

UI Students Program Robots to Dance

By Larry Burkum, KCRG-TV9



University of Iowa students choreographed a dance for robots and programmed them to do it.

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IOWA CITY, Iowa

Classes at the University of Iowa finish up this week, but it's not just students who are dancing for joy.

Robots are also busting some moves.

Students from the dance, computer science and electrical engineering departments worked together to choreograph a dance for the robots, and program them to perform it.

"The robots don't move like humans move. And so we had to really sort of pick apart exactly how they move their bodies and how the movement mechanisms work for them and then design movement that would work for the robots," said Peggy Mead-Finizio, a graduate student in theater arts.

"(The robots are) easy to personify, and you begin to feel bad for them when they fall over," said Sean Laughead, a senior dance major. When they fall over, the robots actually say "ouch."

Aldebaran Robotics developed the robots for use in research and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) education.