



## UMASS KINESIOLOGY: ACTIVE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

Practicum: Movement Mentor

Fall 2024 Semester

### OVERVIEW

We are looking for motivated and passionate Kinesiology students that are seeking public health and behavior promotion related fieldwork experience. As part of our developing Active Communities Initiative, the UMass Department of Kinesiology will be collaborating with local elementary schools to promote and facilitate physical activity opportunities. This practical opportunity will provide hands-on experience in developing and implementing initiatives to enhance physical activity levels among school-aged children. Join us in making a positive impact on the physical well-being of students and creating a healthier school environment! This fall we are partnering with Fort River School in Amherst to develop and facilitate supervised physical activity opportunities during school recess. We are currently working on partnerships with other additional schools and if we have sufficient student interest, we may be able to extend the program.

### PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

As part of our developing Active Communities Initiative, the UMass Department of Kinesiology we are collaborating with one local elementary school this semester to promote and facilitate physical activity opportunities during school recess. This practical opportunity will provide hands-on experience in developing and implementing initiatives to enhance physical activity levels among school-aged children. Our goal a positive impact on the physical well-being of students and creating a healthier school environment!

**Physical Health Promotion:** Supervised activities ensure that students engage in structured movement opportunities, contributing to enhanced cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength, and overall physical health. Structured and age-appropriate play can facilitate the development of fundamental motor skills, coordination, and balance.

**Mental Well-being:** Physical activity has been linked to stress reduction and improved mood. Supervised recess can allow students to release pent-up energy, leading to better concentration and focus in the classroom. Regular physical activity is also associated with improved cognitive function and academic performance.

**Social Interaction:** Supervised games and activities encourage teamwork and collaboration among students. This fosters positive social interactions and the development of social skills. Supervisors can ensure that all students are included in activities, promoting a sense of belonging and reducing feelings of exclusion.

**Safety and Injury Prevention:** Having facilitators and supervision during physical activities helps mitigate potential risks and ensures a safe environment for students.

**Behavioral Benefits:** Structured physical activities and supervision contribute to a more organized and positive recess environment, reducing the likelihood of disruptive behavior. Also, by incorporating additional physical activities into the school day, students are more likely to develop a lifelong habit of regular physical exercise.

**Community Engagement:** This partnership will allow UMass college students to engage with local school-age students in a recreational setting, fostering positive relationships and constructive role modeling.

**Promoting a Healthy School Culture:** Supervised physical activities contribute to the creation of a positive school culture that values and prioritizes the health and well-being of students.

## **EXPECTATIONS**

UMass students that are accepted into the program this semester will be expected to:

- Attend the school community site during recess blocks at least two days per week. (The PVTA has bus stops adjacent to the school as a transportation option.)
- Attend a weekly meeting with UMass faculty supervisor (with in-person and virtual options).
- Attend an orientation session with community site leaders.
- Follow the community site's policies and act in a manner that aligns with their school philosophy and values.
- Check the course management system regularly for announcements.
- Communicate effectively and proactively with the UMass faculty supervisor(s), site leaders, and peers.
- Consent to and pass a background (CORI) check with Fort River.
- Collaborate with school staff and administrators to design engaging and age-appropriate physical activity programs for students during recess.
- Communicate professionally, respectfully, and appropriately with the students of the community site.
- Follow additional policies and practices that will be developed collectively with peers and supervisor(s) and agree upon at the beginning of the semester.
- Develop structured activities that align with kinesiology principles, fostering motor skill development, cardiovascular fitness, and overall physical health.
- Lead and supervise physical activities during school recess periods.

- Ensure the safety of students and inclusiveness of all activities.
- Monitor and assess the effectiveness of implemented programs, making adjustments as needed.
- Additional promotion and outreach activities may include:
  - Develop promotional materials and communication strategies to raise awareness of the benefits of physical activity during recess.
  - Collaborate with teachers, parents, and school administrators to garner support for the initiative.
  - Organize events or campaigns to highlight the importance of physical activity in a school setting.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

- Currently enrolled as a student in UMass Kinesiology or related program.
- Passion for promoting physical activity and healthy lifestyles among children.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills.
- Ability to work collaboratively with school staff, peers, and students.
- Basic knowledge of kinesiology principles and child development.
- A good sense of humor, positive demeanor, and open mind are important!
- Fluency in Spanish is a plus (as Fort River has a growing dual-language program).

## **UMASS FACULTY**

Christine St. Laurent (Assistant Professor)

- 6 Totman Building, [cstlaurent@umass.edu](mailto:cstlaurent@umass.edu), (413) 545-9436

Tom St. Laurent (Senior Lecturer/Associate Chair)

- 109 Totman Building, [tstlaurent@umass.edu](mailto:tstlaurent@umass.edu), (413) 545-6438

## **COMMUNITY SITE AND SCHEDULE**

- Location: Fort River School, 70 South East St., Amherst, MA 01002
- Recess is offered daily to students between 10:30 am and 1 pm. Therefore, students interested in this practicum should ideally be available during that block on at least two days per week.

## **ENROLLMENT OPTIONS**

Students will enroll in at least 3 credits (each credit is equivalent to 3 hours/week).

## **APPLICATION**

To express your interest in this position, [complete the online application](#) and contact Dr. Christine St. Laurent ([cstlaurent@umass.edu](mailto:cstlaurent@umass.edu)) with any questions. (If link does not work, visit [www.mooveandsnoozelab.com/join/newmovementmentors](http://www.mooveandsnoozelab.com/join/newmovementmentors).)