

**Advisory Committee Minutes for Fitness Center Management CTE Proposal**  
**Friday August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 1pm-2pm**

**Attendees:**

Gary Gall, General Manager of Heart of Hustle & Trainer Republic - West Hollywood, CA

Marcus McDuffie, General Manager of Aeon Training - Pasadena, CA

Dom Chan, General Manager at Optum Workplace Wellbeing of multi-tenant corporate wellness site @ META – Seattle, WA

John Pease, M.S., Business Consultant for Health, and Fitness Management Facilities and Franchises

Anna Badalyan, Dean Institutional Effectiveness – Los Angeles City College

Aykanush Gevanyan, Kinesiology Department Chair – Los Angeles City College

Raymond “Britt” Haste, Business Department Chair - Los Angeles City College

Peter Parasiliti, Assistant Professor – Los Angeles City College – former fitness center manager at Equinox in Santa Monica, CA and the Amgen Fitness Center in Thousand Oaks, CA

**What are the must haves and Fitness Center management CTE program?**

Dom: Thinks a CTE in Fitness Management is great idea as there are significant challenges when hiring for managers with either no fitness experience but with nonrelated management experience, or with fitness experience (personal trainers/group fitness/front desk) but without any previous management experience. Having this type of credential/certificate would be very interesting when applicants are applying for fitness management roles hiring. Personal trainers and group fitness instructors don't necessarily make good managers, as the business management tools are missing to be successful.

Gary: This type of program could not only help them prepare for a fitness center management role but even if they are interested in branching out into entrepreneurial role/opening up their own facility, as fitness center facility management is very different skill set and this type of educational preparation can better prepare a trainer/group fitness instructor who is looking to make a jump into management which is often a logical next step in a fitness career.

Aykanush: Especially if an individual trainer is coaching online, they will need even more management training to make the jump into management because they even more removed from directly interacting with people.

Peter: That's a great point especially coming out of the covid pandemic.

Marcus: In boutique and franchise fitness you often get great fitness coaches, but they often don't have the people management skills to be effective fitness managers i.e., how to successfully lead a team, staff retention strategies. They often can be decent salespersons especially if they have worked in commercial fitness that often has internal sales training such as LA Fitness/Equinox/24/Golds, but they don't understand why philosophical reasons people buy. This is why I think a program like this can really be beneficial for fitness pros who may be aspiring to get into management.

John: Kin majors know the science but don't always know or have the management chops. This type of program can help prepare students for growth into management, customer service 101 understanding all stakeholders and can then prepare student for adjacent roles in other business verticals. Classical curriculums would benefit from more of a management structure.

### **What types of courses or curriculum content would you recommend?**

John: Course that cover identifying and catering business practices toward the various user personas, buyer personas, understanding clientele, and service design, from walking in the front door to closing the deal. Exploring the science and art of customer service design and teaching how to effectively design operational manuals that allow for the flexibility of a dynamic business environment that is a fitness facility.

Marcus: What types of persons are you hoping to target with a fitness center management certificate of achieve program?

Peter: Personal trainer and group fitness students who are taking our Fitness Specialist CTE program that are considering a future beyond just face to face exercise delivery. Kinesiology major students who may be looking to explore fitness management as a possible career pathway and the career changers who have become burnt out on a less than fulfilling job or who have been in management and are passionate about a career in fitness, but don't have the kinesiology background to effectively transition into fitness space. Similar to what Don mentioned earlier.

Aykanush: Also, students who are majoring in business and interested in fitness/exercise. This CTE could be a nice way to give them exposure to a world that they wouldn't normally get with a traditional business degree.

Anna: How might a commercial business be interested to partnering with LACC in this process?

Marcus: A person who is making a lateral shift from management into fitness management would need people management skills i.e., a management 101 type course. Teaching systems to teams to be successful. Often personal trainers pride themselves on doing it all. But struggle once in a management role to effectively delegate and train others to deliver. So, any type of course work that would review delegation management strategies and practices. Also, time management skills in a business 101 course and sales strategies.

Britt: Traditionally business courses that we offer don't have the specific "soft skills" education as part of it but that seems to be a need.

Dom: Interpersonal communication skills. In my role as an account manager in corporate fitness center management I am often toggling between various relationships between organizations that require me to adapt my communication styles. On any given day I will be speaking peer to peer, to subordinates, to my corporate regional vice president, various vendors that service our facility and our corporate client liaison whose organization is paying our account fees to manage the facility. Trainers are used to speaking with their clients but are not necessarily nuanced enough with communication styles required in management. If the fitness professional has any aspirations to open their own facility, they may have to have even more nuanced communication styles with investors, accounting, marketing, and operational management personnel.

Britt: A written communications class for management may be useful here and something that we have. It teaches students to write and speak with different levels of management, cutting out the fluff and getting to the point. Our marketing courses teach how to promote and sell products. We do offer an accounting course however it's a belaboring course and may be overkill for a fitness center manager, but we do have a personal finance course that might be more applicable. We also have an entrepreneurship course if they are interested in opening their own fitness center. We obviously don't want to make it 50-unit program.

Peter: From the Kinesiology side we envision 9 units: Kin Maj 117 Personal Trainer Preparation, Kin Maj 115 Group Fitness Instruction and or new Kin Maj 221 Health & Fitness Center Management. This will give student new to fitness the proper exposure to the various roles they will be interacting with.

Aykanush: We really want no more than 18 units or so.

Britt: I'm thinking that our Business 001 course might be appropriate as it covers management, finance, and marketing. It lacks communications strategies, but it sounds like the course will provide most of what the students would need based on what I'm hearing from the panel.

Aykanush: That sounds like it would be a good course to add.

Gary: Human behaviors we take for granted, that often is an area of upskilling specifically teaching responsibility and accountability.

Anna: Are you thinking of creating any other courses? Also, we will be able to offer credit by exam soon so students can test out if they feel they have some of the course requirements already met. And also our directed study courses can be important tool as well that can incorporate soft skills development in the field and can be evaluated as part of its rubric.

Brit: Business courses can be mandatory and/or electives giving the student a few options.

Peter:

John: Speaking of soft skills, there is a new organization that is focusing on partnership in fitness and wellness and has created a talent network brand which is new to the fitness space call, "FIBER" which might be an interesting partnership.

Marcus: John you mentioned "soft skills", what other soft skills do you think are needed as you move from a trainer roll to a leadership. Time management and business writing come to mind for me as important.

Peter: Not all persons jumping into a management role can adapt to managing a team of 20+ employees. Each one having unique personalities. I have seen first-hand when an unseasoned fitness pro is promoted into a management role not realizing that they need to individualize each approach with their subordinates. Especially if they have been a former athlete where everyone may be treated the exact same way. That is too rigid of an approach and will usually result in management failure.

Dom: In the tech space that I work in its very important to find managers who demonstrate nuance when dealing with staff and others aka "code switching".

John: Project management skills is also an area of opportunity as fitness managers are always managing multiple projects simultaneously and must constantly reprioritize on any given moment. Soft skills, empathy and how to relate in relationship management and being a good strategic leader are also areas of opportunity for your curriculum.

Peter: We are up against the hour, and I wanted to ask if there were any parting thoughts?

Peter: And just to be clear you all agree that a Fitness Center Management Program that straddles business and kinesiology courses is a valuable need that we should proceed with developing?

John: Yes.

Marcus: Definitely.

Dom: Yes.