

## Graduate Student Association becomes official

by Mandy Potts - Tuesday, October 22, 2013

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/29863/graduate-student-association-becomes-official/>

Reginald Parson will tell you that life as an undergraduate student and a graduate student are quite different.

Parson recently made the transition from undergrad to master's student. Now at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, he's working toward his degree in public administration. He's also involved in UW Oshkosh's newest student association--the Graduate Student Association--as the co-secretary.

The [Graduate Student Association](#) was formally recognized as a student organization by the Oshkosh Student Association Oct. 1.

"Now that I am a graduate student I understand there is a significant amount of difference between life as an undergraduate and a graduate student. Undergraduate students tend to have more resources available to them immediately. Some undergraduates are 18-22 years old with the exception of a few. Some graduate students have families, careers and other obligations," Parson said. "Some graduate students are returning to school for the first time in 10-20 years. Graduate students have different needs and GSA will allow graduate students to have a place to congregate with their peers and have a social outlet and a way to gather resources."

The underlying goal of the new student association, according to the group's adviser Marci Hoffman, is to create more visibility on campus of graduate students. Traditionally, UW Oshkosh's culture has revolved around its undergraduate population.

"There are more than 1,200 graduate students at UW Oshkosh. They are a big part of this campus and a lot of people don't really realize they are here," said Hoffman, who is glad to be a "point person" to the students who are part of the Graduate Student Association.

Hoffman said many graduate students come to UW Oshkosh from different counties and states, which means they really do come to UW Oshkosh alone. UW Oshkosh's Graduate Student Association is one of the first graduate student-focused student organizations in the UW System.

"Graduate students will now have representation and a voice because of GSA," Parson said.

Hoffman said she's excited to see the ways the students involved with the student group are pulling together to connect. Recently, they gathered to attend the annual Fish Fry on the Fox, for Homecoming's Tent City and for a recent trip to High Cliff State Park. They're also hopeful to plan events and celebrations in the future as a place for comrade and to gather.

"The GSA is a really good way for students not only to connect, but also to mentor each other," Hoffman said. "They can talk about careers, talk through PhD programs and in general talk about their futures."

Hoffman said that the process of forming the student organization wasn't easy, but now that it's up and officially running, very worth it.

"Marci has been a great adviser. She's very willing to give us her honest views on ideas that we propose," said Parson. "Marci has multiple responsibilities working in the Graduate Studies office and she still takes time to assist us in meetings and help us prepare our first budget."

Parson said he really looks forward to working with Hoffman to grow the student association. He's also thankful, he said, for Greg Wypiszynski's guidance and support. Wypiszynski is the director of graduate services at UW Oshkosh.

"It's good to know that we have so much experience to look to with Greg and Marci in our corner," Parson said.

Learn more:

- [Graduate student organization being developed at UWO](#)
- [Graduate Studies at UW Oshkosh](#)
- [Oshkosh Student Association](#)