

Omani students 'graduate' from UWO program

by Mandy Potts - Friday, July 06, 2012

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/19781/omani-students-graduate-from-uwo-program/>

In many ways the students from Oman's University of Nizwa are no different from the students at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh.

Both are eager and anxious to learn, forward-looking and thinking and have the desire to be at the forefront of higher education. And at the forefront is exactly where the Omani students who have been studying at UW Oshkosh for the past five weeks as part of the 'Global Horizons' program found themselves on July 6.

“You are what we in the United States call ‘pioneers,’” said Perry Rettig, associate vice chancellor of faculty and academic staff affairs, at a special commencement reception held for the students.

More than 20 University of Nizwa students have been studying at UW Oshkosh for several weeks as part of a business cultural exchange program partnership. Their commencement reception at Reeve Memorial Union provided what most similar ceremonies do; cheers and smiles, certificates, words of wisdom and many photos to capture every memory possible before their departure from Oshkosh.

Omani student Halima Al Wahaibi spoke fondly of her time at UW Oshkosh and of the program, which facilitated studies in business and offered a global learning experience.

“This is an amazing chance, an amazing opportunity,” she said. “Every day we learned a valuable lesson that makes you up get up and move on.”

Jeff LaVake, senior lecturer at UW Oshkosh, spent five weeks teaching the students through his Introduction to Business and Organizational Behaviors classes. Among LaVake’s favorite memories of the group was “sharing what we know about language and culture.” LaVake said he learns a lot from the students by teaching them.

This is the second summer LaVake has taught as part of the exchange program; it’s also the second year University of Nizwa students have studied at UW Oshkosh as part of the partnership.

The partnership truly dates back to UW Oshkosh Chancellor Emeritus John Kerrigan’s mid 1990s trips to Oman as an academic consultant on behalf of the U.S. State Department. Kerrigan helped the University of Nizwa’s visionaries and founders develop a higher educational institution that, since 2004, has grown from 1,000 students to more than 8,000. A first group of University of Nizwa students visited in the summer of 2011.

“One of (University of Nizwa leaders') missions is to help their students prepare for leaving university and going into a globalized world,” said Mickey Goggin, program coordinator. “This helps them get a perspective and helps them meet their mission. They are similar to us in that way, they are preparing their

students for a global marketplace; this is a chance for them to live it.”

Goggin and University administrators are excited for the future of the partnership and look forward to the day when UW Oshkosh students travel to the University of Nizwa for their own cultural experience.

“We see many more opportunities in the future for both universities,” said Rettig. "So many opportunities exist for both of our communities."

Read more:

- [Petri meets Omani students visiting UWO](#)
- [UWO-Nizwa partnership prospers; Omani students arrive for summer program](#)