

TEAMWORK + TRUST = SUCCESS

Faculty and Sponsored Programs
Working Together

Dr. Nick Stergiou and Ms. Nancy Schlesiger
University of Nebraska at Omaha

Teamwork + Trust = Success

- Dr. Nick Stergiou, Professor and Director
- Nebraska Biomechanics Core Facility
- University of Nebraska at Omaha
- Ms. Nancy Schlesiger, Assistant Director
- Office of Sponsored Programs & Research
- University of Nebraska at Omaha

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- Dr Nick Stergiou – Brief bio
- Born in Thessaloniki (1 million people in North Greece, name of town, 2,300 yrs old, letters in the Bible, Aristotle)
- Aristotle Univ. (B.S. in Exercise Science and Journalism!!)
- UNO (M.S. in Biomechanics, how I came here, graduate assistant in Biomechanics, Dr. Blanke)
- Oregon (Ph.D. in Biomechanics with minor in Mathematics)
- Greek Army (corporal with mortars)

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- Dr Nick Stergiou – Brief bio continued
- back at UNO and currently ...
 - Isaacson Professor and Director of the Nebraska Biomechanics Core Facility (the only one at UNO). 20% UNMC/College of Public Health and the rest UNO. Chair of the Graduate Program of the Env.Agr.Occup.Health Dept. at UNMC. Chair of the Education Committee of the American Society of Biomechanics.
- Hobbies (watching soccer, lifting, seasonal runner, hiking, reading theology and history, I LOVE MY JOB)

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- ▣ Nancy Schlesiger—Brief bio
 - Undergraduate degree from UNO in Gerontology
 - Earned CRA certification in 2000
 - 20+ years in research administration at two University of Nebraska campuses, UNMC and UNO
 - (pre-award office, research compliance committees)
 - Love working with faculty members and learning about their interesting work!
 - Native Omahan, amateur genealogist (interest in Polish and Irish ancestry and in early history of Omaha)

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- ▣ University of Nebraska at Omaha
 - One of four campuses in state-wide system and one of two UN campuses in the City of Omaha
 - ~ 15,000 students (11,500 undergrads), fall 2009
 - ~ \$16M in external sponsored programs in FY2009
 - Funding from NSF, USDE, NIH, DoD
 - Centralized Sponsored Programs office
 - Director and 2 professional staff, staff assistant, graduate assistant and newly hired contract specialist
 - No departmental sponsored programs support

