

# third dimension

## PE—a far cry from push-ups and chicken fat

By Ann Owens

Physical education—which to many students once meant chin-ups, push-ups and jumping jacks has recently taken on a broader meaning at UNL.

UNL's physical education curriculum, comprising activities courses ranging from scuba diving and parachuting to ethnic and social dance, offers students a variety of interest areas, according to acting Chairman of Physical Education James O'Hanlon.

In courses where interest is high, UNL's physical education department expands the number of sections and offers advanced classes, O'Hanlon said.

He said he believes that increased interest in physical education at UNL can be attributed to this wide selection of course offerings.

### A national trend

"Besides, it has caught people's fancy," he said. "There is a national trend towards keeping physically fit and cultural attention towards how leisure time is spend."

For many years graduation requirements in various UNL colleges included a number of hours in physical education.

"As these requirements were dropped the physical education department feared a large drop in enrollment, he said. "On the contrary, enrollment has grown significantly."

No current enrollment figures for physical education classes are available now, according to O'Hanlon and activities courses coordinator Elizabeth Petrakis. After registration this fall every class offered was filled, she said.

### Coliseum renovation needed

The department's future growth depends on renovation of the coliseum, O'Hanlon said. A plan to use the building for physical education classes has been drawn up and is being considered, he said.

Included in this plan are facilities for 15 handball courts, which are now very limited, according to O'Hanlon.

If the plan is accepted it won't actually go into effect for quite awhile, O'Hanlon said, but use of the coliseum is "an important factor in effecting the kind of program we can offer."

"Because of limited staff and facilities we can't project a large growth in the program or the near future," he added.

Marie Sanwick, UNL physical education dance coordinator, said both dance faculty and students are "young, alive people working very hard."

### "Not sissy to dance"

She added that people are not only becoming aware of dance in general but also the different forms of dance.

"This can be seen in the high percentage of males enrolled in dance courses," she said. "Men no longer regard dance as an unacceptable form of activity. It's no longer sissy to dance."

Interest in co-educational physical fitness courses is growing at UNL, according to Petrakis. This helps both men and women, she said.

"Both sexes show a wide range of ability. Co-educational courses allow increased understanding of this," Petrakis said.

### Enthusiasm important

The role of each instructor in the department is important, according to O'Hanlon.

"Students appreciate instructors' enthusiasm, which in turn affects enrollment," he said.

Interest goes up and down quickly, according to O'Hanlon.

### Student surveys best

"It's hard for us to predict which courses will be in high demand" he said. "The best we can do is conduct student surveys and watch early registration patterns. It would be nice if we could be a little more sure."

According to Petrakis, courses of particular interest this year are tennis, karate, judo, fencing, parachuting, backpacking, aerobics, dance and riflery.

"There was a time when students were content to sit around and watch television, but we are in a new era now," she said.

This is especially true of outdoor activities, she added, evidenced by the large appeal of bicycling, backpacking and other outdoor activities.

### Interest in cycles

Interest in different activities appear in cycles, Petrakis said.

"I think it's interesting that in the unstructured society of today, highly structured courses such as ballet and fencing are so popular," she said. "The next specific direction interests might take can't be foreseen far in advance."

Students' ideas are incorporated into the program by means of an activity council, according to Petrakis.

"Each class sends a representative to the council meeting and in this way we get student input which is an important part of our program," Petrakis said.

### Development takes two years

If it appears that nothing is being done about these suggestions it is because the development of a new program usually takes about two years, she added.

"The computer which does UNL's scheduling is set up so that we have to schedule courses about a year in advance," she said.

Course offerings being considered for the near future include advanced aerobics and dance, cycling, horseback riding and a course in shot guns and pistols (a spin-off existing riflery courses), according to O'Hanlon.

The three things restricting the program's growth, according to Petrakis are lack of personnel, money and primarily, lack of space.

