Professional satisfaction has been thoroughly and appropriately discussed in the other articles in this special theme issue. On an individual basis, the concept of professional satisfaction comes from a variety of perspectives. The purpose of this project was to interview several certified athletic trainers to get their feedback on professional satisfaction, as well as how they maintain balance in their lives. Interviews were conducted with some of the well-known leaders of our profession, as well as other ATCs who work in a variety of settings. See the sidebar for a list of the questions that were used to guide the interviews.

Chuck Kimmel, NATA President

Chuck Kimmel has worked exclusively in the college setting. He has been at Austin Peay State University in Tennessee for 24 years as the head athletic trainer and assistant athletic director. Chuck is the current president of the National Athletic Trainers’ Association (NATA).

Professional satisfaction for Chuck comes in two ways. First, in his role as an ATC, Chuck appreciates seeing his athletes return to play as quickly and as safely as possible. Second, in his role with the NATA, President Kimmel thoroughly enjoys meeting and getting to know the members of the NATA. Chuck actually describes his work with the NATA as “fun” and a source of satisfaction for his personal life (although he is quick to add that he considers this work to be very serious). Chuck very much enjoys the professional volunteering opportunities he has had and is having.

Chuck states that his wife, Patty, is the person who provides balance in his life. She is a good listener and provides him with strength. Patty is very supportive and is as involved as she is able to be in President Kimmel’s NATA responsibilities. Chuck feels he is very fortunate to have Patty in his life.

Chuck says that if he could start his career over, he would not do anything differently at all. He feels as though he has been very for-

Questions Used as a Basis for Conducting the Interviews

- What gives you professional satisfaction?
- What gives you satisfaction in your personal life?
- How do you maintain balance in your life?
- If you could start your career over, what would you do differently?
- Have you ever felt overstressed or burned out in your career? If so, how did you overcome that?
- What advice would you give to young people entering the athletic training profession?
tunate in his career and that he is “the luckiest guy on earth” regarding what his career has provided. Chuck feels that all ATCs experience some stress in their lives, simply because of demands of the profession. A lot is expected, and often very little is given in return. Chuck indicates that he has felt stressed at times in his career, but it was never overwhelming, and he was able to simply work through it. Chuck promised himself at the beginning of his career to look elsewhere if the stress ever got to be too difficult. Chuck indicates that by May of each year, he is typically “worn out,” but the 2 1/2 to 3 months of “downtime” over the summer allows him to “recharge” and feel ready to go again.

Chuck’s advice to young ATCs is to do whatever it takes to get the job done and remember that all progress comes with some pain. He also suggests taking time for others. In addition, President Kimmel’s counsel to young ATCs is to “volunteer, volunteer, volunteer.” There are great rewards from such involvement.

Ann Berry, Co-Owner of Tri-Rehab

Ann Berry’s initial employment setting as an ATC was in a clinic where she also had high school outreach responsibilities. She spent 5 years in the clinic setting. For the past 10 1/2 years, Ann has been the co-owner and chief financial officer of an outpatient orthopedic rehabilitation clinic. (Her co-owner is also an ATC, and they also own a medical-billing company.)

Ann gets her professional satisfaction from her volunteer activities at the state, district, and national levels. She enjoys the associations and camaraderie with colleagues. Her personal satisfaction is derived from such diverse activities as woodworking (she has a wood shop in her garage), golf, travel, and reading business books. Time with her family, particularly her nephews, is also an important part of her personal life.

Staying true to one’s values and integrity is the key to maintaining balance in one’s life, according to Ann. She feels that a strong work ethic maintains professional enthusiasm. Work until the job is done, but when away from work, leave it behind. Hobbies and family create balance with a person’s time away from work.

Ann states that she is very happy overall and probably would not change anything if she were to start her career over. She did not start out with the intent of owning a clinic; had she known, she would have taken classes to prepare for business ownership. Ann states that she loves athletic training and she loves her volunteer roles in the profession.

Stress in her professional life requires Ann to take a break every 3 or 4 months. The “break” might be simply a change in environment, such as attending a conference, or volunteer committee meetings. Ann indicates that taking a few days off or a short vacation occasionally to “decompress” is very important.

Ann’s advice to young ATCs is to surround oneself with good people. Get involved in the profession and uphold the standards and ethics of athletic training.

Denise Fandel, Board of Certification Executive Director

Denise Fandel spent 15 years as an athletic trainer at the University of Nebraska/Omaha—3 years as an assistant and 12 years as the head athletic trainer. Denise has been involved with the Board of Certification since 1989 and has been the executive director of the BOC for the past 8 years.

Professional satisfaction is derived from Denise’s conversations and interactions with colleagues. She enjoys discussing issues, particularly in the context of having a vision of the “bigger picture.” She likes following a plan and seeing projects through to completion.

Personal satisfaction for Denise comes from a wide variety of activities. Family is very important, and time with her brothers, sisters, nieces, and nephews is treasured. Denise spends time working with the YMCA and helping to build homes with Habitat for Humanity, as well as mentoring high school and junior high students.