Report of the Special Subcommittee to Study
The Physical Education Requirement

AUTHORIZATION OF THE COMMITTEE

This committee was authorized by faculty action at the regular meeting of the University of Wisconsin--Milwaukee faculty held on January 14, 1960. At that time the University of Wisconsin--Milwaukee committee, responding to a directive from the President of the University to "...study the physical education requirement for undergraduates at the University of Wisconsin" recommended that:

...the present all-university physical education requirement be abolished at the University of Wisconsin--Milwaukee. We further recommend that the establishment of further requirements in physical education be left to the individual schools and colleges. (UW--M Faculty document 103.)

The following subsidiary motion was made and adopted:

...that a decision on the physical education requirement be postponed until the end of the spring semester until the matter can be studied by a committee to be appointed by the Provost." (UW--M Faculty document 103.)

On January 19th the Provost appointed the members of the committee and suggested that the report of the committee should provide "...the essential data on which a judgment can be made and to indicate the various alternatives which are open on the matter. The committee may or may not want to indicate their preference for alternatives." (44)

In attempting to gather "essential data" the committee engaged in the following activities:

(a) A comprehensive review of literature pertinent to the problem, including periodicals, theses, dissertations and books;

(b) correspondence with other institutions concerning their physical education programs;

(c) visitations to another institution which has recently faced this problem;

(d) consultation with Dr. Robert Montebello, Bemidji State College, Minnesota, who has recently completed a doctoral dissertation on this topic; and

(e) correspondence with such professional organizations as the American Association of University Professors, the American Medical Association, and the National Education Association.

In all these activities the committee attempted to gather evidence on both sides of the issue.

PRESENTATION OF EVIDENCE

As a result of these activities the committee has compiled a file of correspondence, data, opinion, recommendations, etc. This file has been placed in the library and faculty members are urged to examine it in detail. The following is a summary of what the committee believes is the most pertinent information related to the problem:
(a) Status Studies

An attempt was made to determine the status of physical education requirements in colleges and universities in the United States. The general conclusion which can be drawn from these studies is that approximately 87 to 96 per cent of colleges and universities have a physical education requirement for graduation.

1. Greene (6) reported that 94.08 per cent of 253 colleges and universities require physical education for graduation for all students.

2. Cieurzo (31) reported that 88.1 per cent of 649 colleges and universities require basic physical education.

3. Kenney (33) reported that 27 of 31 major universities (including the Western Conference) require physical education. (Notable exceptions: Iowa - required of liberal arts and sciences only; Minnesota - required of education students only; Purdue - course in hygiene required; New York University - required of all except education students; University of California at Berkeley - not required.)

4. Messersmith (9) reported that 89 per cent of a national sample of 325 schools require physical education.

5. Phillips (12) reported that 87 per cent of New York colleges and universities require physical education.

6. Westkaemper (13) reported that 96 per cent of 194 schools require physical education. Four semesters was the requirement reported most frequently. Two-thirds of these institutions require four semester hours or six quarter hours of physical education.

7. Handy (35) reported that 94.92 per cent of 59 state universities require physical education for graduation. Of this group 62.5 per cent require four or more semesters.

Closely related to these studies is the rather comprehensive doctoral study by Montebello. (17) Dr. Montebello discussed with the committee his intensive case study analysis made of five institutions which had reviewed the appropriateness of a physical education requirement within recent years. He reported extensive and intensive analyses of each of the problems and the issues raised. In four of these five institutions the requirement was retained.

Related to this, correspondence and visitations revealed that within recent years the Universities of California at Los Angeles, Illinois, Maryland, Wyoming, Rice Institute, Louisiana, and Wayne State have conducted intensive studies of this issue. All except Louisiana and Wayne State have retained the physical education requirement. (Members of the faculty are particularly encouraged to examine in detail the materials the committee has received from the University of California at Los Angeles (35) and from Wayne State University (38) because of the high degree of similarity between these institutions and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.) In addition, the University of Chicago has recently modified its previous requirement into what is essentially a one year requirement. (48) Particularly in the cases of UCLA, Illinois, and Maryland, these decisions were based upon much more extensive investigations than was possible for this committee to conduct within the time allotted. All three of these latter institutions have retained the physical education requirement.

In a recent letter (39) the Executive Secretary of the American Association of University Professors stated that his office has received an "unprecedented number of inquiries from chapters similar to yours..." in recent weeks. The National Education
Association has also prepared a packet of materials which it provides for institutions which are studying this matter.

(b) **Student Opinion**

Student opinion on the University of Wisconsin--Milwaukee campus has not been adequately assessed. The only official action was that of the Student Life and Interest Committee at their December 2, 1959, meeting. (30) This committee (nine faculty, four students voting) approved a motion that "...the physical education program at UW--M be put on a voluntary basis without credit."

