

# Physical education classes can't compete

by Blake Thomason and Cassidy Scott



Karon Allen, center, leads her aerobics class in a core workout in the gym at Randall Hall. Allen's class size has reduced over the past few years.

photo by Cassidy Scott

**W**ith winter registration wrapped up, it is becoming obvious that one-credit PE classes are not filling up the way they used to.

"This year has been tough for everybody, not just my classes but a lot of PE classes," Karon Allen, aerobics teacher, said. "I used to have 50 in a class and then it dropped to 30, and I've never been below 20. So it's been kind of a shock this year; we're coming in with about nine students and you have

to build, say 'Hey you're friends need to sign up'."

According to data provided by Chris Sweet, registrar, of the 78 PE classes available, 46 have less than 10 students enrolled, including 10 classes with only one student.

One possible reason for this is the competition between three-credit health classes and the one-credit PE classes. For most degrees, three credits of either health or PE is required. Many students feel opting for health over PE makes sense in regards to time and finances.

"They do have some pretty cool PE classes ... but [health] was just really convenient," CCC student Sam Hopper said. "I might as well get it done all at once."

Health classes are also convenient because they can be taken online, unlike PE classes. Additionally, the three-credit health classes range from \$270 to \$300, while the most popular PE classes are \$120 for just one credit. That doesn't even account for fees that many one-credit classes have, ranging from \$50 to \$350. Taking health in place of PE saves students about \$60 to \$90.

Another possible reason for the drop in enrollment is the lack of a requirement to take at least one PE class.

"I think we used to have (required PE classes) many years ago," Allen said. "When it stopped it made a big difference. I think everybody needs physical exercise."

Paul Fiskum, a teacher at CCC since 1989, agreed, noting the importance of physical activity.

"I think personal health, and the health classes that are out of a textbook, certainly have very good information," Fiskum said. "But ... I wish we required some physical activity component. I think the activity portion can benefit everybody. Having some activity that gets you moving that you will continue to do for a lifetime, is really what it's all about."

Part-time teachers depend on their PE classes filling up, so there was a lot on the line this winter as PE classes opened for registration. Allen was told if she didn't have at least 15 students, her class would be cancelled. Fortunately she was able to get to 15, but not every class was so fortunate.

"This current term we dropped our karate class that has ran for many, many years due to low enrollment," said Jim Martineau, athletic director.

However, most of the students who wanted to take that class can still get similar instruction in the Self-Defense II class taught by the same instructor.

Both Allen and Fiskum pointed to scheduling conflicts as cause for low enrollment. With students missing out on physical activity and teachers at risk of losing their classes, administrators are looking for possible ways to raise enrollment.

"We are looking at days of the week and times," Martineau said. "Most all of our PE-185 classes meet Monday/Wednesday/Friday or Tuesday/Thursday. This spring we will try out a Monday/Wednesday schedule in a few select classes to see if not having the Friday sections helps out our students."

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