

Journal of Professional Exercise Physiology

ISSN 1550-963X

August 2013 Vol 11 No 8

American Society of Exercise Physiologists
The Professional Organization of Exercise Physiologists

The ASEP Objectives Are Worth Achieving

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Creating success means finding the right path to achieve your objectives.

THERE IS NOTHING about sports that is easy. Practicing in the heat of August to get ready for that first football game is all uphill. Anyone who has experienced how hot it is in Louisiana in August understands exactly my point. It comes down to surviving and staying the course regardless of the challenges. Likewise, change isn't easy. Changing directions, learning to think differently, and doing things that have not been done before are all difficult, time consuming, and at times discouraging. But, as I heard someone say years ago, "We become what we think." Or, stated somewhat differently, you become that football player by what you give to it. Hard work, sweat, and pain are what we give for "staying the course." It isn't any more complicated than that.

To accomplish the ASEP objectives, exercise physiologists need to see themselves already in the future. That way they momentarily achieve their objectives.

So what is this article about? Well, it is time to focus on meaningful goals. Doing something that is actually worth achieving, such as the goals of the American Society of Exercise Physiologists, is partly collaborative and partly a matter of the individual doing something different from yesterday. It is bold, challenging, and not too different from August practice in the heat of the day. But, like learning how to play football and achieving your athletic dreams, the ASEP objectives are mission-based.

What is an ASEP mission-based objective? First, we will take a look at the ASEP mission, which is both a statement of fact and belief. To make exercise physiology come to life for every exercise physiologist regardless of his or her level of education, it is important to choose your path and know your mission. That is what ASEP did years ago. It is the

professional organization that represents and promotes the profession of exercise physiology by committing itself to the professionalism in exercise physiology, its advancement, and the credibility of exercise physiologists.

The ASEP “Objectives” are worth achieving. You can appreciate this point yourself by reading the following list. Note the changes in exercise physiology with the achievement of the objectives by ASEP members who are action oriented. Self-development is a big part of any change, and as a healthcare professional it is useful to ask the question as often as necessary: “What business am I in?”

1. To provide a powerful, unified forum and opportunity for exercise physiologists to present and discuss current research in exercise physiology.
2. To promote and encourage the exchange of ideas and information regarding all phases of exercise physiology.
3. To promote advancement of teaching and research in exercise physiology within the academic environment.
4. To encourage the implementation of undergraduate and graduate education programs to meet the diverse interests and healthcare career opportunities in exercise physiology, regardless of age, gender, race or disability.
5. To promote the growth and application of the highest quality teaching, research, and professional application of exercise physiology in health promotion, disease prevention, rehabilitation, and sport fitness and training.
6. To promote development and exchange of scientific information between ASEP and other professional organizations with an interest in exercise physiology.
7. To set the agenda, determine the direction, and make the decisions about the future of the profession of exercise physiology.
8. To be a dynamic and action-oriented clearinghouse for questions regarding the professional development of exercise physiologists, healthcare, athletics performance, and research opportunities.
9. To increase visibility and enhance the image of the exercise physiology profession throughout the United States.

10. To represent exercise physiologists whose professional work is mainly clinical, and to help ensure that federal agencies and legislators understand their work and needs of the clinical professional.
11. To participate in the development and implementation of public policies and procedures concerned with exercise physiology.
12. To make a commitment to quality and integrity in exercise physiology through adherence to the ASEP Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Practice.
13. To facilitate and promote positive public policy and professional, ethical behavior by providing ongoing peer review and quality assurance programs via the accreditation of the exercise physiology academic programs.
14. To expand federal and private funding for exercise physiology research, education, and professional development.

By simply paying attention to the ASEP objectives, aligning the academic degree with career opportunities, teaching the importance of professionalism in exercise physiology, and doing things big and small that help both students and professionals, the profession of exercise physiology will grow with credibility. By doing so, others will come to realize the differences between exercise physiology and other degree programs (e.g., exercise science, human performance, and sports sciences). This latter point cannot be ignored or otherwise students and the profession will continue to suffer from mixed messages.

The Question Is This: When will exercise physiologists have time to appreciate the profession of exercise physiology?

In short, doing what one can to achieve the ASEP objectives is more a matter of awareness (i.e., knowing that you value change and acting in alignment with the new ASEP thinking) and respect for the profession than copying what others have done. Also, it is important to point out that (although critically important to the profession), academic exercise physiologists with the doctorate degree are not “the” profession of exercise physiology. This is the ASEP point of view. Given the empathy for all exercise physiologists (regardless of whether they have earned a doctorate degree or not), ASEP and the profession is composite of all exercise physiologists.

Adopting this position comes from stepping into the shoes of thousands of college graduates and experiencing life through their eyes. ASEP is interested in helping students build a positive self-esteem. Change the present-day representations of exercise physiology and you will change the students' self-esteem. It is not a matter of mental hard work of any kind. Rather, it is simply a matter of *thinking* about exercise physiology as a healthcare profession. It is visualizing the exercise physiologist as a credible healthcare professional and, then, acting on what is felt. The power of inner thoughts, images, and feelings will go a long way to experiencing new behaviors and possibilities.

It is time that exercise physiologists begin to see the possibilities of the profession. It is time to think of exercise physiologists as healthcare professionals and not fitness instructor. The means to making it financially is to embrace healthcare and not the personal trainer path. The dream should be healthcare, not strength coach. It is time to develop the attitude of success, not powerlessness. Is such thinking rational, given the identification of exercise physiology with exercise science and personal training? The ASEP leaders think it is.

To communicate your profession is to speak what is in your heart.

If exercise physiologists want to acknowledge themselves as healthcare professionals, then they must plan accordingly. It means learning to think differently, managing experiences, and living the new version of ASEP exercise physiology. It means taking responsibility for building an academic environment that is both positive and meaningful for students and faculty alike. Also, please appreciate that there's no rule that says exercise physiologists can't do more than these suggestions. As Don Juan says, "A path without a heart is never enjoyable. You have to work hard even to take it. On the other hand, a path with heart is easy, it does not make you work at liking it..."

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