

David Fukuda Named as New Department Head of Kinesiology and Health Science

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David Fukuda, KHS Department Head

The Emma Eccles Jones College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences has named David Fukuda, Ph.D., as Department Head of Kinesiology and Health Science (KHS) at Utah State. The department is committed to educating and serving students and members of the community through their programs, including kinesiology, health science, recreation administration, sport management, and lifetime activity.

"I am excited for Dr. Fukuda to lead our popular and successful KHS department into its next chapter of growth and impact," said Emma Eccles Jones Endowed Dean Al Smith. "His scholarly background and leadership experience set him apart during our search process, and prepare him to be highly effective at USU."

Fukuda says USU's land-grant mission, extension services, and commitment to community engagement were among the strongest factors that attracted him to the university.

"Growing up in Idaho, I participated in 4-H and a variety of community activities, and those experiences had a lasting impact on me," Fukuda said. "I'm eager to join a team that values many of those same principles and invests in the community in meaningful ways."

Fukuda was also impressed with the breadth of programs within the KHS department. He aims to build upon these programs as part of a broader initiative focused on promoting healthy lives. "The combination of programs creates opportunities to address health and human performance from multiple perspectives, while also

preparing students to make meaningful contributions in a rapidly changing world," Fukuda shared.

In his new role, Fukuda hopes to create stronger pathways for student success and help them discover opportunities they may not initially recognize. "We need to develop the best prepared students in the state for health, recreation, sport, and human performance," Fukuda said. "We want them to be leaders in their field and see all the possibilities they can pursue."

Another key priority for Fukuda is increasing the visibility of the KHS department. "There's already great work going on here," he explained. "We have talented faculty, strong programs, and meaningful research taking place every day. We just need to be more visible, and that visibility extends beyond Utah."

Prior to USU, Fukuda spent 13 years at the University of Central Florida (UCF) where he was a professor of kinesiology and division chair. His research focuses on sports science, body composition, and exercise and nutritional interventions across the lifespan.

While at UCF, Fukuda was also involved in the institution's growth and development. He played a role in the transition of the sport and exercise science program into kinesiology and contributed to the creation of the School of Kinesiology and Rehabilitation Sciences and the College of Health Professions and Sciences as part of an Academic Health Sciences Center that brought together medicine, nursing, and other health disciplines.

Additionally, Fukuda was the recipient of Educator of the Year in 2022 from the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) and serves as a Fellow of the NSCA and the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM). He holds a black belt in judo, which has influenced his research in combat sports and martial arts participation.

"All of these experiences helped prepare me for this role," Fukuda said. "Throughout my career, I have recognized the importance of the connection between health and education—those things can't be separated. I'm grateful for the journey I've had this far, and I'm excited to see what the future brings."