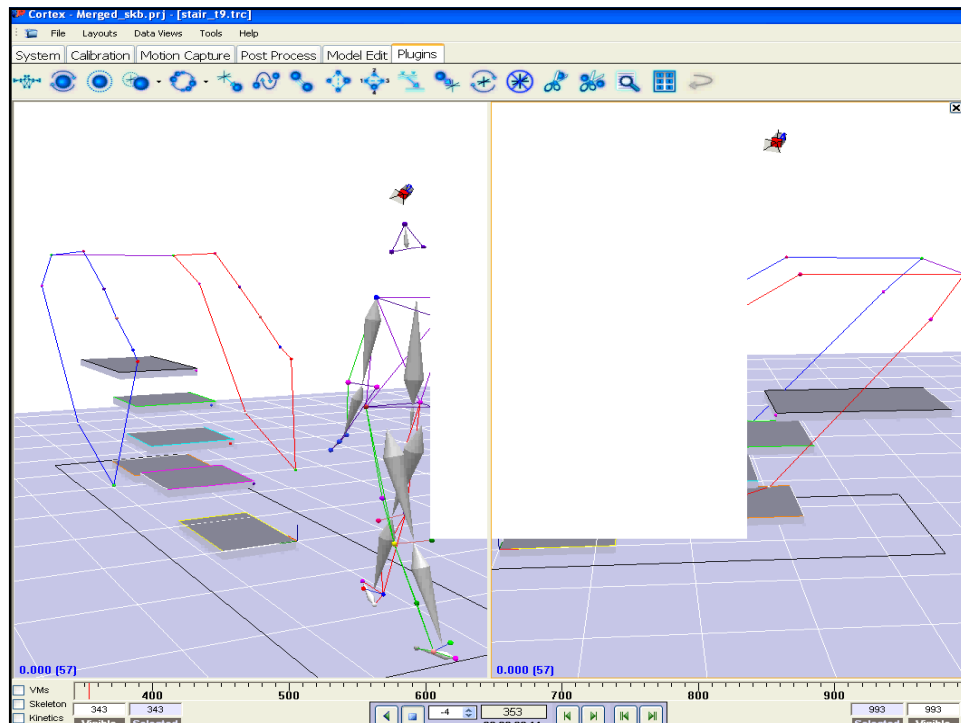
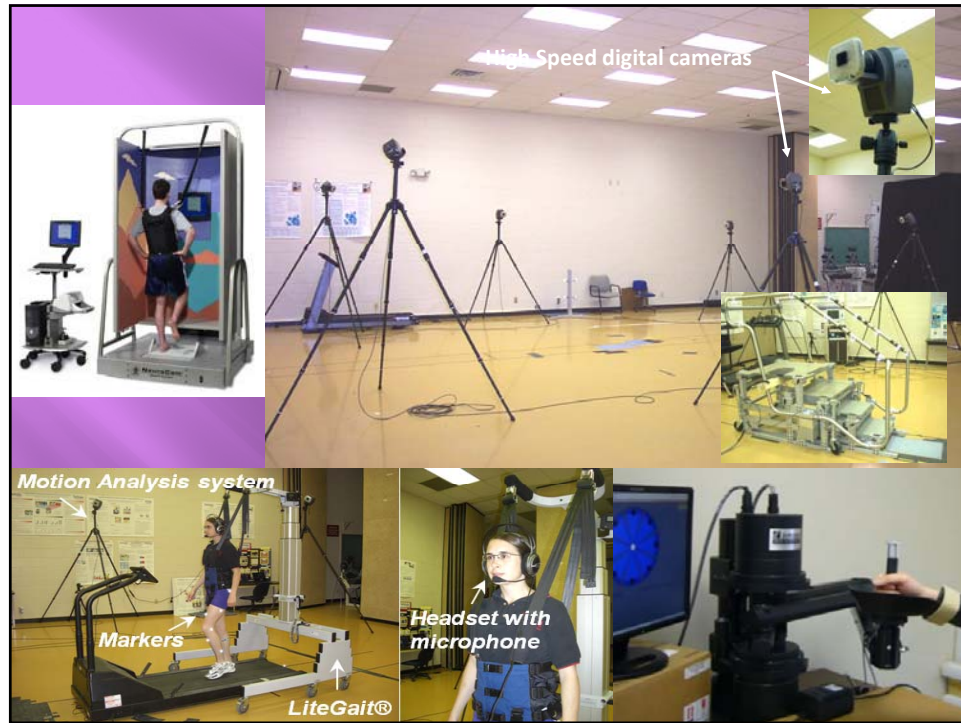
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- ▣ OMAHA BASED WORK
- ROBOTIC LAPAROSCOPY
- GAIT (Elderly, Parkinson, Peripheral Arterial Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, COPD, Chaotic Music Therapy, Gait-O-Gram™)
- MODELING
- POSTURE (Development of the Sitting Posture in Infants with Motor Disabilities, focus on Cerebral Palsy)
- STROKE THERAPY

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- ▣ NON-OMAHA BASED WORK
- POSTURE AND GAIT (cerebral concussion, elderly ambulatory activity) with NORTH CAROLINA and NEW ENGLAND
- GAIT (development of gait in Down syndrome babies) with MICHIGAN
- GAIT (ACL injuries and reconstruction) with IOANNINA MEDICAL CENTER in GREECE
- ANIMAL LOCOMOTION (Natural History Museum of France in Paris)
- And few others
- The total amount of money awarded for research grants related with this work is more than \$7 million!







