

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

OSHKOSH

Lingua

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Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures
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Amanda Radke, a Japanese student at UWO, gives a presentation about baseball in Japan at the End of the Year Party on April 28.



French student Kaitlin Galow reads an original poem about the lasting effects of the 2010 earthquakes in Haiti.

Department Celebrates End of Another Academic Year

Students and staff of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures gathered for the annual End of the Year Party on Thursday, April 28, in the Pollock Alumni House.

The event began by honoring Spanish professor Charles Thomas, who is retiring after the spring 2011 semester. He has taught at UW Oshkosh for 28 years.

Students from the French, Spanish, Japanese and German programs then gave presentations, including readings of original poems about the 2010 earthquakes in Haiti, a Latin American musical instrument demonstration and a presentation about the history of baseball in Japan.

Dianne Graf also read an original poem she wrote about German

fairytails. She was then presented with the William C. and Clifford W. Sanders Memorial Award Scholarship.

The presentations were followed by awards given to students in each program. The celebration wrapped up with food and drinks provided by the staff while everyone celebrated the completion of the academic year. 🍷

Club Nippon Leads Fundraising Efforts for Japan Relief

In response to the tragic events in Japan, Club Nippon hosted a fundraiser to raise money to donate to the Red Cross Japan Earthquake & Pacific Tsunami Relief Fund. The fundraiser ran through April, which was Asian Heritage Month. Students and staff could receive a button with Japan-related phrases and images in exchange for a donation of \$1

or more. These images included "Ganbatte Nippon" (Good luck, Japan), a sakura flower and a daruma doll, all with text stating they had donated to the relief fund.

Club members sold these buttons in classes and at campus events. The club's president, Kelly Potratz, said the response was great and the club

was able to raise about \$300.

"Everyone who participated was really excited about helping and getting a button out of it," Potratz said. "Although Japan is so far from the U.S., people seem to have a connection to the country and really cared about trying to support them in any way they could." 🍷

Spanish Classes Offered for Native Speakers

Spanish classes are very popular at UWO, but many students only know about classes that teach Spanish as a second language. However, there are a few classes that focus on improving native speakers' language skills, too.

Michael Matos and Emanuel Salinas, students at UWO, both grew up speaking Spanish at home. Because they have received most of their formal education in English-speaking schools, they have never learned the

proper grammar rules of their first language.

Now they have the chance to take classes that focus on grammar and are taught in a way that responds to their needs as native speakers.

"I speak slang Spanish," Salinas said. "So when I write in Spanish I make some simple mistakes. These classes teach you how to speak and write Spanish correctly."

Aside from learning proper grammar, Matos said he likes these classes because they keep his language skills strong and help him stay connected to his family's culture.

"These classes help me keep my roots," Matos said. "We're always using English at school, so you kind of put Spanish on the back burner. When you don't use it as much you make more errors."



Catching up with Dianne Graf

After being featured in the Fall/Winter 2010 edition of *Lingua* for her study abroad experiences and passion for German fairy tales, Dianne Graf's life has turned into somewhat of a fairy tale itself.

Graf has a bachelor's and master's degree in English and had previously been teaching upper-level high school English classes, which is where her interest in fairy tales began. That interest led to her studying German at UWO and participating in a study abroad program to Germany in summer 2010.

She will finish her BA in German in May 2011 and then relocate to Berlin, Germany to continue her career as an educator.

The study abroad trip to Kassel, Germany had such an impact on Graf that she was motivated to find a teaching position that would give her the opportunity to live and work in Germany.

During an Internet search one night, Graf stumbled upon a job opening for a teaching position at a college prep high school in Berlin, Germany.

She had only two and half days before the deadline to submit her application, which was a daunting task

considering the application process required a handwritten autobiography, which she wrote auf Deutsch.

A week later the school confirmed her application materials had been received, and Graf was invited to interview.

She had to travel to Waterloo, Iowa to meet with two principals from the school. Luck would have it that the date of the interview coincided with the terrible blizzards the Midwest received in early February.

However, through planning ahead and with some help from a neighbor and his snowplow, Graf's trip to Iowa was successful, and she was able to meet with the principals on Feb. 3.

After the interview, she returned to her hotel room, and a short time later Graf received a phone call from the principals.



Graf reads an original poem about German fairy tales at the End-of-Year Celebration.

"I was sitting in my hotel room that night, and three and a half hours after the interview, they called," she said. "They said we know what we want and we want to offer you the job."

Graf said she all but went into shock upon hearing the news.

"What an incredible opportunity – to live and work in Berlin, one of the most wonderfully exciting historical cities in Germany, in the world," she said.

Her life since receiving the news has been filled with packing, downsizing her possessions and making travel and living arrangements. She said that her new school has been very helpful in this process.

Despite the tremendous task of relocating to a foreign country, Graf said she has no apprehensions because of her sense of adventure and love of Germany.

"Last summer, when I stepped off the plane in Frankfurt, I felt like I was home," she said. "I don't know how to explain it. There was just something about Germany that was so familiar to me."

