

# Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport

Tucker Center News

Spring 1998

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings from the Tucker Center. Several projects have been underway this winter and spring that have involved a dynamic collaboration between the Tucker Center and Minnesota high schools. These projects are designed to encourage adolescent females to think critically about media representations of women in sport. Karri Smith, a Ph.D. student working in the Tucker Center, has served as Project Director for these endeavors.

The first collaborative project stemmed from a grant we were awarded by the American Association of University Women (AAUW). This project, "Empowering Young Girls Through Sports: Mass Media, Role Models & Mentoring," develops mentoring relationships between high-school students (who are also female athletes) and members of the AAUW. Students and mentors "team up" in a workshop, the purpose of which is to train young girls to develop a critical eye toward the media's portrayal of female athletes. After a slide presentation in which students are made aware of stereotypic images of athletic females (e.g., sportswomen are portrayed in ways that emphasize their femininity and sexual attractiveness rather than their athleticism), the students are encouraged to construct their own non-stereotypic images. These alternative images are then put on display in the high school. A related aspect of the workshop is to encourage participants to brainstorm other ways of promoting positive images of women in sport. An example of this would be for the students to design a website that emphasizes female athletes' important sport achievements. A final piece of the workshop is to develop young girls' public speaking skills. Toward that end, students present the results of the workshop to a local branch meeting of the AAUW. Thus far, workshops have been performed at Stillwater and South High Schools; we will conduct three additional workshops this spring.

We have also received grant support from the Minnesota Women's Fund to collaborate with the "Out for Equity" program in the St. Paul Public Schools. The grant project, "Stereotypic Media Representations of Female Athletes: What We See and Hear Can Harm Us," promotes awareness of the dangers of stereotypic representations of females in sport media by delivering a series of in-service workshops to high-school girls and educators. The workshop consists of two main components. The first is a slide presentation that highlights research findings on the harmful effects of sexism, racism and homophobia in mainstream sport media. The second component encourages high-school girls to create their own visions of women's athleticism that are not based on stereotypes of females in sport.

In addition to these projects, we have continued our work on the Borghild Strand Distinguished Lecture Series. Professor Margaret Duncan of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee will be speaking at the Weisman Art Museum from 7-9:00 p.m. on Monday, May 11. Professor Duncan, an internationally recognized scholar on the media's treatment of female athletes, will deliver a presentation entitled, "The Body in Question: Women, Girls, and the Sport Media." Her lecture will examine the changing images of gender in the sport media, looking at past portrayals of women athletes and female bodies, outlining significant trends, and highlighting future possibilities. In addition to the lecture, Professor Duncan will participate in a Tucker Center-sponsored panel discussion taking place the following afternoon in Coffman Memorial Union. The panel, "Strategies for Improving Media Coverage of Women's Sports: Views from Academics and Journalists," will present insider (journalists) and outsider (academics) perspectives on how to develop practical strategies for increasing media coverage of women's sports. If you have any questions about either of these events, please see the enclosed flyer or call 612-625-7327.



Dr. Margaret Duncan



Dr. Mary Jo Kane

This Spring's distinguished lecture has taken on a special significance for students dedicated to studies in Recreation, Park, and Leisure Studies because the

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## STAFF CHANGES

There have been some changes at the Tucker Center of late: We bid farewell to Kristin Raab, Shelly Shaffer, and Diane Gardetto and welcome Joah Iannotta and Kim Pearce. Diane will remain in Kinesiology and Leisure Studies, focusing her energies on completing her doctorate. Shelly has moved back east and is job hunting. Kristin was accepted into the Ph.D. program in Epidemiology at the U of MN, and has taken a research assistant position there. Good luck to all and many thanks for your work!

**Kim Pearce** has been working with the Tucker Center since last fall, primarily on the Center for Transportation Studies grant, but also assisting with the Distinguished Lecture Series. **Education:** BS in Recreation Management, Appalachian State University; MS in Recreation Administration (MSRA), University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill.

**Current Position:** Research Assistant and Ph.D. Candidate. **Interests:** Gender issues in leisure and sport; social constructions of the body; feminist resistance through sport and leisure.

“Working with the Tucker Center provides an arena for the critical study of sport in ways that expand previously unknown options for girls and women. The outreach and scholarship enabled by the Tucker Center creates new ways of thinking about participation in sport, ways that are truly liberating and ways with which I’m proud to be associated.”

**Joah Iannotta** began her work at the Center in early 1998 and has already become a strong force in day-to-day Tucker Center operations. She has already submitted one grant and has written an upcoming article in the *Minnesota Women’s Press*.

