

**The Effectiveness of a Water Fitness Pool**  
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The effectiveness of Alumni Pool as a water fitness area is known throughout the campus and the multi-purposes it serves because this uniqueness is exceptional. All PED classes are taught by professionals with years of experience in their particular fields. Alumni Pool is a vital part of the School of Education, which is headed by Dr. Don Locke. The water fitness pool provides the campus with excellent exercises which improve land performances and includes special events for student enjoyment. The main function of the perfectly heated deep and shallow water fitness pool is to meet the needs of the majority of students in a healthy and physically safe environment while developing programs that affect the body, mind, and spirit. Specially designed programs allow students to experience different levels of anaerobic, aerobic, recreational, and certain types of therapeutic exercise as prescribed by the Mississippi College athletic trainers. The water fitness programs provide the students with necessary lifesaving skills. These programs reach across campus and are currently conducted for the Athletic, English, Kinesiology, Music, Nursing, and Psychology Departments. The constant goal of Alumni Pool is to provide an educational, healthy, and physically safe water fitness program for Mississippi College.

Alumni Pool is used for water fitness programs instead of being used as a swimming pool. The reason it is not a pool for swimming laps is explained in detail in the article **One Degree** [www.mc.edu/water-fitness](http://www.mc.edu/water-fitness). A quick synopsis of that article is that lap swimming pools and water fitness pools are poles apart in temperature requirements. Habitually water programs try to mix the two but trickle with numerous problems when they do. At Alumni Pool so many difficulties developed from this mix and we determined that the two programs simply needed to be held in separate pools. A gradual separation began in 1998, and once completed we discovered countless programs can mix with a 100% water fitness pool, which allowed for program expansion. Many additional water fitness ideas are on the Alumni Pool drawing board for our future students such as water polo and aqua zumba.

With heads above the water, 40 water fitness students per hour can exercise at one time at Alumni Pool. As a water fitness pool, the classes produce a large number of PED students each semester to generate a cost effective operation toward wages, equipment repairs, and supplies. If the pool were to become a swimming pool then it would have smaller class registrations due to its size for swimming lanes and fewer varieties of classes due to swimming program requirements; this would also be true if swim teams were formed. With fewer students registering for classes, a swimming pool could not provide a cost effective operation or serve the population of the campus as well as a water fitness pool does. A swimming pool not generating a cost effective program would be a gigantic financial burden and would drain college funds.

It is well known that healthy contact sport athletes should not swim since swimming works adversely toward muscle and bone density required for land brunt. However, the

water fitness exercises designed for Mississippi College athletes are weight bearing as they push against the constant surrounding resistance of the water and these intricate moves complement contact sports. Athletic trainers determine if an injured athlete can rehab in the water fitness pool by running in the deep end.

In the past when Mississippi College was Division II, the coaches brought the healthy athletes to the pool two times each week. They were not brought for the therapeutic benefits that water delivers such as dissipating soreness. Rather, they were brought to further improve the abilities they had already increased from their land work-outs. It was during this type of added athletic conditioning that we were Division II champions and had fewer injuries than when the athletes trained only on land. The reasons behind this past perfection are many but one is because the weight bearing water fitness exercises serve to balance the muscles, maintain the muscle and bone strength, and increase the flexibility/energy as the athlete performs on land. Darek Pfenninger, full back 2013, and Trace Lane, one of the best special team players and defensive back 2013, are two examples who show extra energy on the field. They have acquired this superior oxygenation from adding interval water fitness exercises to their normal land work-outs. The athletic coaches, after acquiring knowledge in the specialized area of conditioning athletes in the water, will be the key to this type of future Division II training. Proper interval training is crucial since moderately moving in the water will not produce the desired effects for the field, track, and court. Non-interval exercises will be wasting training time for the coaches and the healthy athletes. The healthy players must put into practice certain exercises that trigger a nine or ten on the RPE scale then change to different exercises that bring them into the recovery mode. As soon as recovery is reached they repeat this process for 50 minutes to one hour. Different interval ratios can be applied as endurance increases.

The usage of the water fitness pool is for currently registered students; if space is available, it also can be used by faculty/staff. Water fitness exercises provide benefits that no other land or swimming exercise could ever deliver our employees. A deep water pool can provide more benefits to the exerciser than a pool that is 5-6' in depth. The water fitness program, presently in place for the past 30 years, has proven to be safe, healthy, and cost effective and will certainly burgeon as soon as the college returns to Division II rules for training the athletes.

Alumni Pool is a high tech pool and has cameras (several are hidden from view for security purposes). These cameras record all pool activities during open hours and record the pool, both water and deck, during closed hours as well.

