

Past Week

Search

Advanced | Browse | Help

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Home

Marketplace

- Classifieds
- Autos
- Homes
- Jobs
- Place an Ad
- Print Ads

Sections

- Today's Front
- News
- Sports
- Opinion
- Columnists
- Blogs
- Communities
- Lifestyle
- Announcements
- Entertainment
- TV Listings
- Photographs
- Photo Reprints
- Religion
- Obituaries
- Weather
- Corrections

Services

- Email Extra
- Mobile News
- RSS
- 1-Month View
- Search
- Circulation

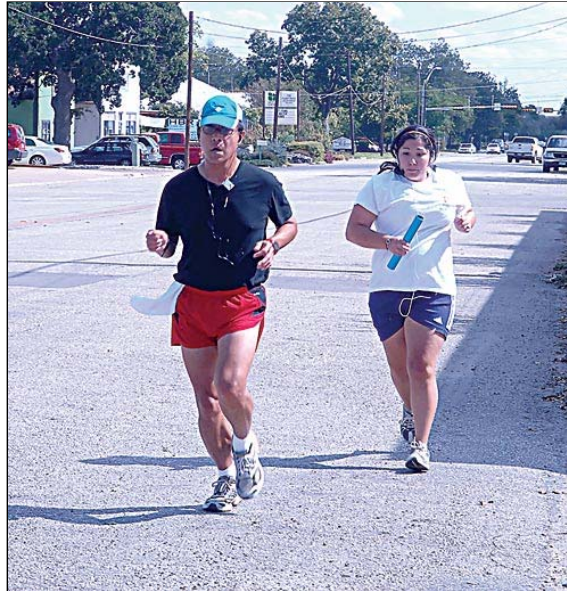
AP News

- Top Stories
- Nation
- Texas
- Politics
- Business
- Technology
- Sports
- Health
- Arts

Thinking on their feet

Schreiner University professor Juan Gonzalez, left, passes Amanda Martinez during the class' "midterm" race Monday.

Published October 20, 2009



Daily Times Photo

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Search

Advanced

Browse

Help

Register

Sign In

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Home

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- ★ Classifieds
- ★ Autos
- ★ Homes
- ★ Jobs
- ★ Place an Ad
- ★ Print Ads

Sections

Today's Front

News

Sports

Opinion

Columnists

Blogs

Communities

Lifestyle

Announcements

Entertainment

TV Listings

Photographs

Photo Reprints

Religion

Obituaries

Weather

Corrections

Services

- ★ Email Extra
- ★ Mobile News
- ★ RSS
- ★ 1-Month View
- ★ Search
- ★ Circulation

AP News

Top Stories

Nation

Texas

Politics

Business

Technology

Sports

Health

Arts



Thinking on their feet

By Joe Harrington

The Daily Times

Published October 20, 2009

Martin Boardman didn't look like he was ready for his midterm on Monday.

He didn't bring any books, pencils or anything else that would remotely create the appearance of a prepared college student. Primed to take the least amount of time possible, and wearing a headband and running shoes, he was ready for his exercise physiology midterm.

The rest of the class followed suit, as Schreiner University's running guru, Dr. Juan Gonzalez, bucked the academia world by throwing out the papers, the desks and test anxiety with a new exam method: He was going to race them.

"They're going to receive some credit for all their activity today, but instead of writing about it, I wanted them to experience all the kinds of stuff we're supposed to cover in class," Gonzalez said. "It's a very good way to get them engaged and make it fun."

For the first time, Gonzalez's midterm consisted of an eight-mile race, where he competes against a relay team of eight students running one mile intervals. Students not running recorded the times of the runners and followed them from one of the three cars trailing behind.

The course started outside Schreiner's Moody Hall, went through East Main Street, then up Jefferson, eventually turning around at Elm Street Park.

"It's mostly just hands-on, where we get to actually experience exercise physiology," senior Ashley Eubanks said. "Instead of just studying about it and taking a test on the prep cycle (and) aerobic and anaerobic capacity — we're actually going to go out there and experience it and try it."

The exam began at 2:30 p.m. on Monday with Gonzalez facing Boardman on the first mile. Boardman, a senior, dashed down the road, giving the students more than a minute advantage after one mile.

"I think (I passed my exam)," Boardman said. "It wasn't bad. I ran it in 6:10. I was shooting for around six. I was a little slow, but I'll take it."

Gonzalez passed the first mile marker at 7:34, but Boardman said the "crafty" Gonzalez wasn't out of it yet.

"That was way too fast," Gonzalez said. "I was supposed to run it in eight minutes — for the first mile — it's kind of hard when you're trying to chase somebody down (to stay on pace)."

During the second mile, Gonzalez took the lead, but eventually he fell behind his students for good.

"They ran a good race," Gonzalez said minutes after he completed the eight-mile course through Kerrville. "I thought I had them midway, but (the students) pulled away. After that I just couldn't catch anyone."

Gonzalez finished the race in one hour and eight minutes, while the class clocked in at about 55 minutes, giving each student a 100 percent on the exam.

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"Maybe (we'll do this) for the final exam, but they'll run the eight miles,"
Gonzalez said.

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[back to top](#)