Comprehensive studies of student opinion on this matter have been conducted at other institutions. Sixty-two per cent of the students polled at the University of Illinois favored the physical education requirement. (12) In a similar survey at UCLA, 60 per cent of the students indicated that the required physical education program had helped them to keep a schedule for activity which they needed and wanted. (35) In one of his anonymous case studies Montebello (17, p. 96) reports that "Attitude polls taken every few years by the College of Physical Education indicate that over 75% of the students favor a required program."

Early in its deliberations the committee decided that it would make no formal attempt to assess student opinion on this matter.

(c) **Follow-up Studies**

Only one study was located which attempted to determine the extent to which skills learned in physical education programs were utilized by individuals in later life. Kenney (34) reported that 66 per cent of those polled were participating in physical education activities studied at the university five to ten years earlier.

(d) **Fitness Studies**

In recent years there have been numerous studies relative to the physical fitness of American Youth. The issue was explored in great detail at the President's Conference on Fitness of American Youth held in 1956. (12) The report of this Conference contains considerable evidence which indicates that the level of fitness of American Youth leaves much to be desired and the recommendations contained in the Conference report call for expansion rather than curtailment of physical education programs at all educational levels.

(e) **Medical Opinion**

While the committee made no attempt to survey or evaluate research on the medical aspects of physical activity and physical education programs, the medical profession has expressed strong support for physical education programs.

1. A resolution adopted by the Joint Committee on Health Problems in Education of the National Education Association and the American Medical Association, March, 1959,

   "...urges practicing physicians to stimulate their colleagues interest in and support for comprehensive programs of health education, health services, physical education and in athletics in schools so that these programs may be sound both medically and educationally." (42)

2. A resolution passed by the House of Delegates of the American Medical Association, June, 1959, reads,
"Resolved that the American Medical Association, through its House of Delegates
go on record as approving in principle the aims and objective of the President'sCouncil and the President's Citizens Advisory Council on the Fitness of AmericanYouth and as urging its member physicians to cooperate in the promotion ofproperly conceived plans and programs for youth fitness..." (42)

The plans and objectives referred to call for expanded programs of physical educationand fitness at all education levels.

3. The report of the Third National Conference on Health in Colleges entitled
A Health Program for Colleges published by the National Tuberculosis Association, makes a
specific statement as follows:

"Physical education should be required of all students, preferably a daily period
five days each week or three double periods per week for a minimum of two years.
Efforts should be made to expand facilities for those students who desire to
participate on a voluntary basis beyond the two year program." (42)

4. It was stated by the head of the Department of Physiology in one of the
anonymous case studies conducted by Montebello that,

"For some twenty years I have done research in 'work physiology' and I have been
unable to convince myself from life expectancy tables, epidemiological studies,
investigations on chronic disease, or investigations of career data, that compulsory
physical education is in fact of medical benefit." (17, p. 115)

(f) Opinions of Prominent Individuals

The committee has compiled a collection of opinions of nationally and internationally
renowned individuals concerning the values, objectives, limitations, etc. of physical
activity, physical education (required and voluntary), general education, liberal education,
compulsion in a free society, etc., etc. These are included in formal and informal
publications and in accounts of the resolution of the problem at other institutions. No
attempt will be made to summarize these opinions in this report, but faculty members are
urged to examine them in the library.

(g) Effect of Abolition of the Physical Education Requirement on Enrollment

Of the institutions contacted three have responded to date concerning enrollment in
voluntary physical education programs,

1. Louisiana State University voted to change from a required to a voluntary
physical education program in 1956. The enrollment in physical education courses decreased
by approximately two-thirds. (43)

2. Following a change from a compulsory to voluntary physical education
program Wayne State University experienced a 20 per cent decrease in the number of students
during the first semester and well over a 30 per cent decrease in the succeeding semester.
At Wayne State University students in the Colleges of English, Education, Pharmacy and
Nursing are still required to take physical education. (50)

3. The University of California at Berkeley reports that approximately 14
per cent of the undergraduates enroll in the voluntary physical education program. (46)
(h) **Proficiency Testing Programs**

While not specifically related to this problem, the committee has had some opportunity to examine and discuss proficiency "screening" programs, which have been developed by other institutions. These programs appear to represent realistic attempts by physical educators to adapt programs suited to the needs of individuals and to remove many of the objections which are cited concerning traditional compulsory physical education programs. (40)

(i) **Action of the University of Wisconsin Committee and Board of Regents.**

At the March, 1960, meeting of the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents the Chairman of the University of Wisconsin committee presented a tentative recommendation that the present physical education requirement be continued at the University of Wisconsin. (28) No formal action was taken on the recommendation but the question was referred to President Elvehjem for further consideration and clarification.

