

Martial Arts on

How to Get a Real Degree from a Real University!

If you're a dedicated martial arts kid with your sights set on heading off to college after you snatch that high school diploma from the hands of the principal on graduation day, you need to think carefully about where you go.

You may have seen magazine ads for any number of "martial arts universities," but they usually turn out to be glorified *dojo* with inflated titles. Don't throw your money away.

There is at least one *real* institution of higher learning, however, that offers *real* college degrees related to the martial arts—and loads of other majors as well. Its name is Radford University, and it just may

be the place you've been looking for.

Located in the city of Radford, in a scenic rural area in southwestern Virginia, RU boasts perhaps the country's only legitimate martial arts curriculum. Dr. Jerry Beasley is the man in charge, and he has some simple advice for anyone thinking about enrolling.

"The best way to prepare is to make good grades in school," Beasley says. "You should be a good student because it's a college first, and that means you have to get accepted. Once you're in, we'll teach you martial arts."

Beasley's emphasis on academic achievement has resulted from just the type of phony ads mentioned above; they lead kids to believe

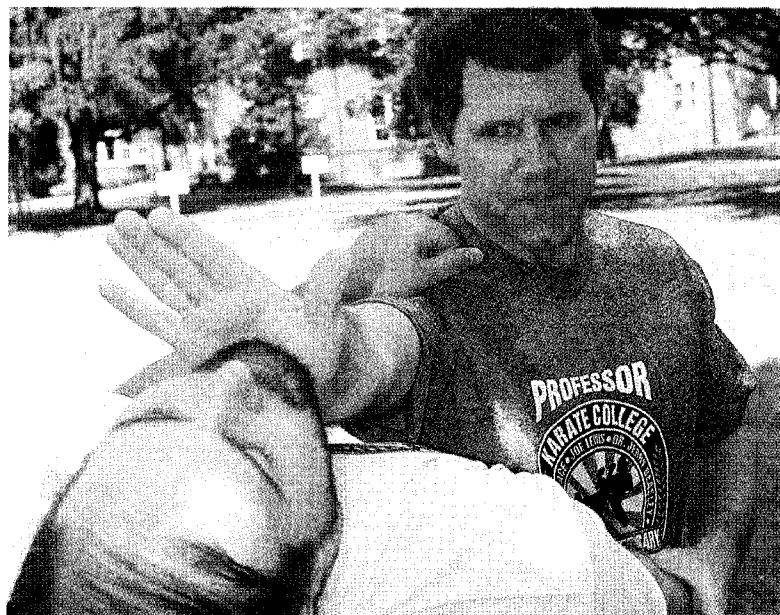
their martial arts background is all that matters because the martial arts are all that's taught. Wrong.

"One of the biggest misconceptions is that being a good martial artist will guarantee your admission to Radford University," he says. "Another problem is that people expect that we have scholarships ready to pay their tuition. Although we're looking into setting some up, we don't have any yet."

You know what that means: student loans, scholarship applications, begging your parents.

Of course, having a black belt in any art can't hurt your chances of getting in. "A lot of the people who come in already have their black belt," Beasley says. "But don't worry

Unlike most "martial arts universities" you may see advertised, Radford University is a real college with real degrees. Dr. Jerry Beasley (right) heads the martial arts program there.



Opposite page, left: Kickboxing legend Bill Wallace is always a popular instructor at the Karate College training camp. Opposite page, right: Willie Johnson (upside-down) is another regular at Karate College.

Campus

by Robert W. Young

if you don't have one when you graduate from high school because approximately 70 percent of the students are not martial artists when they come in. They take lessons here or at one of the various martial arts schools in town. You definitely don't have to be a black belt to get in, but you'll probably get more out of the program if you take lessons before you get here."

Beasley likens his RU program to a martial arts graduate school. "We teach a lot of theory and history," he says. "And it's multi-cultural. That means people come in with a background in one art, and we want them to experience other arts. We stress the common link between arts, the common denominator that

makes them work—as Bruce Lee used to say, 'Using no way as way.' There are a lot of ways to approach combat; there's no one best way. That's our philosophy here."