**Education:** BA in Women’s Studies, Wesleyan University; MS in Exercise and Sports Studies, Smith College.

**Current Position:** Research Fellow and Ph.D. Candidate.

**Interests:** The shaping of physical sport performance by social constructions of gender, sex and the body; homophobia and identity development in sport.

“Working at the Tucker Center has been a great experience. I had chosen to come to the University of Minnesota both because I had heard about the Center and because I was really impressed by Dr. Kane’s scholarship. All of my suspicions were confirmed on arrival: This is a dynamic place with bright individuals and sustained enthusiasm to constantly pursue new avenues which will positively effect the lives of girls and women in sport.”

**VISITING SCHOLAR: Dr. Joan Fry** from Charles Sturt University in Australia will be a Visiting Scholar at the Tucker Center this summer. Dr. Fry will be researching East

Asian and Anglo Saxon Celtic Australian female students relative to physical activity, the ways these girls are attracted to physical activity, and what social processes in physical education lessons tend to reject them. As a result of her research, Dr. Fry stresses that physical education may be structured to better meet the varying needs of increasingly diversified student populations and that inequitable power relations within physical activity can be better addressed. &



## AFFILIATED SCHOLAR PROFILE—JO BUYSSE

The Tucker Center’s newest Affiliated Scholar is Dr. Jo Ann Buysse, the Coordinator of the School of Kinesiology and Leisure Studies’ Sport Studies Program and a researcher in the field of media representation of gender and race in sport.

Buysse received her undergraduate Bachelor of Science degree in Physical Education in 1976 from Southwest State University in Marshall, Minnesota; her Masters degree in Physical Education at Montana State in Bozeman, Montana; and her Doctorate in Kinesiology at the University of Minnesota. She has been teaching for 20 years, two at the high school and elementary levels and 18 at the university level. She has coached and held administrative posts in soccer, basketball, volleyball, and boys and girls track.

Most recently the Women’s Athletic Director at Hamline University in St. Paul, Buysse decided she wanted to pursue more academic work. She commented, “Coaching and administration in athletics did not allow the time and energy to pursue the kind of intense academic work that I wanted to do. My work at the University of Minnesota, specifically being mentored by Mary Jo Kane, inspired and motivated me to continue work on media representations of women in sport.”

Buysse came to the University of Minnesota to start the increasingly popular Sports Studies program. The program focuses on contemporary sport as a product of social, psychological and economic phenomena. “I was very attracted to the Sport Studies program because not only am I passionate about sport, but I sincerely believe that in order to make changes and improvements in sport we need to educate people from a social sciences and critical thinking and learning perspective. We need to challenge traditional notions of sport and what it means in our society.”

Buysse has just finished a follow-up study on her original research on media portrayals of male and female athletes at 54 Division I university intercollegiate programs in 10 sports and is currently in the process of writing a manuscript based on that research. Buysse says preliminary analysis suggests, unfortunately, that not much has changed since 1991: Males continue to be portrayed in ways that emphasize their athleticism while females continue to be

portrayed in traditionally feminine and passive ways. In the near future Buysse hopes to pursue related avenues of research looking at media constructions of people with disabilities in sport, interviewing male and female athletes regarding their feelings about being portrayed as someone other than an athlete on media guide covers, and researching the power dynamics between athletes and coaches. She continues to gather and present data for the Title IX Gender Equity compliance effort.

Buysse has great praise for the Tucker Center. She says, "I'm delighted that the Tucker Center is bringing in the best scholars in the field to the Distinguished Lecture Series and giving the community the opportunity to learn from the valuable research that these people are doing. I think a primary role of the Tucker Center should be in continuing to educate society about girls and women in sport and to do research that focuses on efforts to improve the institution of sport. I also think the connection that's been made between the Tucker Center and the Minnesota Women's Fund doing mentoring in the public schools is wonderful. To improve sport it is vital that we start with youth. The Center's 'practical' relationship with the public schools is critical to that endeavor."



*Dr. Jo Ann Buysse*

sport to fund the Center. Anyone can put money into all different sorts of things. But it takes someone special to actually start something and make it the first in the country. That is pretty significant."

Though she is very busy developing the Sport Studies program and doing cutting-edge research, Dr. Buysse does find time for other things. As one might expect, given her passion for sport, it is not unrelated to her professional interests. "I do sport. I love to play basketball, to run, to ice-skate, golf ... Unfortunately, no more marathons, however. When I'm not doing sport I garden and read." When asked what she reads, she laughs: "All of the sport science books I haven't read in the last ten years—mostly academic but I'd like to do more fiction. It's just that there's so much wonderful non-fiction."