(j) **Staff Space and Facilities**

It will be noted that no information or data has been presented in this report relative to staff, space, or facilities needs of the University. At one of its early meetings the committee unanimously agreed that the question of compulsory versus voluntary physical education should be discussed in light of the values and objectives of physical education in the education of a University student. If a compulsory program is judged advisable, resources, including staff, space and facilities should be provided for such a program.

The committee also agreed that this question should not be considered in conjunction with the professional physical education program or the intercollegiate athletic program.

**ALTERNATIVE COURSES OF ACTION**

The committee believes that there are several courses of action which the University of Wisconsin--Milwaukee faculty might take. The following are not listed in order of preference.

(1) approval of the original recommendation of the University of Wisconsin--Milwaukee Committee that the present physical education requirement be abolished and that the establishment of further requirements be left to individual schools and colleges;

(2) abolition of the present requirement and placing physical education on a voluntary basis with no credit for physical education courses;

(3) abolition of the present requirement placing physical education on a voluntary basis with credit for physical education courses; and

(4) retention of the present physical education requirement provided that any student passing prescribed proficiency examinations shall be certified as having fulfilled the physical education requirement. Such proficiency examinations shall be developed and administered by the physical education department subject to review by the University of Wisconsin--Milwaukee faculty at the end of three years; and

(5) retention of the present requirement.
RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee has had the opportunity to examine in detail and evaluate much of the evidence and opinion that has been summarized in this report. Some of the most outstanding items of evidence appear to be:

(a) the overwhelming majority of institutions of higher learning require physical education. This would seem to indicate wide acceptance and recognition of the role of physical education in general education at the college and university level;

(b) health and well-being of students are dependent upon regular exercise. The American Medical Association has endorsed this concept and has supported physical education programs at all levels;

(c) experiences at other institutions indicate that unless physical education is a requirement, those who need it most are not likely to elect it; and

(d) the development of proficiency examinations appears to represent realistic attempts by physical educators to adapt programs to the needs of individuals.

For these reasons and others, the majority of the Special Committee to Study the Physical Education Requirement recommends that the University of Wisconsin--Milwaukee faculty approve alternative four above:

(4) retention of the present physical education requirement provided that any student passing prescribed proficiency examinations shall be certified as having fulfilled the physical education requirement. Such proficiency examinations shall be developed and administered by the physical education department subject to review by the University of Wisconsin--Milwaukee faculty at the end of three years.

Respectfully submitted,

George Elmergreen
Gerald Cleason, Chairman
Armin Kraeft
Marvin Summers
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BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. PERIODICALS


B. DISSERTATIONS


C. PAMPHLETS


D. OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS


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    meeting, December 2, 1959.

E. UNPUBLISHED REPORTS FROM OTHER UNIVERSITIES

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    of Illinois." Paper presented at College Physical Education section meeting of the
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    Benefits of Physical Education, Exercise, and Physical Fitness." School of Physical

37. University of Wyoming, "Notes Used in Defense of Two Year Required Physical Education
    Program."

38. Wayne State University, Report of the Wayne State University Committee on Physical
    and Health Education, April 20, 1959.

F. LETTERS

39. Letter from William P. Fidler, General Secretary, American Association of University

40. Letter from John A. Friedrich, Chairman, Men's Physical Education Instructional
    Program, Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, Michigan State
    University, East Lansing, Michigan, March 8, 1960.

41. Letter from Fred V. Hein, Consultant in Health and Fitness, American Medical

43. Letter from J. W. Kistler, Department of Health and Physical Education, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, February 16, 1960. The required physical education program has been dropped with a resulting two-thirds reduction in enrollment.

44. Letter from J. Martin Klotsche, Provost, University of Wisconsin--Milwaukee, January 22, 1960. Authorized formation of the Special Committee to Study the Physical Education Requirement at the University of Wisconsin--Milwaukee.

45. Letter from Charles P. Nader, Chairman, Department of Physical Education, Marquette University, Milwaukee, February 16, 1960. Review of physical education program at Marquette University.

46. Letter from Carl L. Nordly, Chairman, Department of Physical Education (Men), University of California, Berkeley, March 14, 1960. About 14 per cent of undergraduates now enroll in voluntary physical education program.

47. Letter from N. M. Parkhurst, Registrar, Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana, March 11, 1960. History and requirement, past and present of Physical Education at Purdue.


49. Letter from R. E. Summers, Dean of Admissions and Records, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis 14, Minnesota, March 21, 1960. Review of physical education requirements at the University of Minnesota.

50. Letter from Rico N. Zenti, Administrative Assistant, Department of Health, Education & Athletics, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, March 17, 1960. A decrease of 20 per cent the first semester and 30 per cent the second semester when physical education requirement was eliminated from College of Liberal Arts.