

Western University School of Kinesiology Strategic Plan 2017-2022

VISION:

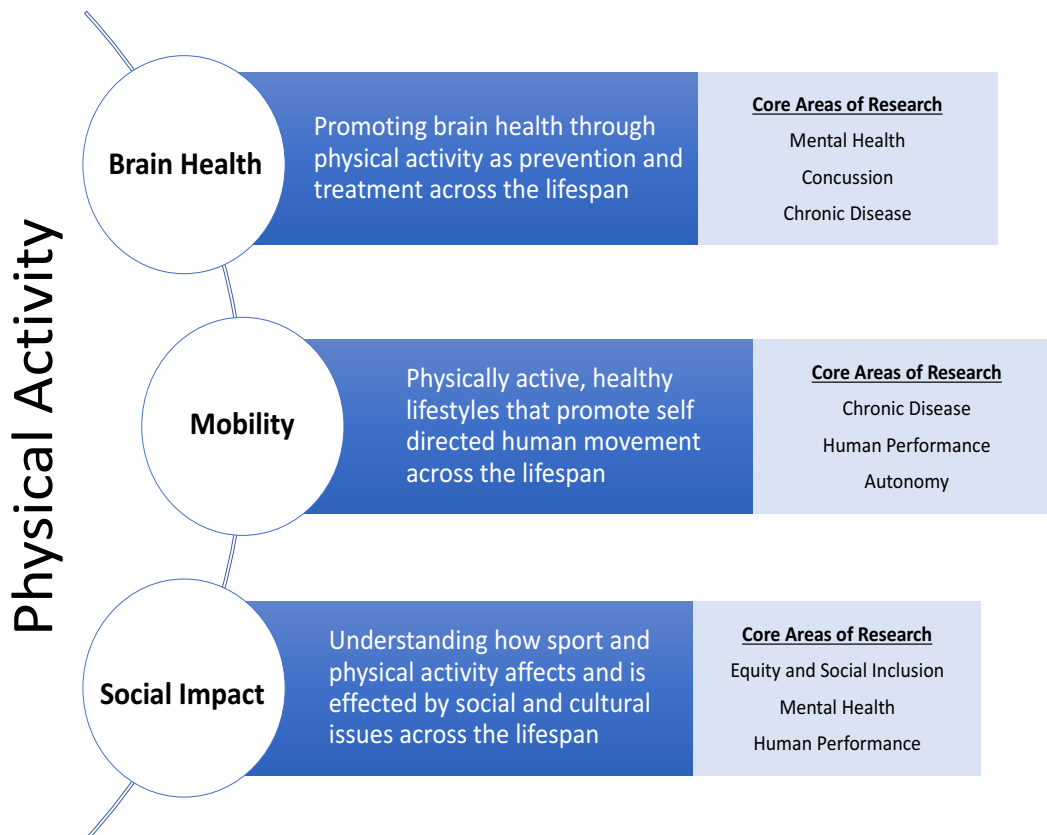
The School of Kinesiology at Western will be recognized Globally as a leader in research and education through a multidisciplinary approach to Kinesiology.

MISSION:

The School of Kinesiology at Western advocates the benefits of physical activity to society by providing a multidisciplinary approach to discovery, dissemination, and application of knowledge about human movement and its effects.

ENHANCING RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

The School of Kinesiology is well known for excellence in research and innovation. It has a history of disciplinary (e.g. biomechanics, exercise physiology, history, management, psychology, sociology) around physical activity. In an era of increasing competitiveness for funding, scholarships, and student excellence, the school will continue to excel in discipline specific research and knowledge mobilization on the benefits of physical activity as prevention, treatment, and lifestyle across the lifespan. We will continue to support and respect all types of research knowledge from basic science to applied perspectives. In addition, we will move towards integrating our disciplines to address key societal issues from a multidisciplinary perspective. In this way, faculty members will continue to advance strong research programs within their disciplines that foster collaborative, integrated thinking. In moving this agenda forward, research in the school will focus on three strategic cohesive research clusters: 1) Brain Health; 2) Mobility; and 3) Social Impact. These three areas of focus dovetail with the Faculty of Health Sciences strategic plan, and Western University strategic plan – particularly in the areas of ‘On the Move’, ‘Health Equity and Social Inclusion’.



