Dance department complete, instructors highly qualified

By Kathryn Mowat

"Creighton's dance department is unique because it is small, the instructors are highly qualified to teach and the atmosphere promotes a lot of individualized attention," said Valerie Roche, an associate professor of dance and a coordinator for performing arts.

Roche began teaching at Creighton in 1983 and nearly 22 years later, she is still enthusiastic about the dance department.

"The department is designed to teach students everything from beginning to advanced dance," she said. "Good previous dance training is beneficial but we're not necessarily looking for a great deal of experience."

If students have no previous dance training, they must be in good physical condition.

"We prefer they develop their skills here," Roche said.

Two degrees

The department offers students who major in dance a choice of two degrees: a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Fine Arts with an emphasis on dance. Each degree requires a combination of classes in classical ballet and modern dance.

"Students may emphasize one or the other depending on where their ability lies," Roche said.

Theatre dance, dance motivation, history of dance and dance composition are some of the elective courses offered. Students are required to take drama classes and also art and music appreciation classes.

"It is extremely important for dancers to have an interest in fine arts other than dance and to develop those artistic interests," Roche said.

Individualized attention

Roche emphasized that the dance department is small enough to offer a great deal of individual attention.

"As in any college, communication between students and professors is very important. I feel that the professors in the dance department have accomplished excellent communication with their students."

"If students are having problems that are affecting their development, we can deal with them together and continue to move forward," she said.

"All of our graduates, with the exception of one, are employed. Roche said. Most have gone into teaching or have joined dance companies."