(See "Graf" page 4)

Love of Language Leads to Variety of Study Opportunities

Catherine Wrucke entered UW Oshkosh in September 2008 planning to study international studies with an emphasis in global and national security and a minor in Japanese. Since then, she has fallen in love with the German language, expanded upon her Japanese skills and is considering adding Russian to the list of languages she is studying. Wrucke has studied abroad in Japan through KCP International and is currently studying in Marburg, Germany through the Wisconsin-Hessen Exchange program. She is now majoring in German with a minor in Japanese, and she plans to add a major in international studies before she graduates.

Q. How did you become interested in studying language?

I grew up for the better part of my childhood in California, where Spanish was mandatory starting at the fifth grade. I was more interested in languages that were so bizarre, so “out there,” that people would want to ask me why I would bother learning it! Japanese became a very early love for me. Several years later, living in Wisconsin and irritated that I didn’t have the option to learn Japanese in school, I started teaching myself.

Q. Why and how did you choose your educational path?

My need to understand languages somehow became my career at UWO, and as a student, I couldn’t let that go to waste. In the beginning of 2009, I started to plan my first trip studying abroad. I loved German, but felt that, with only a semester under my belt, I was hardly qualified to study in Germany. With Japan it was different. I knew I had wanted to go to Japan since I was little. The food, kimono, the architecture – it was all very alluring. So I picked a program I found online – KCP International – and filled



Wrucke has been able to enjoy multiple trips abroad because of her passion to learn. She is currently studying in Marburg, Germany, where she hopes to receive an internship and remain for the summer. Photo courtesy of Catherine Wrucke.

out the paper work.

Q. How did you decide to do a second study abroad program?

After going to Japan, I finally sat down and realized that I needed to go to Germany, and soon. I was going to be a junior, and, honestly, when else would I find the time to go? I was directed to choose UWO’s Wisconsin-Hessen Exchange program to Marburg for its flexibility. So far, the program has been amazing despite a few ups and downs. Not to scare people from studying abroad, but every study abroad program is going to have some hiccups. Japan and Marburg are no different.

Q. What have you learned from your study abroad experiences?

I’ve gained an amazing amount of experience from these trips studying abroad, and I’m not boasting. Studying abroad teaches you not only new skills to learning a new language, but it helps you invent new ways to cope with change in environment, people

and culture. It’s about personal enlightenment, I suppose. And I think I’ve gained some of that enlightenment – something I never thought I’d say!

Q. What advice would you give to students who are considering studying abroad?

To make a study abroad trip truly successful, you need to figure out why studying abroad is so important to YOU. Not what you hope to gain, but what you hope to achieve through yourself and your own hard work. I heartily encourage any and everyone to study abroad.

Q. What are your plans for the future?

I’m currently underway through an organization to intern here in Germany this summer. Unfortunately, the job market is tight and I can at this point only cross my fingers and wait. What I hope to do with German, Japanese and (sometime soon) International Studies is a mystery even to myself. I’ve tried ROTC with hopes of working in intelligence. I’ve considered ditching all of it in favor of being an art major, and I’ve considered adding Russian to the amount of languages I’m studying. It’s chaotic, but I’m not backing down. I love languages and I love studying national and global security. Although my future is not set in stone, I want to enjoy my time doing whatever it is that I do. With such a motivated institution as UW Oshkosh and the support of the Foreign Language Department and the Office of International Education, I’m positive I will have no problem liking wherever it is I end up.

Who knows, I might just end up teaching languages!



Spotlight: Charles Thomas

Thomas retires after 28 years as UWO educator

During his 28-year career at UWO, Dr. Charles Thomas has been an educator, Spanish Club adviser and helped organize Hispanic Heritage Month, all while encouraging students to “dare to be different and find a job they love,” he said.

Thomas received the Teaching Excellence Award in 1992, something he said was one of the proudest moments of his career. He has also translated more than 50 plays, three novels and various short stories and poems. His musical adaptation “Daylight Spirits,” for which he wrote lyrics for nine original songs, was chosen as one of five works for a stage reading in London in 2003 through a contest sponsored by Mercury Music.



After retiring, Thomas said he will continue to translate new works, possibly teach some classes, promote his musical and do volunteer work.

Graf (cont. from page 2)

Graf said if people take any advice from her, she would like it to be to never limit yourself and always follow your passions.

“Studying the German language has opened many doors that I never knew existed. Initially, I wanted to learn the German language for me; little did I know it would lead to this incredible opportunity.”

New Course for Fall 2011: Spanish 300: Conversaciones culturales

This is a conversational course based on an introduction to the cultures of Spain and Latin America, past and present, through readings, audiovisual materials and contextualized activities. This course will help students improve their communicative skills in Spanish and build vocabulary within a cultural context.

Spotlight: Club Nippon

A look at Japan Week events, April 18-22



Students participate in an laido sword demonstration as part of Japan Week in the Reeve Theater on April 19.



A Japanese-style game show held by Club Nippon on April 21 attracted students for a night of fun and crazy antics.

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Department website:

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