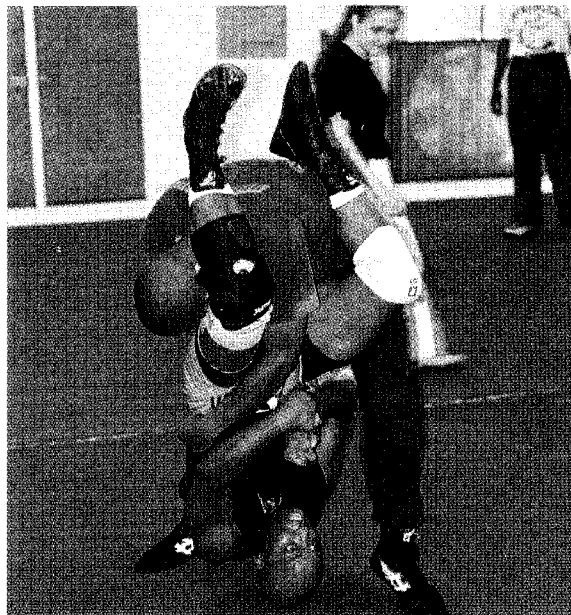
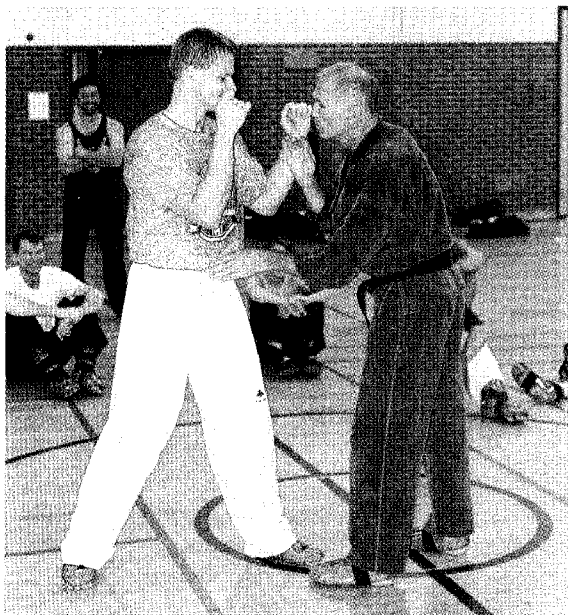
In fact, if you're a Bruce Lee fan, you'll be pleased to know that RU offers, among numerous others, a semester-long course that uses the "Little Dragon's" best-selling book, *Tao of Jeet Kune Do* (Ohara Publications Inc.), as its text. "Some people with no martial arts background take that course because the philosophy applies to all sorts of things," Beasley claims.

Extracurricular activities at RU are guaranteed to keep even the most hyper martial artist occupied. "During the academic year, Joe

Lewis comes in to do a seminar," Beasley says. "We had a student teaching a Brazilian-*jujutsu* program for the past two years. We've had kung fu practitioners, *taekwondo* black belts and even a *silat* master who came in and taught for a while. There are always interesting masters around.

"Students also like to form groups and clubs to exchange ideas and training methods," Beasley continues. "They often get together and spar, or carpool to a tournament or seminar."

Perhaps the biggest and the best extracurricular events at RU are Beasley's annual training camps, the best known of which is Karate College. The year 1997 marked the





credit program. It's separate from the university course requirements."

Right now, you may be thinking: "I love my art, and I don't want to practice any other style. What can I get out of a university program or a training camp like this?" Well, you can get a lot, Beasley insists.

"Students learn to identify different concepts," Beasley says. "If they learn to do a punch or kick in their school, they may not know there are other ways. But eventually they see that there *are* different approaches." They may end up changing the way they do certain techniques instead of just criticizing, he says.

If you're totally convinced now but your parents are not, try this for your own application of the "different approach" methodology: "But dad, it's not just some dime-a-dozen rank certificate I'll be receiving after four years. It's a real university degree in physical education with a martial arts option."

And when you think about it, a degree in physical education (or criminal justice, psychology, history or any other major) will probably prove more useful when you go looking for a job after graduation.

"You get your degree in whichever major you select, but you can also get the martial arts option and all the training that includes," Beasley promises. **BEK**

10th anniversary of Karate College, which remains one of the largest and most successful in the country. Why? "First of all, we have the American Independent Karate Instructors Association for support," Beasley says. "And a lot of instructors work for less than their normal fees, and that helps us keep our price down to less than \$200 for the camp, lodging and meals. That's cheap when you consider that you can learn from 20 instructors, many of whom are world champions."

Quite a few students who are enrolled in RU attend Karate College, and it can help them a lot with their skills, Beasley says. "But the camp isn't set up as a

For information about Radford University's admission requirements and martial arts program, write to Radford University, Admissions Office, Radford, Virginia 24142. For information about Karate College, write to Dr. Jerry Beasley, P.O. Box 402, Christiansburg, Virginia 24073.

Above: Kickboxer Benny Urquidez taught at the 1997 training camp. Below: Full-contact fighter Joe Lewis teaches an annual seminar at Radford University.

