

## **Kinesiology student setting the pace with Walking Wednesdays**

by Kristin Stockheimer - Tuesday, April 15, 2014

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/32999/kinesiology-student-setting-the-pace-with-walking-wednesdays/>

When a University of Wisconsin Oshkosh student's relevant real world experience collides with an excellent service for faculty and staff to stay healthy, you know you've got something good going, which is exactly the case with Walking Wednesdays.

The Walking Wednesday initiative, part of UW Oshkosh's Healthy Titan program, is coordinated by UW Oshkosh senior kinesiology major Darcy McMurtagh. The program brings together faculty and staff, who meet outside of Dempsey at noon on Wednesdays, to walk together for about 45 minutes each week.

"It's cool because I can promote being healthy and get to know some of the staff and faculty. I can tell them what the kinesiology program offers and promote things I've learned," McMurtagh said.

Carol Thull, University Dining Office manager, tries to make it out every Wednesday to walk and encourages some of the other members of her team to walk on other days of the week, as well. She also works out on Tuesday and Thursday through the Healthy Titans program, which is a health and fitness resource program open to all University faculty, staff, retirees and their families.

"I just love the fact that I've met other employees across campus and have a chance to connect with other departments through something as simple as walking, which everyone needs more of," Thull said. "I wish we could get even more people to commit to the great Healthy Titan programs we have here on campus."

McMurtagh's interaction with faculty and staff through sending out emails with healthy tips and communicating with them on Wednesdays has helped her prepare for her clinical through the Healthy Titans program, she said. Her clinical experience will allow her to work with UW Oshkosh campus community members to help improve overall wellness.

"I definitely feel like it is hands-on, real world experience because you are getting clients and they are all very different. Even with coordinating the walking, it's benefiting my overall skills to interact with people besides the people you just know in class," McMurtagh said.

The skills learned from the coordination efforts of Walking Wednesday and clinicals help students like McMurtagh prepare for post-college jobs and careers. In fact, the previous coordinator for Walking Wednesdays, Tori Strutz, has applied what she learned through her previous experience coordinating the weekly walking group at Kimberly Clark, which is now where she has a full-time position.

Strutz said her experiences through Walking Wednesdays, classes, shadowing and volunteer opportunities have all benefited her at Kimberly Clark. Each step of the way, she learned skills that helped her prepare for an occupation that will challenge her and get her out of her comfort zone, she said.

"Working with a variety of people, and challenging yourself out in the real world isn't easy, but once you

become more comfortable, you become more confident. Getting the experiences and putting yourself out there are hard things to do in life, but in the end it can be so rewarding,” Strutz said.

Strutz and McMurtagh are the first two students who have led the relatively new Walking Wednesday program at UW Oshkosh; the program began in the summer of 2013 when UW Oshkosh staff member Amanda Bain grouped together about 20 people for the Fox Fitness Challenge.

“I’m a pretty active person so I wanted to do something to help others and just make them aware of another opportunity that they could do and try to do something for my division to help them come together a little bit more and to get away from their desk,” Bain said.

This Fox Fitness Challenge is put on by the Winnebago County Health Department and encourages people to participate in a minimum of 30 minutes cardiovascular exercise on a certain day to be eligible for participation prizes.

Through the organization of the Fox Fitness Challenge, George Paul, UW Oshkosh network cable technician, was motivated to turn physical activity into a weekly activity on campus. Interest sparked with faculty and staff and now there is an email list comprised of about 50 participants, which is now known as Walking Wednesdays.

“My idea of Walking Wednesday, and other things I have been involved with on campus, is to get staff and faculty away from their desks and see the campus and surrounding areas. By taking a different route every week, we are able to see all areas of the UW Oshkosh campus and also be able to walk a large part of the city,” Paul said.

Bain agrees with the idea of getting people on campus active and healthy.

“I think that UW Oshkosh does a great job through the Healthy Titans program and other things on campus to make exercise a priority and to give people opportunities to get healthy. I think that they really try to instill that in the campus culture, which is nice,” Bain said.

Learn more:

- [Healthy Titans](#)
- [UW Oshkosh earns 'Well Workplace' GOLD](#)