

# Excellence in Teaching



## Pam Ward

### Health/Physical Education

#### With her students every step of the way

Pam Ward is a high energy instructor. In her Folk and Square Dance class she is constantly in motion, calling out instructions, calling out questions, turning on the music, and joining in the fun. Her class moves at a fast pace, with students exhibiting high energy – there is a lot of smiling and laughter. Students in the Folk and Square Dance class learn 10 to 12 different dances, including the Patty Cake Polka, the hora, the hustle, and dances from Russia and Africa.

Pam herself is right there with her students, literally every step of the way, modeling steps for them, applauding their performance, and dancing along with them. Pam's positive outlook and bright smile encourage all students to participate. The music she selects is also very motivating.

Pam is graduate of Western Oregon University ("called OCE – Oregon College of Education, back then," she notes). She joined the faculty in 1995 and has taught here for the last 11 years. Pam has taught a variety of courses in health and physical education, including PE 121 Folk and Square dancing, PE 122 Social Dance PE 170 Teaching Games and Physical Activities to Children, PE 171, Teaching Educational Gymnastics, PE 172, Teaching Dance and Rhythmic Activities to Children, PE 246, Teaching Movement Concepts and Activities to Children, as well as HE 211, Techniques of Relaxation.

#### What I like about teaching at Western

"I like the small classes and the small campus. At Western the faculty get to know the students personally and take an interest in them. The faculty and staff here are wonderful also, very willing to help, to share information and ideas."



#### Staying on her toes

Pam was on the track team and a gymnast when she was a student at Western. She also performed in the dance company at Western (as well as Southern Oregon College, which she also attended). The gymnastic camps she taught brought her back to Western. She still maintains these interests. Pam works out daily in addition to her active teaching schedule, and runs 5 miles a day. She also enjoys reading and art. While Pam teaches a variety of courses her first love is dance. She says, "I've just always had a passion for dance, ever since I was little. I love all kinds of movement."

Pam is a member of the Independence Wagon Wheeler's Square Dance group. "America's folk dance is square dancing," she notes. She invites the organization to visit her classes at the end of each term, giving students the opportunity to dance under the direction of a professional caller, and to dance with the club members. "Everyone loves it, this is a great opportunity," she says. Students watch videos of international folks festivals as well, so they can see performers in costume, and learn more about the influence of culture on dance.

#### What students say about Pam

*She is awesome! She's always in a good mood, happy, smiling and laughing. A joy to be around.*

*She is the best teacher ever. Very energetic and helpful.*

*She makes people feel comfortable even if you're not sure about trying something new.*

*Your classes are so enjoyable and the attitude you brings to class is so easy to learn from.*

*Always understanding and helpful.*

*You demonstrate everything so well.*

*I loved this class! I looked forward to it every day.*

*The best teachers love what they teach and make students love it with them – you definitely made the class do this.*

*I liked how you gave extra help when people needed it or didn't get it.*

*This class was magical. The whole group got to be very close and we all had so much fun together.*

*I have to admit this class surprised me. I gained a lot of exposure to dances I would have never learned other wise. I had lot of fun and really enjoyed it.*

*I was nervous signing up for this class but I absolutely loved it and I am so grateful for everything I learned.*

*I really enjoyed this class. I was able to learn many different dances. I've even taught some of them to my family!*

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