I submitted my proposal last December with the vision of bringing a new area of expertise to our department in gerontology studies. After completing additional coursework on my '04 sabbatical, I realized the tremendous need to prepare our students going into the allied health fields such as physical and occupational therapy in fall prevention strategies. This is a relatively new and essential field of study. Adults over 65 represent the fastest growing population in U.S. A commonly cited statistic is that each year one third to one half of adults over 65 experiences a fall. The implications of this trend are enormous. People who sustain a fall are less likely to maintain physical fitness regimens which obviously influence health. One fall can result in significant changes in psychological and emotional health. In addition to these significant health implications, billions of dollars are spent annually supporting older adults who sustain falls.

**Goal #1: Complete additional coursework in gerontology**

In order to prepare myself for this area of expertise, I spent six months completing an online course on Balance and Mobility Training for Older Adults (3 units) from California State University Fullerton through their Center for Aging, a nationally recognized innovative program in gerontology. I selected this course because it has been singled out as one of the most comprehensive courses in the world. It is backed by numerous research studies on how to best approach retraining the visual, somatosensory and vestibular systems to regain some lost function and help in fall prevention. These systems respond to practice and experience. Children stimulate these three systems constantly with daily play-summersaults, balancing on curbs, etc. We lose the effectiveness of these systems once we decrease our movement experiences. The program is a systematic approach to provide safe practice opportunities to stimulate each of three systems. For example, learning to focus on a vertical visual line when abruptly turning one’s head can help maintain good balance. Attending to somatosensory cues in the feet when walking on unstable surfaces can train the body to keep the center of gravity (body core) over the base of support (feet).

**Goal #2: Balance and Mobility Certification**

The culminating project related to this course was the option of attended a certification assessment at California State University, Fullerton in July. After successfully completing this certification, I was granted a specialization in Balance and Mobility training. This is a nationally recognized program with fewer than 100 specialists worldwide. I was also told in my evaluation by the head of the program that I might be considered as a future “master teacher” in the Fallproof certification program.
Goal #3: Integrate balance and mobility training into the current coursework in the Kinesiology major

We currently teach two gerontology courses in our major. This fall I am teaching *Physical, Psychological and Social Aspects of Aging*. I was able to successfully integrate key principles from this certification into the curriculum. Next fall we will be teaching *Physical Aspects of Aging* in our department. In the past, the instructor (Gregg Afman) has conducted research studies with students using older adults as subjects. This certification allows me to give pre and post assessments in balance which will provide valuable data and support to his work with students.

Goal #4: Forge connections with the older adult population in the Santa Barbara community through balance and mobility training

In the above mentioned course taught this fall, the culminating project was a presentation series given to the residents at Samarkan Retirement Community entitled “Max Out on Life”. The flyer for this series is attached. It was a highly successful activity, allowing students to apply theories learned during the semester in a very practical way with real subjects. In addition, I will be involved in a Community Awareness one day workshop in February. I will be collaborating with the director of Vista Del Monte, a retirement community in Santa Barbara on fall prevention. This outreach provided by the Santa Barbara City College Continuing Education program will be free of charge to community members. Finally, I hope to involve one or more students this spring in an internship, helping me to conduct balance and mobility training for local older adults. It is my plan to bring older adults to campus in the spring on a regular basis for this training. All of these activities provide a valuable service to Santa Barbara and should enhance our relationships with older adults in our community.

I am pleased to report that all four goals were accomplished. I appreciate the support of the Professional Development Committee in helping our department maintain “cutting edge” curricular changes in these new areas of expertise under the broad umbrella of Kinesiology. Finally, you might enjoy reading the attached article that came out in yesterday’s “Daily Sound” about my work in fall prevention and the Samarkan program.

Chris Milner