BRAIN HEALTH: Promoting brain health through physical activity as prevention and treatment across the lifespan.

The multidisciplinary research cluster of Brain Health includes the research areas of Mental Health, Concussions, Performance, Co-Morbid Vascular Diseases, and Epigenetics. Issues relating to movement, cardiovascular control, cognition, and exercise prescription are all incorporated as they relate to the brain. As per the Faculty of Health Sciences Strategic Plan, Brain Health also encompasses the increased understanding of various age-, neurologic-, and trauma-induced injuries, including congenital, neurological and musculoskeletal disorders across the lifespan. Researchers in this cluster of Kinesiology are concerned with the multifaceted understanding of physical activity as it influences and is involved in the overall maintenance of a healthy central nervous system. The Brain Health cluster is further supported by the Faculty of Health Sciences' Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging (CCAA), and campus initiatives such as the Brain and Mind Institute, and The Regional Cardiac Rehabilitation program.

MOBILITY: Physically active, healthy lifestyles that promote self-directed human movement across the lifespan.

The Mobility cluster encompasses a broad area of research perspectives and disciplines, including Chronic Disease, Human Performance and Individual Autonomy. The foci of the Mobility area in Kinesiology is to further include the impact of physical activity on individuals' [limited] mobility, including the determination and prevention of related risk factors and diseases, as well as helping individuals return to their expected quality of life or standard of living following an adverse health outcome (such as an injury or chronic disease). The spectrum of mobility research considered in this cluster includes high level athletes (able-bodied and disabled) to hospitalized patients following injury or disease. Achieving "lifelong mobility" is a vision also shared across campus within the Bone and Joint Institute, the Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging (CCAA) and the International Centre for Olympic Studies (ICOS), of which members of the School of Kinesiology play pivotal roles demonstrating the importance of physical activity for all aspects of quality of life.

SOCIAL IMPACT: Understanding how sport and physical activity affects and is effected by social and cultural issues across the lifespan

The Social Impact research cluster encompasses a broad range of issues as relating to Equity and Social Inclusion, Mental Health, and Human Performance within the scope of social and cultural issues. Researchers within this cluster concern themselves within the boundaries of social determinants of physical (in)activity, social inequities in sport and health, and ability/disability and individuals' 'lived experiences' of sport and physical activity. With a newly formed research group, '*Sport and Social Impact Research Group*' (SSIRG), The key link to the Faculty research is around social justice issues of access to physical activity which are linked to health and well-being across the lifespan. The Social Impact research cluster is also supported across campus within the Center for Research in Health Equity and Social Inclusion, as well as ICOS.

In order to support the research clusters and become known as one of the top research-focused Kinesiology programs in Canada, we have set out a number of strategic objectives:

1) SCHOOL OF KINESIOLOGY RESEARCH CHAIR

OBJECTIVE: Appoint Research Chair from among Faculty Membership

TIMELINE: January 2018 (Term 3-5 years)

To support the research objectives and related initiatives of the School, we will appoint a Research Chair from among the Kinesiology Faculty. The aim of this appointment is to focus on key issues of research around the core areas, support grant applications, help support synergies amongst faculty members, and be involved in mentor training for research. A workload relief comparative to the Undergraduate and Graduate Chair will be assigned in order to help facilitate the broad goals of this position. The Research Chair will become a key member of the Leadership Team in Kinesiology including Chairing an ad-hoc service committee as needed to support the strategic research areas. A primary objective of the initial appointment will be to develop a School of Kinesiology Research Strategy that dovetails with the Faculty of Health Sciences Research Plan.

