

## **Host of activities planned to commemorate, recognize Black History Month**

**by Derek Paulus - Friday, February 01, 2013**

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/24912/host-of-activities-planned-to-commemorate-recognize-black-history-month/>

Every February, the nation comes together in remembrance and celebration of black history in the United States, and at the same time each year the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh hosts a series of Black History Month events and activities for both the campus and greater Oshkosh communities.

This year's celebration, organized by the Center for Academic Support and Diversity (CASD) and the Black Student Union (BSU), will kick off with an informational event on Feb.1 from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. in Reeve Memorial Union concourse. A variety of events will follow throughout the month, all of which are free and open to the public.

Byron Adams, a counselor and adviser from CASD, said UW Oshkosh's Black History Month events are an opportunity to recognize such accomplishments and focus on breaking down barriers between students.

"The majority of the events planned for Black History Month are geared to engage the students of UWO and bridge gaps among different cultures and ethnicities while celebrating the cultural heritage of African Americans," Adams said.

Black History Month was officially recognized by the federal government in 1976. Its true origins, however, stretch back to 1926 when black history began to be celebrated for one week in February that recognized the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and abolitionist leader Frederick Douglass.

Each year, a theme is chosen to provide a specific focus for the month's remembrance of black history, with this year's theme being "At the Crossroads of Freedom and Equality: The Emancipation Proclamation and the March on Washington." The theme is in recognition of the 150th anniversary of Lincoln's signing of the Emancipation Proclamation and the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington.

Graduate student Nana Coleman, who is from Ghana in West Africa, is leading her own discussion on the slave trade that she hopes will alleviate tension she has noticed among two student groups—native Africans and African-Americans. The discussion is titled *Connecting the Dots*, and will take place Feb. 4 at 5 p.m. in the Campus Center for Equity and Diversity (CCED).

Coleman said a misunderstanding of slavery's brutal history in America caused many Africans to look down upon African-Americans, believing they had received better opportunities in the United States. She said it wasn't until modern day Africans began traveling to this country that the vicious truth about slavery was realized.

“Student presenters get to clarify the misconceptions people have about Africa-Americans so as to bridge the gap that has been created between the students....” Coleman said.

Coleman is the vice president of the UW Oshkosh Black Student Union (BSU), which seeks to promote cultural awareness on campus and in the community, as well as encourage black students in their education. She said the BSU is an integral part of her discussion and other Black History Month events on campus.

“The Black Student Union members showcase events that led up to slavery and the aftermath conditions to create awareness, as well as showcase the culture of the African-American, which they are proud of,” Coleman said.

BSU President Donavon Johnson will be one of the presenters for an open discussion titled, *The N-Word*. The event, which will take place Feb. 27 at 5 p.m. in Reeve Union 214, will examine the history and influence of this derogatory term in American culture.

Norlisha Crawford, director of African American Studies, said students influence the type of events and topics that are covered during Black History Month. Last year, students requested she lead a discussion on the state of “love” between black students at UW Oshkosh. The discussion, *Black Love & Relationships*, will take place Feb. 18 at 5 p.m. in the Campus Center for Equity and Diversity. Crawford said the topic is one that is only now beginning to be discussed openly and is a form of public expression that is “another healthy legacy of the modern civil rights movement.”

African American Studies also offers a film series each February relating to African-American history and culture. A total of four film showings are scheduled for the month, with discussions to follow.

Adams said the month of February at UW Oshkosh provides a chance to unite as a community and remember the rich history of blacks in the United States.

“... Black History Month is a brief opportunity to showcase how blacks have contributed to the growth of this nation while providing an opportunity for the UWO campus community to come together and celebrate cultural diversity and inclusive excellence,” Adams said.

Additional activities for the month:

- Saturday, Feb. 2; 10:30 a.m. — Second Annual Black History Month Fellowship Breakfast, Multicultural Education Center
- Wednesday, Feb. 6; 5 p.m.—African American Studies Film Series: *Cooley High*, Women’s Center
- Thursday, Feb. 7; 4 p.m.–6 p.m.—MEC Mixer, Multicultural Education Center
- Thursday, Feb. 7; 7 p.m.—LGBTQ Resource Center Series: *Cupid Don’t Know @\$%!*, Reeve Union 307
- Friday, Feb. 8; 11 a.m.—LGBTQ Resource Center Series: *Your Pants & Poetry: An Exploration of Gender, Sexuality & the Spoken Word*, Reeve Union 221
- Friday, Feb. 8; 10 p.m.—MEC Lock-In, Multicultural Education Center
- Monday, Feb. 11; 5 p.m.—African American Studies Film Series: *The Pursuit of Happiness*,

Women's Center

- Wednesday, Feb. 13; 7 p.m.—Black History Month Game Night, Campus Center for Equity and Diversity
- Saturday, Feb. 16; 8 p.m.—Black History Month Open Mic Night, Titan Underground
- Tuesday, Feb. 19; 6 p.m.—African American Studies Film Series: *The Interrupters*, Sage 1239
- Thursday, Feb. 21; 5 p.m.—Black Student Union Meeting, Multicultural Education Center
- Friday, Feb. 22; 9 p.m.—Black History Month Student Dance, Reeve Union 227
- Monday, Feb. 25; 5 p.m.—African American Studies Film Series: *Ballast*, Sage 1239
- Thursday, Feb. 28; 11:30 a.m.—Soul Food Sample Luncheon, Multicultural Education Center

Learn more:

- [UW Oshkosh Black Student Union](#)
- [Center of Academic Support and Diversity](#)