Mississippi College has different strategic goals and the existing water fitness programs serve the following purposes for four of those goals:

### ***Strategic Goal I***

Concerning strategic goal I, the most significant improvement is that Alumni pool, as a water fitness pool, has increased its instruction to a vast number of campus departments reaching a wide variety of students. Alumni pool provides an enriched

educational facility as described in this section along with innovative delivery methods. Updated research on water fitness provides education to the list of classes below, and they exercise while viewing my personal DVD's as they learn from experienced instruction. Syllabi for the below six water fitness classes and articles are provided on-line via the water fitness website [www.mc.edu/water-fitness](http://www.mc.edu/water-fitness)

1. PED 105 A/B: Water Aerobics.
2. PED 106 A/B: Deep Water Running.
3. PED 113 A: Water Walking (including bicycling).
4. PED 114 A: Water Volleyball (known as the most fun class on campus).

Assessments in water fitness classes are used to define how students correlate nationally. These assessments are used at the beginning and the end of each semester to gauge the students' improvement. Additional creative water fitness exercise methods such as Plyometrics, Hydroriding, Oodles of Work, Aqua Power Step, Liquid Abs, and Interval Athletic Training promote knowledge about various types of water fitness benefits that transfer to land. The many different types of water fitness exercises increase performances on the field, track, and court and those same exercises also ensure the students know how to volume-train in other pools upon graduation. Injury is extremely minimized at Alumni Pool and healthy lifetime activities are incorporated.

There are numerous other styles of classes that are compatible with water fitness pool requirements and two of them are:

1. Scuba.
2. Beginning Fundamentals for the Non-Swimmer (lap swimming not included).

PED 128: Scuba meets the recreational needs of students and their activity is performed slowly underwater as students check their instruments and adjust their masks. The scuba certification creates job employment opportunities in fields such as Marine Biology and underwater touring.

PED 107A: Beginning Fundamentals for Non-Swimmers is designed for students who are apprehensive of the water and do not know how to swim. On the first day of PED 107A, those students that have swim ability are reassigned to other classes in pools that swim laps. PED 107A serves the students by giving them confidence and essential life saving skills such as floating and treading water.

Other departments, such as the Music Department, use the water fitness pool. Dr. Craig Young's class, MUS 324 Introduction to Conducting, needs the water fitness temperature as well as the water buoyancy in order to precisely perfect necessary arm movements with less stress to the shoulders of his students. In addition, MUS 132 for voice students use buoyancy saddles keeping them vertical in the deep end. The water pressures place a gentle compression on their chest and force them to breathe deeper from the diaphragm. This is an excellent training technique for the voice since this type of exercise improves the oxygenation process.

The pool also serves Dr. Rob Ward's classes, Psychology 482 and 483. The necessities of proper exercise in water fitness are demonstrated for the Psychology students to support the fitness discussions in Dr. Ward's classes.

The Nursing Department sends their students to the pool to walk, run, and ride the bikes. This helps refresh the body and mind. This type of exercise is a major stress reliever and enables the students to concentrate in a better way after exercising.

Dry deck lectures or instructed water exercises are available for the faculty who want to bring their classes during each semester. Alumni pool shares the necessary health and wellness education to all of its students.

Additionally, the colorful arrays of 48 international flags, which represent students who have attended water exercise at Alumni pool since the 1980's, provide an educational and cultural environment. During Milling's classes, some of the histories of the pool flags are spotlighted for the students. Civitan, a men's service club at Mississippi College, have adopted the pool as their service project; they place the flags on the beams as needed.

The PED classes which continually use Alumni pool are six water fitness, two scuba and one non-swimmer fundamentals. These nine classes currently create 185 registration openings for a one hour PED credit per semester. These classes promote part of the excellent mission of Mississippi College - to provide the knowledge required to maintain a healthy lifestyle and create full and part-time job employment opportunities.

### ***Strategic Goal II***

The pool is locally known and respected for its excellent healthy and safe exercise programs. It has also received national and local recognition for the college. In addition, the public perception of the college is enhanced by the Alumni Pool water fitness website. The website is updated semi-annually and is continually browsed, producing many inquiries both nationally and internationally via telephone and email: [www.mc.edu/water-fitness](http://www.mc.edu/water-fitness)

### ***Strategic Goal III***

The pool provides a Christian atmosphere with wellness exercises. Students can learn the importance of discipline and commitment from completing the water courses. The students work together and create interpersonal relationships. The pool motto, "When Water Moves Miracles Happen" is exemplary of water fitness's benefits and relates to John 5:9-12. Campus organizational meetings on the pool deck provide students with Christian fellowship. It is not unusual for the pool to host events for 100+ students.

