

## **Innovative UWO Web-management major starting fall 2012**

by Kat Pecora - Friday, April 20, 2012

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/18248/innovative-uwo-web-management-major-starting-fall-2012/>

A collaborative effort between the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Colleges of Business and Letters and Science has resulted in the institution's new and unique Interactive Web Management major.

The Interactive Web Management (IWM) major, which was approved in mid-April by the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents, will combine coursework from several departments on campus, including marketing, computer science, journalism and information systems.

“The degree is intended to prepare students for work at the intersection of technology, marketing, public relations and media,” said Carleen Vande Zande, assistant vice chancellor for curricular affairs and student academic achievement. “This represents a blending of all of these disciplines to prepare students to develop and manage interactive media.”

Students will be able to add the major starting fall 2012. The major can be taken as a Bachelor of Business Administration, Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science degree, and requires 42 general education courses and 31 or more credits for the major, depending on the degree type.

“There are only one or two classes that have not yet been offered in the IWM major. We are currently planning on offering them this fall semester, so students who have taken the rest could actually complete the requirements and graduate this December,” said Kathy Lynch, UW Oshkosh senior lecturer.

“Employers are looking for employees who can move between the different disciplines, such as computer science, marketing, information systems and journalism,” Lynch said. “They need someone who can talk the jargon between all the different areas and that’s what IWM is going to do. Social media is expanding in local businesses. Where you might have had only one social media person, now you could see one employee that specializes in CPC (cost per click), another in analytics, and another that is just handling the Facebook and Twitter accounts. A person graduating from IWM will have enough background to be able to communicate with the technology departments, the media experience to manage accounts and also be able to talk to business professionals in terms of project scope and identifying target audiences they’re trying to connect to.”

Melanie Cross, a UW Oshkosh alumna and social media and Web content specialist for the admissions office, said it is important for students to understand social media and especially how a social media campaign works and its components.

“You’re not just a writer, designer, videographer, photographer, programmer or marketer. You’re a little bit of everything,” Cross said.

Cross explained that larger companies will sometimes hire specialists in these areas, but for those who work for a smaller company, more is expected.

“If you're one of those people, you're going to need to know how to write effective Web content, understand key marketing channels, execute basic design and video productions and successfully tie your efforts into the overall strategy of your company,” Cross said.

For several years, faculty members from different colleges and departments have been working to create the new IWM major with the funding from the state growth agenda.

The growth agenda is funding from the state given to universities and colleges to attract new students with pertinent coursework. The fund also gives universities the opportunity to create new programming or degrees.

“It’s really hard to create new programs when you don’t have the money to pay for it, so the growth agenda came up as a way to do that,” said Tim Gleason, journalism professor.

Representing the different departments were Lynch from computer science, Gleason from journalism, Aliosha Alexandrov from marketing and Jakob Iversen from information systems.

Gleason said the team worked closely with professional advisers outside the University in Oshkosh and Boston and have heard positive feedback on the new degree.

“They said this was something really different, something really unique,” Gleason said.

The major is not only unique to the UW System; it is also unique to the nation. Iverson did much of the research for this new major and found there are some degree programs in the nation that are close to the new major but emphasize different disciplines.

“You can imagine a couple years down the road. Other programs that want to do it are going to be looking at us to see how we do it because we’re going to be that model that’s out there,” Gleason said.

Assistant Professor of Marketing Aliosha Alexandrov said reactions to IWM has been favorable and there is support from students and faculty.

“We (had) 45 students signed up for the emphasis, even before the program (was) fully approved,” Alexandrov said. “Several students expressed interest in the major and already plan to graduate in the first year when the degree is available.”

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