

Pooling Their Resources

**For two BC employees,
the quest for a healthy
life is going swimmingly**

BY GREG FROST
STAFF WRITER

Last semester, Controller's Office staffer Mary Pohlman waded into the pool at the Flynn Recreation Complex and swam from Boston all the way to Maine. Her colleague, Barbara Holmes, swam to New Hampshire.

Huh?

Both women belong to the RecPlex's Swim Incentive Program, which gives swimmers an extra kick by translating their cumulative pool laps to real-world distances.

Caitriona Taylor, aquatics manager at the RecPlex, introduced the program several years ago as a way to motivate swimmers by fostering friendly competition and alleviating the tedium of swimming laps.

"When you swim in a pool, you're just going up and down, up and down – sometimes it can feel like you're not going anywhere," says Taylor. "But the Swim Incentive Program allows you to map out your progress, so it feels like you're actually going somewhere."

Last semester, the program took on a New England theme and gave swimmers 10 different target cities around the region, from Waltham, to Lewiston, Me. This semester, swimmers will be taking a virtual tour of lighthouses along the Outer Banks.

Between 10 and 20 members of the Boston College community take part in the program each semester, and none is more formidable than Pohlman, a business system support

analyst in the Controller's Office.

Arriving on campus at around 6 a.m., she is routinely one of the first people in the pool. She averages between two and three miles a session.

It is that kind of determination that allowed her to cover 185 miles last semester, putting her well past her target of Lewiston.

"I wanted to go all the way to Bar Harbor but the pool broke," she lamented. (It has since been fixed.)

Pohlman has spent a big chunk of her life in and around pools. She put in countless miles on her high school swim team, and for the past 27 years she has coached the New-

As a resident of Plymouth, Holmes leaves her house at 4:50 a.m. each day to make it to the Plex by 6.

"My one hour of swimming is so important to me," she says. "That's my time, and it's why I love the Swim Incentive Program – it gets me moving and it makes it fun."

Last semester, Holmes set Portsmouth, NH, as her goal. She ended up swimming more than 75 miles – easily surpassing the 51 miles between Boston and Portsmouth.

Holmes says swimming also helps protect her body from the effects of osteoporosis, which has caused her a few broken bones in



Barbara Holmes, left, and Mary Pohlman in a familiar setting: the Flynn Recreation Complex swimming pool. (Photo by Lee Pellegrini)

ton Recreation Department Swim Team.

Holmes, on the other hand, is relatively new to the sport. An accountant in the Controller's Office, Holmes took up swimming three years ago as a way to get in shape and carve out some personal time in her busy day.

recent years.

Still, there is a downside to all those laps in the pool.

"I have these new biceps that get in the way — I can't wear my old jackets because of these," she says, flexing her arms with a chuckle. "Oh well. I must be doing something right."