The Sport, Health and Physical Education Research group (SHAPE) emerged in 2009 as a result of the appointment of Professor Murray Drummond in the discipline of health and physical education. Health and physical education in the School of Education at Flinders University has had a long history particularly around curriculum and pedagogy. Therefore the appointment of Professor Drummond was designed to assist in developing the research culture and output in the area. This has been a key focus since the emergence of the group as it seeks Centre status by 2013. While the group consists of a number of early career researchers its publication output has been exemplary since 2010 with 46 peer-reviewed publications in ERA listed journals and high quality national and international conference proceedings. Several members of SHAPE (Professor Drummond and Dr Kate Ridley) are also involved in multi-million dollar consultancies running across the University including the $4.4 mil Obesity Prevention and Lifestyle (OPAL) Evaluation and the $1.2 mil PANORAMA nutrition and physical activity observatory. Other members are involved as office bearers (Dr. Shane Pill) in key stakeholder groups such as the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER), which is important for the advocacy of the group. Importantly, however, SHAPE has pride in its “ground up” model, which is underpinned by Honours and PhD students being an integral part of the group. In 2011 the group had its first PhD graduate (Dr. Deb Agnew) and now has several other postgraduate students (Ms Stefania Velardo and Mr Sam Elliott) who are current APA scholarship holders and have emerged through the Honours program, with first class Honours degrees. Another PhD student has just enrolled while several other Honours students are about to complete and potentially take up PhD candidatures within the group. This is an outstanding achievement given the paucity of research that had been previously undertaken in this area in the school.

While it had its beginnings in 2009, SHAPE was launched in 2010 at the inaugural SHAPE research conference held at Flinders University. With over 160 paying delegates in attendance the conference was a resounding success. Keynote speakers included Professor Derek Colquhoun from the University of Hull and Professor Jenny O’Dea from the University of Sydney. Both are leaders in the respective fields of children’s health and nutrition.

Aims / purpose

The fundamental aim of the group is to develop research performance, improve research income and increase the number and quality of Research Higher Degree and Honours students. Producing and disseminating high quality research outputs is integral to the group’s operation. Of particular strategic intent is forging new, and enhancing existing,
relationships with key stakeholder organisations associated with Sport, Heath and Physical Education within the community including State and National peak bodies.

KEY OBJECTIVES INCLUDE:

- Apply for externally funded grants
- Promote research productivity around sport, health and physical education
- Disseminate data through traditional scholarly outlets as well as traditional media and new social media
- Develop new external community and key stakeholder partnerships
- Enhance existing community and key stakeholder partnerships
- Become the primary Research Centre to be called upon by relevant agencies for research, consultation and policy advice.

Structure / function

SHAPE is led by Professor Murray Drummond and is based upon a sustainable model of early career researchers together with emerging and developing researchers. However, as previously identified a strategic structure of the group has been based on the “ground up” model in which Honours and PhD students are integral to its function and sustainability. The group has been active in strategic research specific to individuals within the group and to date, most of the publications have been based around this approach. Research group members (Drummond and Pill) have been collaborating closely in attaining grants (e.g. AFL junior retention project $54,000) and co-authoring publications. Drummond and Pill are also co-supervising a PhD and an EdD student further strengthening the sustainable links. Dr Ridley is also an associate supervisor for one of Professor Drummond’s PhD students. It is this fostering of research supervision for the early career researchers that is imbedded within the structure of the group and will assist in the long term with regard to future PhD and EdD candidates.

As the group flourishes in terms of its peer reviewed papers, conference proceedings, book chapters and conference presentations there is an expectation to succeed in grant applications in the future. The group is active in applying for Category 1 grants such as ARC and NHMRC as well as category 2 and 3 grants. It is also active in applying for consultancies.

Membership

Membership of SHAPE consists of members of the Health and Physical Education discipline. It also consists of Honours and Postgraduate students. Looking forward as the group develops into a research centre, membership across the school, faculty and university will be broadened to accommodate the growth of the centre and enhance its research capabilities to make it a truly multifaceted and multidiscipline research hub. Membership will be based around full membership for active researchers as defined by the current active researcher criteria together with associate membership for other less active researchers. An
An executive committee along with a key stakeholder reference group will make up the management structure of the centre.

2010 – 2012 achievements

The group has collectively been credited with a number of significant achievements since 2010. These include the development of a robust Honours and postgraduate model in which students are being effectively trained in the research process with the sport, health and physical education discipline. Members of the group are achieving a lot of success in developing their own publication records as well as establishing collaborations within and outside the group. The fact that several of the members have been asked to be part of multi-million dollar research and consultancy teams is testament to the way in which the group is perceived. The SHAPE conference in 2010 as previously identified was a very successful event, which launched the group. Members of the group are regularly invited to provide comments for the media on contemporary issues relating to their area of expertise, which provides exposure and visibility for the group. For example Professor Drummond was invited recently as a key expert on an edition of SBS Insight on male body image as well as feature articles in the Australian on boys and body image. Dr. Pill has provided comments for the Advertiser on the state of physical education in South Australia. Ms. Felicity Lewis is also regularly called upon to provide comments to the media of health education in South Australia. It should also be noted that Dr. Ridley was invited to a prestigious international meeting of Physical Activity experts in 2012 where she was invited to present her most recent research. Most of the members regularly contribute to the reviewing process of ERA listed journals and category 1 grants together with those who are on the editorial boards of international ERA listed journals.

The group is flourishing and publishing in high quality ERA listed journals. This is a primary area in which the group will concentrate its energies over the coming years together with category 1 grant applications. Since 2010 the group has collectively published 46 peer reviewed C1 and E1 publications as well books and book chapters.

Recent Key Publications


