

Martial arts club finally kicks it up at Elon

Kristopher Moody
Reporter

After four years of struggling to gain recognition, a martial arts club has finally been launched at Elon.

Trying to gain acceptance has caused many changes in leadership. The current leaders have succeeded in making the concept a reality. The new Aiki Bujitsu club has already hosted its first two meetings. Lisa Ponton, faculty adviser for the club, is excited that all of the hard work has finally paid off.

"We're so happy to finally get approval," Ponton said. "This is needed on campus."

Ponton said that self-defense seminars are important to bring to campus and are a good start to make students aware of issues. The problem was, however, there was no outlet for students seeking to practice self-defense. Darren Thompson, instructor, and Michael Collison, club president,



*Kristopher Moody/ Photographer
Instructor Lisa Ponton shows a student a basic stance at a meeting Monday.*

joined Ponton in an attempt to provide this outlet.

Advocates for the club have endured rejection due to concerns about safety and the view that it would promote violence. The true nature of the art got lost in the

translation by people who didn't know about the practice. The decision-makers misinterpreted the teachings of peace as teachings of violence.

"I do understand the hesitance, because if you do something

wrong it could go very badly," Ponton said.

More important than the knowledge of the techniques is the awareness that accompanies it. People tend to not understand that because you know how to use the skills, you know not to use them. Ponton said that the intangibles of martial arts are much more important than the fighting.

Aiki Bujitsu is a blend of martial art styles. Its wide array of techniques makes its teachings more applicable to a university setting. Instructors will teach falling, breaking holds and grabs and the ceremony. Each meeting will feature a meditation session to help students focus on a single task, something that Ponton says is crucial to learn in today's multi-tasking society.

Respect, focus and discipline are the main intangibles the club hopes to give students. These are the ideas that transcend the dojo and help people in their daily lives.

Especially on college campuses, where confrontations are inevitable, having a martial arts club can help to decrease the number of incidents that may occur. For students who will take part in this club and for students who will not, the awareness that something exists is crucial. Just knowing your abilities, surroundings and levels of confidence allows you to avoid potentially harmful situations.

"It's a matter of control," Collison said. "It's controlling the situation around you."

With the campus already showing interest in the newly established club, the Aiki Bujitsu club hopes that more people will take advantage of the skills and opportunities the club offers.

"Everyone can do martial arts," Ponton said. "Everyone can gain something out of this."

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