

UNIVERSITY

Students shaping up on campus

By Tammy Batey
Emerald Reporter

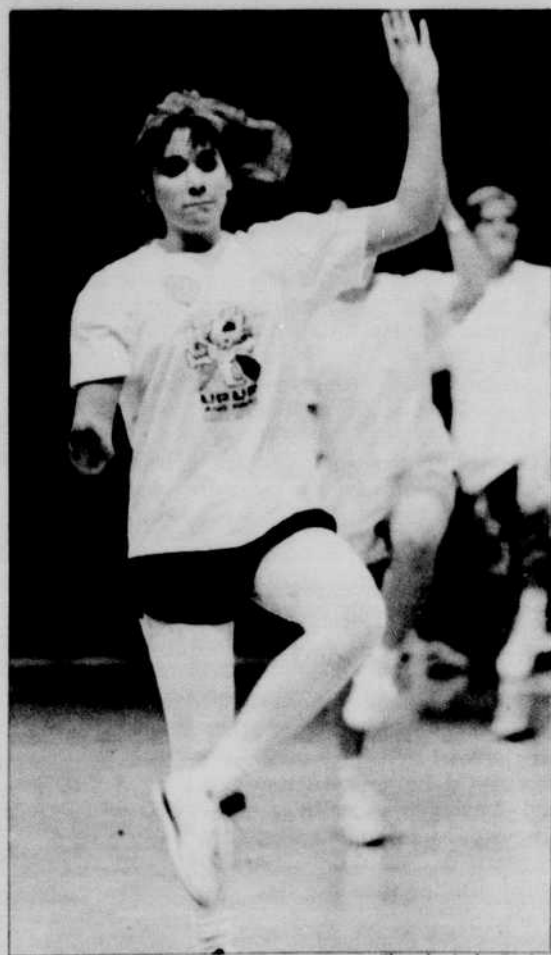


Photo by Andre Kanieri

Freshman Tracy Winfrey, a University aerobics class participant, is one of many students taking part in campus exercise programs.

Many University students are finding that exercise provides the daily stress reliever necessary for them to get through a busy week. Students are quickly immersing themselves in the "fitness craze" and becoming involved in a variety of programs and activities designed to improve fitness.

There has been a change in students' attitudes toward fitness in the past several years, said Joanne Frank, director of health education for the University Health Center.

"There's been an increased trend in society ... exercise is real beneficial in terms of lowering cholesterol," she said. "On campus, students see it as a good outlet. It feels good."

Exercise makes a person feel good both physically and mentally, Frank said.

"They (students) reap benefits mentally when they exercise," she said. "There's just a good feeling doing something to move their bodies. It's a psychological well-being I can't describe."

The University offers more physical education courses than most other universities, said Lani Loken-Dahle, head of physical education service programs. Students have a variety of options ranging from the always-popular aerobic classes to yoga and meditation courses.

"Students should be searching out alternatives. Some may find great joy on an ice skating rink whereas others may get it hitting balls out on the courts," she said.

Instructors and other personnel involved with the physical education program at the University try to stay in touch with students' desires, Loken-Dahle said.

However, students also have to stay in touch with their own needs in terms of fitness, including what to do when experiencing burn-out.

"Some people get involved with aerobics for a number of terms and get burned out," she said. "Rather than quit we advise them to take their background and move it into other directions."

Service Physical Education classes include outdoor wilderness classes such as rock climbing, skiing, and wind surfing, Loken-Dahle said.

Over the last five years there has been a "big boom" in student interest in recreation and intramurals, said Karla Rice, RIM director.

RIM classes are non-credit and often taught at night, whereas SPE courses are for credit and are taught during the day. RIM courses are also eight weeks long as opposed to the term-long SPE classes.

The University has responded to the fitness trend among students' by creating three fitness halls — Thorton, which doubles as a substance-free dorm; De Cou; and the first floor of the University Inn. Approximately 150 students live in these special fitness halls, said Dianna Miller, who handles residence accounts.

Graduate student Alison Parakh conducted a

survey for hall residents on the subject of fitness. The results summary, which she wrote, will be given to University housing who will use the information to create more fitness programs and activities.

The top five activity preferences (with frequency of participation at least twice a week) of the 246 respondents were, in order: walking, weight training, aerobics, jogging and cycling.

Nearly half of the respondents had participated in SPE or RIM activity classes, but a majority of respondents did not use the weight room in Esslinger. Those who do lift weights apparently are "turned off by the crowds and the perceived unavailability of the facility," Parakh said.

Students receive three benefits from exercise, Rice said. First, exercise is a stress reliever. Second, there's the fitness component for people who want to work and shape their bodies. Third, there's the social aspect; students get together in a healthy type of activity.

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