

STEP interns help students choose UWO

by Matt Hietpas - Tuesday, October 23, 2012

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/22416/step-interns-help-students-choose-uwo/>

High school students have a lot of decisions to make before they graduate, with one of the most important rooted in a question: “Where should I attend college?”

Lucky for students who have their sights set on – or interest piqued by – the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. Here a talented team of students, faculty and staff in the admissions office helps to showcase all UW Oshkosh has to offer, helping make the decision to attend the state’s third largest public institution an easier one.

Melanie Cross, UW Oshkosh admissions social media and Web content specialist, employs Deniz Cakmak, Nathan Stepanek and Jenell Riesner in the campus admissions office through the Student Titan Employment Program (STEP). The team helps her utilize social media to connect with potential and current students.

“It helps potential students as well as students that already go here to connect more with our University and be proud to go here,” said Cakmak, a senior studying journalism. “For incoming students we like to put a lot of information out there that they might need to know.”

One of the projects Cross’s STEP team produces, under the leadership of radio-TV-film student Stepanek, is a series of YouTube videos, which are aimed at featuring various aspects of and activities on the UW Oshkosh campus.

One of the newest videos produced by Stepanek is a parody of the popular song *Gangnam Style*; the video has more than 7,500 views. The video features a man with large headphones on, dancing to the song in a ‘90s-style outfit. The parody video was a promo for the admissions video blog series called GO2UWO. Blog entries are created by the STEP students. The short multimedia posts help prospective students answer commonly asked questions.

<http://youtu.be/aSg8iWqJ3a0?hd=1>

If the online feedback is any indication, the videos are a hit. On the *Gangnam* parody, one YouTube user zeroing in on the student-star commented: “I didn’t know that the Fresh Prince went to UWO.”

No -- no Fresh Prince here. But UW Oshkosh is home to many students with a story to tell.

“The students really take charge of the project from writing the lyrics to coordinating filming to singing and recording,” Cross said. “I help them make sure they stay on the right track and offer suggestions; but really, that’s their thing.”

Cross also has each STEP student maintain a public figure Facebook page to help share messaging where

prospective students are.

“I run my own Facebook page *Deniz at UWO* and keep it up to date with information that would interest potential incoming students,” Cakmak said. “It’s taught me how effective social media can really be as long as it’s used correctly.”

The Admissions office's Facebook page has more than 2,200 likes, more than 400 followers on Twitter and more than 35,000 views on YouTube during the past two years.

“I would like to hope that it's helped bring in more students,” Cakmak said. “I know every time we put out a new music video people get really excited and love to watch them.”

Cross said each student tends to gravitate to certain areas of production, but ultimately the students work together to make a product that potentially attracts high school student to UW Oshkosh.

“I work to make sure students are doing jobs that relate to what they want to do after graduation but I also try to give them a background in related fields,” Cross said.

The students are given the opportunity to learn different areas in their major and even associated material, which they may not learn in their classes.

“I’ve learned so much through my 16 months in the admissions office,” said Riesner, a senior studying interactive Web management and marketing. “Through my experiences through work I have been able to excel in the classroom due to the hands-on experience I have that others may not.”

Meanwhile, the UW Oshkosh admissions office benefits from the work the students do through STEP, Cross said.

“We could not do what we do without them, and I am so thankful for the opportunity to work with these students every day,” Cross said. “It’s a great program and I am so proud of UW Oshkosh for continuing to dedicate resources toward it.”

Cakmak said her favorite part of being employed through STEP is the people she has been able to work with while still creating career portfolio products.

“I get to learn so much and have fun while doing it,” Cakmak said. “I love that STEP gives students the opportunity to get not only get a job on campus, but it also helps you get involved on campus and learn more about what UWO has to offer.”

The Student Titan Employment Program (STEP) offers students quality educational experiences while providing faculty and staff members with needed assistance in areas such as media services, student-faculty research, supplemental instruction, library assistance, instructional technology and academic computing support and Web page development and maintenance.

Learn more:

- [UW Oshkosh Admissions](#)