

Project Name

Increasing Exercise Opportunities at the GSD

Individual or Group

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Project Plan

Unlike other schools, membership to Harvard gyms is not included in the GSD student fee, and many students do not elect to pay the \$230 for an academic year membership, plus an additional \$110 for racquet access. Indeed, fitness fees are one of many fees GSD students are unaware of before enrolling (e.g. extensive printing and materials costs), and they are one of the first discretionary items students cut from their budgets to make ends meet.

The school encourages us to make healthy choices by sleeping 7-8 hours, eating right, and getting regular exercise, but the GSD does not adequately facilitate opportunities for physical activity.

The only option currently on offer is yoga three days a week:

- Monday and Wednesday nights at 7pm in the Porticoes, taught by Elizabeth Brown and coordinated by the Student Yoga Coordinator
- Sunday mornings at 11am for female-identifying people only, taught by Erica Licht in Gund 112, coordinated by Student Services

This is a great start, but yoga is just one of many ways students might choose to exercise. **We propose adding a resistance training exercise option one day a week**, based on bodyweight exercises and (budget permitting) inexpensive equipment like free weights and resistance bands. Participants would likely be asked to bring their own yoga mat to class. As with the weekly yoga offerings, we would like to hire a regular fitness instructor to lead these sessions. Classes would be an hour or less and would likely take place in the Porticoes, too, depending on scope of interest and ventilation.

Timeline

1. Identify potential instructor(s). Abby wants to teach these classes, but we might also recruit another instructor or two as backups.
2. Identify potential times for classes.
3. Circulate poll over GSD-Fellow-Students to identify preferred time (assuming instructor(s) are somewhat flexible).
4. Book out room(s) for next semester.
5. Host the first class at the start of the spring term!

Core Values

Our proposal seeks to increase access to exercise opportunities for GSD students by bringing an additional fitness option directly to them. We seek to promote equity by making classes free and open to any GSD student, instead of just those who can pay the Harvard gym membership fee. Furthermore, we are excited about the opportunity to create a space for GSD students across disciplines to interact outside their programs.

Impact and Longevity

In the immediate term, this project will increase fitness opportunities for GSD students, which we know to be important for students' physical and mental health.¹ We will pilot these classes this year, gauging the regularity of interest and the volume of participation over time, producing a short report and proposal at the end of the academic year for how the GSD might carry this forward. Specifically, we anticipate creating a budget and recruiting instructor(s) for the GSD to take ownership of this going forward, in the same way it does the regular yoga courses.

Budget Table

The budget below reflects what we anticipate we would need to get started. Depending on distribution of funds, we could budget solely for the instructor for the spring semester, which would be \$400. We do think having a little light equipment on hand will add to the experience, though, so we propose a modest budget for obtaining free weights, jump ropes, core sliders, and resistance bands. These are all fairly portable (with the exception of free weights) and could be stored in a supply closet or the like.

Line Item	Unit Cost	Quantity	Total
Fitness Instructor	\$25 / hour	16	\$400
8-lb Weights (Set of 2)	\$25	5	\$125
10-lb Weights (Set of 2)	\$30	5	\$150
12-lb Weights (Set of 2)	\$36	5	\$180
15-lb Weights (Set of 2)	\$44	5	\$220
Jump Ropes	\$7	7	\$49
Core Sliders	\$10	7	\$70
Resistance Band Sets	\$10	7	\$70
Total			\$1,264

Nota Bene

We have not yet had a chance to connect with Olivia Howard, who coordinates Monday/Wednesday yoga, or Rianne Hammerl, who coordinates Sunday yoga, to learn their best practices. We will reach out to them to help refine our proposal in the intervening time between now and voting. We like the idea of creating a more coordinated fitness effort, if appropriate logistically.

¹ Pillay, Srin, "How Simply Moving Benefits Your Mental Health," 2019 Oct 30
<<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/how-simply-moving-benefits-your-mental-health-201603289350>>.