

## **Students, faculty engage in Sign Language Club**

by Audralynn See - Tuesday, March 15, 2011

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/10145/uwo-students-faculty-engage-in-sign-language-club/>

The Sign Language Club at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh is a fun way to get involved, gain experience and interact with participants of all skill levels.

The Club's curriculum, the Bravo Family video series, is designed to teach the basics of American Sign Language through vocabulary, culture and grammar. There are two separate clubs, which learn two different sets of vocabulary but both work on basic grammar skills. The groups meet Tuesdays from noon to 1 p.m. (Clow 19) and Wednesdays from 3 to 4 p.m. (Nursing Ed 29).

Tom Fischer and Denise Clark, coordinators of the Sign Language Club, said it is a great change of pace for students and they are always eager to learn more. "They push us as well," Fischer said of the current students, faculty and staff that attend the weekly meetings.

For each of the weekly meetings, there have been about 15 to 20 participants. Fischer and Clark agreed that the continued interest was mainly due to the liveliness of the club sessions. "The energy that the group gives off is great," Fischer said.

The weekly sessions usually begin with the curriculum videos, showing different scenarios, vocabulary or culture. And each session ends with a jam when the group learns to sign a popular song such as, "Party in the USA," by Miley Cyrus or "Love Story," by Taylor Swift. These songs change every week.

"The songs seem to bring the guard down and make it easier to relax a little bit," Fischer said.

Participants of any skill level are welcome to attend the weekly meetings and there is usually a good mix of beginning to more advanced members.

"I think it helps to have a mix of both," Clark said. "I used to be fluent but lost some skills over the years. Doing this provides an ongoing venue to practice in."

No matter what your skill level, the curriculum helps improve a very useful skill. Once a participant attends two-thirds of either session, they receive a certificate of participation that is a great addition to a portfolio or looks great in a job interview.

"It really gives credence that the student has been committed to this experience," Clark said. "It's a culture within our bounds."

[View images from Sign Language Club in 2009.](#)