, that we also see HPER faculty members collaborating with colleagues in other IU schools and departments such as the School of Music, Education, SPEA, and Informatics. Little wonder that HPER reaches out across the state to study such topics as obesity in Indiana children, governmental policies on sport and leisure, and tobacco and drug cessation. Little wonder that HPER maintains a national reputation providing wellness programs to companies such as Florida-based CSX Transportation, evaluating an HIV/AIDS project in Georgia, and establishing cooperative agreements with at least 17 international institutions including Victoria University in Melbourne, Australia.

HPER's global efforts embody the spirit of inquiry and intellect at the heart of Indiana University. All of these projects suggest the expanding notion of scholarly community that attends our contemporary world. Information technology can only enhance HPER's outreach efforts as it is truly global and allows scholars to share information instantaneously, establishing and maintaining intellectual affiliations. IT has the potential to enhance all forms of scholarly inquiry and research, especially at the frontiers of HPER's academic pursuits. It enables scholars more easily to conduct complicated health and fitness assessments, analyze high volume data studies, and reinforce positive behavior that leads to healthier fitness and nutrition decisions.

5. THE CHANGING SPIRIT OF HPER

Whether in the realm of technology, community, or wellness, the School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation has changed tremendously over the past 60 years. It has redefined our notions of health and community. It has become a proactive agent in applied public health concerns. Indeed, its spirit has evolved, and so too must the school's name to reflect its evolving vision and goals. The faculty task force I mentioned earlier is also working to establish a school name that reflects the current spirit of what is now known as the School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation.

Under the leadership of Dean David Gallahue, HPER has remained a major force within the IU community and beyond. Beginning at IU as an assistant professor of kinesiology many years ago, Dean Gallahue brought his experience to university administration in 1996 when he became associate dean for academic affairs and research, and acting dean of HPER in 1998. In 2002, he accepted his current position as Dean of HPER, and we are immensely grateful for his years of active and dedicated service. Soon, he is stepping down from this position in order to spend more time with his wife and family at their farm in Colorado but will continue to consult, speak, and write regarding his expertise in motor development.

I am pleased to announce that Dean Dan Smith will chair the search committee to identify David's successor. This committee faces the challenging task of finding a candidate who will match Dean Gallahue's vision and commitment to excellence.

6. A LEGACY OF LONGEVITY

Long before Descartes, Juvenal, in his *Satires*, exhorted his audience to "pray for a sound mind in a sound body." This is one of the relationships that HPER, with its attention to both mind and body, to research and wellness, exemplifies. What we have to consider, however, is the spirit that outlives us as individuals. The spirit of Indiana University is its people, its programs, and its legacy. HPER allows us to offer one of the most precious legacies to IU students, faculty, and the citizens of this state: healthier, happier, and longer lives.