It is precisely this passion and devotion to sport and to making sport equitable through research and education that makes Dr. Buysse such a welcome addition to the circle of Affiliated Scholars at the Tucker Center. &

*"Letter from the Director" continued*

winners of two scholarships will be announced at the lecture. The Edith Mueller Park and Recreation Memorial Award, which is funding the Spring lecture, was established by Dr. Van and Dr. Mildred (Mike) Mueller in memory of their daughter. Edith Mueller was a senior at the University of Minnesota in the Division of Recreation, Park, and Leisure Studies when she died suddenly from a case of pneumonia. The scholarship was established in honor of Edith and her enthusiasm for life, the outdoors and sport. The second award, the Jason David Schleien Memorial Fund Scholarship, is dedicated to the memory of the infant son of Professor Stuart and Dana Schleien. The purpose of the scholarship is to improve the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities by encouraging the study of therapeutic recreation and special education. The Tucker Center is pleased to recognize the recipients of these awards at the Distinguished Lecture.

Finally, the Tucker Center is looking for an individual to serve as a grantwriter. The job posting is provided on the back page of the newsletter. If you or someone you know would be a good match for this position, please contact the University of Minnesota Job Center at 612-625-2000 for an application.

*— Dr. Mary Jo Kane, Director*

#### **PCPFS ONE YEAR UPDATE**

It has been one year since the initial release of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sport Report "Physical Activity and Sport in the Lives of Girls: Physical and Mental Health Dimensions from an Interdisciplinary Approach." From requests alone, we have distributed over 900 reports to more than 480 individuals and organizations. Many additional copies have been distributed at various Tucker Center events and at conferences attended by Tucker Center personnel, as well as through the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sport and the US Center for Mental Health Services/ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, both of whom were underwriters for the report. Some recipients are using the report as required texts for classroom teaching. If you or someone you know would like an Executive Summary of the report, do not hesitate to contact us.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

•**Tucker Team Award Winner:** Courtney Heniff, Masters Candidate in Kinesiology, was recognized at an award ceremony at the Weisman Museum on April 8 as the winner of the Advanced Study Student Scholarship from the College of Education and Human Development Alumni Society. Ms. Heniff is working on her degree in Sport Psychology and is the advisee of Dr. Diane Wiese-Bjomstal, an Affiliated Scholar at the Tucker Center. Heniff is also the Project Director on Tucker Center grant funded through the Center for Transportation Studies.



•**Email Listserv Request:** Some of you are already on our email listserv. If you would like to receive Tucker Center announcements and the newsletter via email, please send a subscribe request to [crgws@tc.umn.edu](mailto:crgws@tc.umn.edu) or call 612-625-7327.

•**New Publication:** Former Distinguished Lecture Series speaker Mariah Burton Nelson has published her third book entitled, "Embracing Victory: Life Lessons in Competition and Compassion." Through an in-depth examination of the concept of competition, Nelson argues that a conquer-and-destroy style of competition has been glorified in our current culture. For Nelson there is a better manner in which to compete, and she urges women to embrace a mode of competition she defines as "seeking excellence with one another." Through this style of competitiveness, Nelson believes that women can achieve both new levels of success and also foster positive, empowering bonds with those with whom we compete.

•**Race:** The Melpomene Institute will be hosting the 16th Annual Melpomene Benefit 5K Walk/Run on May 2. There are a number of age divisions; the start line for all is at Summit Avenue and Mississippi River Boulevard. For more information or a race application please call 612-642-1951 or see the Melpomene website at <http://www.melpomene.org>.

•**Scholarship Website:** For those of you interested in the Edith Mueller Park and Recreation Memorial Award or the Jason David Schleien Scholarship, information can be found on our parent website at <http://www.kls.coled.umn.edu/scholars.html>.

*Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport*  
University of Minnesota  
203 Cooke Hall, 1900 University Ave. SE  
Minneapolis, MN 55455  
612-625-7327, 612-626-7700  
<http://www.kls.coled.umn.edu/crgws/>

GRANTSWRITER POSITION

The Tucker Center is currently searching for a grantswriter to aid the Center in its mission to produce cutting-edge research on girls and women in sport. We are looking for an individual dedicated to the philosophy of the Tucker Center who has experience in researching and writing grants as well as serving as project director for soft money funds.

This position's responsibilities focus on professional and administrative tasks related to grant writing, program planning, and program implementation including: 1) identifying funding needs and resources; 2) writing, coordinating, and submitting grant proposals; 3) serving as project director; and 4) representing the Tucker Center or a specific Tucker Center program(s) to the University and/or community organizations and individuals. A proven track record as well as a strong knowledge of the budget and proposal process is desirable. Preference will be given to individuals with a hard science background and experience writing grants for state, federal, and foundation funds.

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. To apply, contact the University of Minnesota Department of Human Resources at 612-625-2000, 8-4:30, Monday-Friday. A full job posting is available at <http://www.umn.edu/ohr/employ.html>.