2) PEER-REVIEWED EXTERNAL FUNDING

OBJECTIVE: Increase the overall relative percentage of faculty members holding external peer-reviewed funding

TIMELINE: December 2022

We will encourage and assist faculty members in their research endeavours with a particular emphasis on integrative research questions encompassed by our core research areas. This initiative aligns directly with Pillar 1 of the FHS strategic plan to support increased peer-reviewed research funding. In order to achieve this OBJECTIVE, the Research Chair, in conjunction with the Leadership team, will be responsible for supporting collaborative granting opportunities, encouraging multidisciplinary research teams from Kinesiology, and supporting individual granting opportunities. Additionally, incentives will be developed to encourage and support these collaborative opportunities and research/grant preparation time allotment. We will take advantage of alternative workload arrangements and examine the Annual Performance Evaluation process to encourage the pursuit of peer-reviewed funding opportunities. Following suit with the FHS strategic plan, we aim to have 75% of faculty members supported externally peer-reviewed funding by 2022.

3) RESEARCH METRICS

OBJECTIVE: Develop a systematic internal approach for measuring and sharing research success that values the multidisciplinary nature of the School of Kinesiology

TIMELINE: Spring 2020

Given the multidisciplinary nature of our research and Graduate education, we will endeavour to develop an approach that is unique to Kinesiology, aligning with the Faculty of Health Sciences' measures to not only gauge research outputs, but also celebrate these outputs. Research approaches in Kinesiology range from basic to social science, bench to community. Therefore, we need to find innovative ways to support and value all outputs in varying ways, with a particular emphasis on those that contribute to our core research areas. This will extend to Graduate research and education where we will find ways to celebrate the successes of Graduate student research, and emphasise the importance of scholarly and practical outputs. This initiative is core to Knowledge Mobilization and valuing the multidisciplinary work of the Faculty.

4) RESEARCH INSTITUTE

OBJECTIVE: Create a Centre/Institute of research excellence that represents our signature areas of study (e.g. Physical Activity and Health)

TIMELINE: 2020

Disability in its various forms such as musculoskeletal, cardio/cerebrovascular, mental health and acquired neurological disorders, often limit mobility and create a significant challenge for individuals, communities, and health care systems. The need for self-regulated preventative, rehabilitative, and focused support for overall well-being has never been more important. The benefits of physical activity for prevention, treatment and healthy lifestyles is fundamental. The development of an Institute focused on physical activity as the centrepiece for prevention, treatment, and empowerment will bring together the multidisciplinary perspectives of Western Kinesiology around the core research areas of brain health, mobility, and social impact. The creation of an Institute will be a collaborative effort among members of Kinesiology, the Faculty of Health Sciences and beyond. This initiative aligns with the Faculty of Health Sciences strategic initiatives of enhancing interdisciplinary collaborations within FHS and with community, government and industry partners.

LEADING IN LEARNING

The School of Kinesiology has undergone a transformation over the past 20 years away from a focus on physical education as the core of the program, to a multidisciplinary approach examining movement as it relates to prevention, treatment, and lifestyle for overall physical and mental well-being. As we continue to evolve and define ourselves, we need to ensure an innovative curriculum at the Undergraduate and Graduate levels that is embedded in scholarship and practice. Over the next five years, we will continue to refine the core curriculum and refine the learning outcomes of the program to best meet the needs of the changing face of Kinesiology.

1. UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

OBJECTIVE: Refine program level learning outcomes for all degree programs

TIMELINE: Spring 2018

As part of the retreat process in June 2017, the faculty sought to develop Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (UDLE) that are consistent with Ontario's *Quality Insurance Framework*. UDLE's describe the intellectual and creative development of students and the acquisition of relevant skills.

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- A. Exercise initiative, personal responsibility and accountability in personal and group decision making contexts. (Leadership)
 - B. Understand the value of physically active lifestyle and model it for those in the community.
 - C. Execute critical thinking and problem-solving skills that exemplify the scientific method.
 - D. Demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills that link to conceptual knowledge.
 - E. Communicate logical written and oral reports to other scientists and lay public.
 - F. Identify and respect global and cultural diversity across disciplines in Kinesiology.
 - G. Understand the human body and its response to physical activity/exercise.
 - H. Understand the psychosocial and cultural issues associated with physical activity/exercise.
 - I. Apply knowledge of the human body and its response to physical activity/exercise/sport.
 - J. Critically evaluate research literature and use this information to inform evidence-based practice.
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2. STREAMLINED AND RESEARCH-INFORMED UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