My staff and students

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- When I started I had a very small laboratory and one TA! I was also teaching 3 courses a semester!
- I knew very little about how to pursue funding! Never been taught!
- So, I worked hard! Mrs Mary Laura Farnham also introduced me to Dr Glenn V. Dalrymple who taught me from scratch.
- I flew several times to Washington at my own expense.
- I took failures as challenges.
- I opened my mind to the impossible so I can find success.
- I obtained successful grants, participated in grant writing workshops, met with successful scientists, I listened...
- Mrs Farnham also brought Mrs Nancy Schlesiger who became my “guardian angel” on almost every aspect of grant writing/submission/everything.

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- ▣ Nancy—
- ▣ Development as a research administrator:
 - Working as support staff--without much understanding of the specific research projects
 - Understanding sponsors
 - Exposure to post-award practices
 - Understanding research compliance
 - Supporting institutional policies and practices
 - Interface with post-award office
 - Teamwork throughout the cradle-to-grave process

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- ▣ Developing research administrator expertise continued:
 - . . . and one thing more—learning about and understanding the specific individual faculty members and their needs.`

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- OUR RELATIONSHIP (from Nick's perspective)
- It is based on humility. Nancy is the absolute authority on what she is doing. I do not question her. I check my ego at her door.
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- I always explain to everybody that she is fundamental for my success.
- In the beginning she had to teach me more about budgets, forms, procedures, mechanics, etc. I also had to explain her more about my research and my goals.
- Now we are automatic! She practically knows what we are going to have on our budget and what we need to do in every aspect of the grant.
- Now our challenge is to help young people to develop this automaticity!

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- OUR RELATIONSHIP (Nancy's perspective)
- Becoming familiar with the specifics of the PI's research so that I can share program announcements with him. Recognizing key words and typical announcement cycles from sponsors
- Understanding the policies and requirements of the funding agencies and being able to anticipate the PI's needs
- Developing the PI's trust in me as a research administrator—important! Challenging, takes time, must be totally honest and open with PI, as we would be in any relationship

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- More from Nick about Nancy
- Whoever finds a grant shares everything with the other. We read and we prepare. We develop a list of questions and then I contact the Program Officer for answers.
- I will work on the scientific part but Nancy will also read the proposal at the end for English (I write in Greeklish) and to get an understanding about what we are doing.
- She will develop the budget based on a general outline that I will give her and I will review it and give her feedback.
- Then we will work together on internal and external forms. She will give me instructions and feedback every step on the way. The final product goes out of her office. She will hit the launch button!
- On bigger proposals (i.e. C06) we bring more people to contribute but we try to infect them by our willingness to be humble and think first the team.

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- IMPORTANT DETAILS
- I will always share with her inside information that I will obtain at meetings and/or the funding agencies. She will do the same.
- I know how important is such information and I really explore carefully to identify as much as I can. Such information may shape the way we develop our proposals.
- She respects such input and encourages me to obtain it.
- She has my cell phone and knows where I am at all times.

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- ▣ Nancy stresses that ...
- ▣ Trust. . .
- ▣
 - Providing guidance to a first-time PI (developing trust) vs. sharing input with an experienced PI (a trust-based relationship)
 - Trusting information Nick has heard at a review session or learned from a recently-funded PI

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- FUTURE DIRECTIONS (from Nick's perspective)
- Our challenge now is to help young people to develop similar relationships.
- I will introduce them to Nancy and tell them that they have to respect her and listen to her very carefully.
- I will work less with Nancy and more with the junior people teaching them procedures.
- At the same time I will explore opportunities that are of much larger scale where many times we have to bring more players.
- However, even then we try to maintain our team first mentality.

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- ▣ Evolution of relationship (from Nancy's perspective)
 - Nick's growth as a PI has made me a better research administrator (I need to be well-informed about many aspects of his research and funding).
 - I have an opportunity to interact and mentor postdocs and students in their preliminary grant-writing—it is wonderful!
 - His large-scale and multi-institutional proposals require me to coordinate with individuals from throughout campus—C06 grant, for example.

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- ▣ Nancy provides our CONCLUSIONS
 - Many components contribute to the success of a faculty member's grant-writing efforts (PI's endeavors, importance of proposed work, connections with the sponsor)
 - Teamwork and trust between a faculty member and a sponsored programs official can not only contribute to this success but can make the effort enjoyable!
- THANK YOU AND QUESTIONS?