If students cannot register for the PED classes, daily schedules are posted for special times that they can come free for water usage, deck usage, or both. This provides students with a splendid Christian service.

The Milling Water Volleyball Tournament is held each year on Homecoming. Students and alumni combine to form eight different teams. These eight teams play to become champs for that particular year. Tee shirts and meal coupons are given to the

championship team. The special rules are unlike any other volleyball game rules on water or land, and produce laughter, skills, and enjoyment for the players and for the audience. This is a marvelous way to enjoy Christian fellowship.

#### ***Strategic Goal IV***

Alumni pool strives to build and enhance meaningful relationships with alumni during tours by sharing water fitness research and discussing how the pool has changed to meet the majority needs of today's students. During these tours, alumni can also view the instructional DVD's and receive water fitness articles sharing additional information about the benefits of water fitness exercises.



#### **Employment and Duties:**

Alumni pool employs 9-12 student workers fall and spring semesters and each student can work 1-20 hours a week. Daily lifeguards work between one to four hours a day per student, per semester. Summer hours are handled differently. This ensures an alert lifeguard is on duty managing the safety and well being of all water fitness students. Lifeguards are responsible for making certain all pool rules are followed; doing so keeps students not only safe but also healthy. Secondary duties consist of cleaning the pool and deck area; and after heavy usage, skimming the surface of the water by hand before the next class arrives.

A pool employee, even though other lifeguards are on duty, must always be present anytime the pool is in use to monitor the quality of the water and the operation of the

equipment. New employment occurs each semester depending upon class schedules and current certifications. Employee exercise sessions are scheduled each semester in accordance with the requirements and rules of Alumni pool.

The following duties of the current Aquatic Director produce a pool that performs and functions well for the students

- **Pool Operator:** Check the pool equipment/chemicals hourly when in use and daily when closed. Take manual readings of the pool water to verify the readings of the equipment. The water balance must be maintained at all times for weekly classes, and pool chemicals cannot be allowed “to go dead” overnight or over the weekend. Back wash the pool equipment as needed. The frequency of back washing depends on heavy or light usage and needs to be monitored daily. Check the water level daily; too much or too little water will create cleanliness dilemmas. Solve problems, if possible, when equipment malfunctions. If repairs cannot be made immediately then they are scheduled as quickly as possible. Set up preventive maintenance necessities such as changing the sand in the filters as needed and scheduling regular humidifier unit PM’s to prevent avoidable cost and unit downtime. The pool has equipment totaling +\$100,000.00.

**RESULTS: This type of hands on operation saves dollars annually.**

- **Office Duties:** Handle all office paperwork such as budget projections, quarterly and annual reports, assessments, payroll, schedules, ordering supplies, telephone, e-mails; each morning monitor recorder for any pool activity during the previous night. Handle any complaints. Meet with all visitors that come to the pool and answer their questions.

- **RESULTS: An organized, safe, and effective pool program functions well on daily basis.**

- **Instruct and Design Water Fitness Programs:** Instruction for six PED Water Fitness classes meeting twice a week or 12 one-hour classes weekly. Prepare ahead of time since each class listens to the lectures concerning water fitness as they exercise. Free instruction to MC employees and athletes/students in-between the PED classes. Design new water fitness programs on a regular basis.

**RESULTS: Classes create job opportunities for students. Students/faculty/staff receive free gifts of instruction given as a Christian service. Students love to try the newly designed programs each year.**

- **Extras:** Work whatever hours are necessary to accomplish above and below.
  1. Interact with MC students in giving special water fitness events.
  2. Hire lifeguards and assign cleaning duties such as vacuum pool, hose deck, clean drains, chlorinate deck, scrub silver, clean glass, remove trash daily, etc.
  3. Design and update the water fitness website to hold current interest of

students.

4. Keep certifications updated and attend International Water Fitness Conventions.
5. Perform water fitness research for publication.
6. Write articles for publication.

The majority of Mississippi College students are satisfied with the water fitness programs offered at Alumni Pool. Surveys are taken annually and returned surveys show positive comments. Some of those past comments are listed below:

- “Please make classes mandatory for athletes; they need these benefits to help our teams during games.”
- “Every student should have to take the water fitness classes before they graduate. I had no idea of the useful information contained in Mrs. Milling’s classes.”
- “Add more water volleyball classes please.”
- “The information I have learned during this semester is so helpful, and it is so much more than I expected; this is the best class on campus. I will take it again even though my PE credits are satisfied.”
- “This is the most fun class I have taken at MC.”
- “Advertise more; I’m a graduating senior, and I knew nothing about these wonderful classes at Alumni Pool.”
- “I love the pristine water; the sunshine through the windows makes the water sparkle for my 10:00 class. It is the cleanness pool I have ever seen.”