OBJECTIVE: Reorganize and refine undergraduate curriculum around core research areas

TIMELINE: Fall 2020

Significant curricular change has occurred in the past few years with the decreased focus on activity requirements including changes to the BSc module. The different modules that our undergraduate Kinesiology students pursue are increasingly more similar than ever before. In addition, significant interest both from students, as well as the government, has emerged in experiential learning. As part of this reorganization, and to align with the developing degree level expectations, a number of key strategies will be implemented.

- a. Develop a new first year full year 1.0 FCE Kinesiology course that introduces students to the breadth and depth of research and professional opportunities in Kinesiology. This will encompass a multidisciplinary understanding of Kinesiology. A Case-Based blended format will be ideal for the implementation of this new course. IMPLEMENTATION FALL 2019.
- b. Introduce KIN-Points (See Leading in Learning Report 2017) throughout the program years to offer a streamlined understanding of common language, terminology, and course content. This will help ensure that research informs teaching and more broadly support the development of critical thinking integral to the UDLE's.
- c. Redesign current activity offerings into modular format aligning with the Leadership in Kinesiology (e.g. IDI SMART Health Campus). Students will then be required to take a specific number of experiences from a limited list of offerings that are bundled and delivered by core Faculty in Kinesiology, and others are taken independently through the Leadership course offerings (see #3 Leadership in Kinesiology). All experiential components will become a Pass/Fail and will be mandatory milestones in the program.
- d. Define KIN experiential learning and develop milestones for all undergraduate students to ensure experiential learning opportunities are available throughout the program and define appropriate method for tracking for co-curricular or related credit.
- e. Develop a strategy to ensure that all honours students undertake a significant research experience so as to evaluate and improve both their knowledge and practice. This will connect with a Research Chair to support the research experiences and focused integration of opportunities such as Kin 4444, Kin 4443, and Kin 4492.
- f. Consider a new Bachelor of Kinesiology designation for the Undergraduate degree. This designation would offer students distinctiveness and opportunity to highlight their knowledge and skill base to potential employers and post-graduate education opportunities.

3. LEADERSHIP IN KINESIOLOGY

OBJECTIVE: Develop a Leadership Certificate in Kinesiology

TIMELINE: Fall 2019

A fundamental learning outcome of the Kinesiology Undergraduate program is for students to exercise initiative, personal responsibility and accountability in personal and group decision making contexts, a core value of leadership. As part of our goal to become leaders in Physical Activity teaching and scholarship, we also endeavour to ensure we are producing students to become the next leaders. We will be developing a Leadership Certificate opportunity for students. This certificate will enable students to accumulate leadership ‘points’ towards achieving this certificate designation during the Kinesiology program. The Certificate will be awarded to students at that the Kinesiology Awards Ceremony each spring.

4. STREAMLINED AND RESEARCH-INFORMED GRADUATE EDUCATION

OBJECTIVE: Reorganize and refine Graduate curriculum around core research areas

TIMELINE: Fall 2022

Over the next five years, we will evaluate the possibility of reorganizing the Graduate program around the core research areas. In addition, leading up the next Institutional Quality Assurance Process we will also review the option of a Masters in Kinesiology option for the course-based options. A streamlining of the offerings and the redevelopment of the Graduate Seminar course will be part of the reorganization process.

5. HONOURING ‘TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION’ IN KINESIOLOGY

OBJECTIVE: Improve accessibility of Kinesiology program for Indigenous students, and integrate TRC into the Undergraduate Education

TIMELINES: 2022

“Reconciliation must create a more equitable and inclusive society by closing the gaps in social, health, and economic outcomes that exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians” (2017, p.125)¹. We have the opportunity in Kinesiology to impact a more socially just way of thinking about physical activity and sport. Thus, we will support the integration of Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods where possible in the curriculum. As part of the Call to Action, we will also support indigenous students’ learning by ensuring clarity and support for alternative entrance requirements and ongoing academic counselling, and ensure that indigenous students participate in the Academic Transition Opportunities (ATO) Program offered by Indigenous Services.

