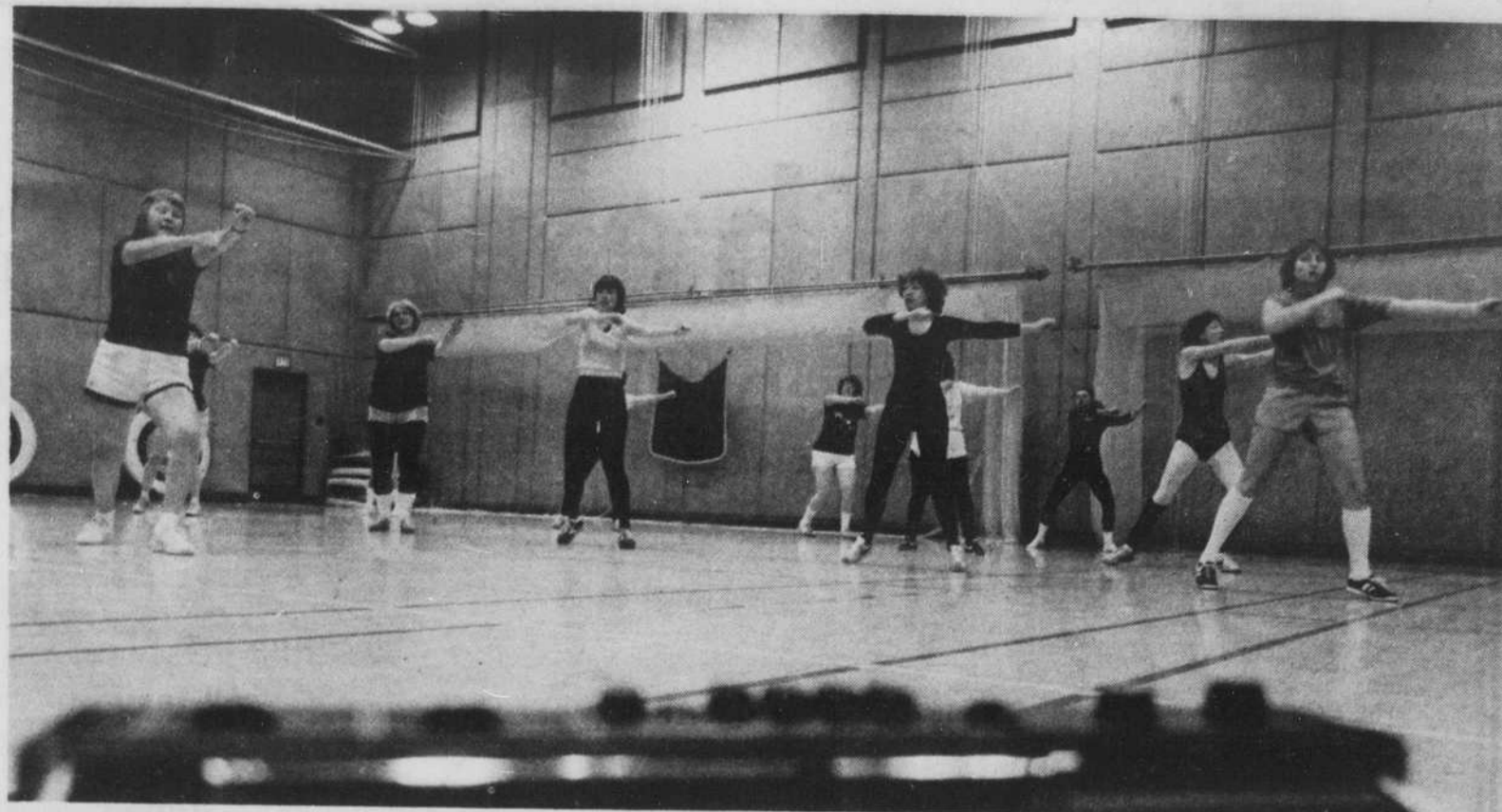


Dance Slimnastics instructor Jaynese Hiigel shows her students how it's done. The popular class is part of the P.E. department's new SHAPE courses.



Program lets students get in SHAPE

A 75-year-old University tradition was broken when physical education activities classes were changed from mandatory requirements to elective courses.

Some faculty in the P.E. department have even taken to calling the new program a "health and fitness club." The "club" is the P.E. department's answer to state budget cuts that goes by the acronym SHAPE.

"The purpose of this program is to establish course offerings (credit and non-credit) that would be self-supporting through additional fees," says Mike Reuter, associate physical education professor.

Physical education department officials aren't sure why the state legislators decided to eliminate funds for student-activity courses.

Some legislators hold a deep antagonism for athletics, and physical education often is considered to be athletics, says Celeste Ulrich, dean of the Health, Physical Education and Recreation department.

"As a result, legislators lump the two together like comic books and Shakespeare," Ulrich says.

Last July, when the department saw the cutbacks coming, a four-member committee formed to seek alternatives for continuing student activity courses.

As a result, a specialized "for the consumer, by the consumer" concept developed.

One of SHAPE's main advantages, Reuter explains, is that "the market forces will continue to tailor the needs of the students and community."

The committee realizes it takes time for students and Eugene area residents to become familiar with SHAPE.

Students do not realize it yet, but they need this type of program, says Mike Ellis, head of the P.E. department.

"When students are stuck in a place with no where to go or anything to do, they'll realize SHAPE is exactly what they're looking for," Ellis says.

Despite the 5.3 percent enrollment decline this winter, registration in physical education activity classes is 81.57 percent compared to winter enrollment a year ago.

As long as the courses do not cost too much and do not have too many regulations, Ellis says more people will participate in SHAPE.

The proposed average cost for a SHAPE course is \$20. The fee will go to pay the instructor's salary plus any special equipment or transportation fees.

Because the department now is independent from the University budget, it has no choice but to derive funds

directly from consumers.

Demand will determine which SHAPE courses are offered. Sections will be reduced where the participation is lowest. For Fall 1982, when SHAPE goes into full effect, courses will be offered according to a student survey taken during the 1981 fall quarter as well as from pilot SHAPE classes this winter and spring.

Reuter says the department was pleased with the 2,320 survey responses received.

After considering the fee for a SHAPE course, 47 percent of the respondents said they would be interested in enrolling in one or more classes beginning next fall. That number could drop, though. The \$49 tuition surcharge had not been announced at the time the questionnaire was distributed.

The department is aware that students' major considerations will be the economic conditions and the tuition cost before registering for a SHAPE class next fall.

From the survey responses and course enrollment, SHAPE may exceed the department's minimum goal of 2,000 students per term, Reuter says.

Of the SHAPE classes offered this term, the "thing that went best was the rhythmic activities like slimnastics," Ellis says.

When SHAPE goes into full swing next fall, classes offered will be based upon predicted enrollment and the present class distribution during winter and spring quarters.

Fifteen SHAPE courses are offered this quarter. Approximately 136 students are already taking advantage of SHAPE.

Ellis says the enrollment figures for SHAPE's initial "take-off" appear promising.

"It looks like we're going to have enough paying participants to support the faculty and program."

"It's really pretty amazing that so many students are enrolled in activity courses without the requirement. People are becoming a lot more activity conscious and realizing the enjoyment they get out of it."

University administrators back the program. The department already has received calls inquiring about SHAPE from other universities facing financial cutbacks.

The committee, backed by the department's faculty, feels confident about their plan.

"We will be able to survive here because people like to be in shape," Ellis says.

By Catherine Cornils
Photos by Duane Schrag

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