¹ Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2017). *What we have learned: Principles of truth and reconciliation*. Ottawa, ON. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The School of Kinesiology is committed to fostering a positive workplace environment that instills a sense of pride, teamwork and interconnectivity among our members. Here we intentionally expand the “members” list to include faculty, staff, students, and strategic partners. To advance the workplace culture, the School of Kinesiology is committed to the actions and principles of diversity and equity. Focusing on our core values of *Open Communication, Respect, Teamwork, Shared Leadership, Collaboration, and Integrity*, the School will continually strive to be a great place to work, learn, and flourish.

1. WORKPLACE CULTURE: VALUES AND BELIEFS

OBJECTIVE: Streamline communication to faculty and staff to foster a collaborative research and learning environment.

TIMELINE: ONGOING

The School respects and values the actions and voices of all in our workplace. Members should be leaders for an active and healthy lifestyle which fosters positive physical and mental health. Communication and awareness are cornerstones to a sense of pride, teamwork and cohesion within the school. To facilitate increased communication and growth, we will continue to find strategic and meaningful communication approaches (e.g. newsletter with faculty contributions around the research areas, brown bag lunches, collaborative spaces, health and wellness events, awards and excellence recognition, and ongoing opportunities for dialogue among all members). In addition, the School will work towards a more streamlined communication plan for professional development and leadership opportunities for faculty and staff, while supporting and valuing diversity.

2. LEADERSHIP AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

OBJECTIVE: Fostering leadership and inclusive opportunities for junior and mid-career faculty members

TIMELINE: ONGOING

In order to provide an environment fostering leadership and inclusive opportunities for junior and mid-career faculty members, we will develop a faculty mentor program, and a leadership succession plan. We will ensure that junior faculty members and career transition faculty members will have a mentor to support excellence. In addition, in order to develop skills, capacity and leadership opportunities, we will develop a plan for future leaders in Kinesiology to ensure seamless transitions, valuing and honouring our commitment to diversity. We will also reconsider the number and role of student representation on all Kinesiology committees.

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

Kinesiology is an evolving academic discipline which requires innovative thinking and practice requires a stronger focus on *producing leaders in Kinesiology through intensive research and innovative training*. To keep relevant amidst these changes, the School of Kinesiology needs processes in place to drive futuristic planning which builds on and expands areas of strength. Engaging partnerships with alumni, community groups, internal Centres and Institutes, along with national and international collaborations, represents a critical strategy in understanding and forging the future of Kinesiology at Western.

1. EXTERNAL RELATIONS ADVISORY GROUP

OBJECTIVE: Develop an advisory council of selected members who will advise the School

TIMELINE: Spring 2018

An advisory council will be developed to advise the School on recent or potential developments in the broader field of Kinesiology and offer suggestions for strategic action that may affect the curriculum, research and other School initiatives (e.g., entrepreneurial strategies). Drawing upon the 2017 Kinesiology Strategic planning report on engagement, the committee will develop a mandate for identifying entrepreneurial outreach opportunities with alumni, practitioners, and businesses interested in the offerings of the School of Kinesiology. The committee will work with the Faculty of Health Sciences Development Officer to explore the external environment and seek advice on potential initiatives.

2. FORMAL ENGAGEMENT AND REVENUE GENERATION OPPORTUNITIES

OBJECTIVE: Develop a process of engaging external partnerships through consultations with consultative/explorative discussions AND revenue models.

TIMELINE: Ongoing

The aim is to increase contact with external partners, donor-funded research and service programs, alumni or external partner involvement in Kinesiology programs, and offer potential revenue generation opportunities. This will require a formal strategy alongside revenue potential opportunities such as Fitness Testing, Ergonomics Assessments, Physical Activity Programs, etc. Multiple models of sponsorship, partnership, and revenue will be developed to create a sustainable business plan for the School of Kinesiology in an increasingly competitive climate.