

## **UWO offers first civic engagement program in Wis.**

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<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/7630/uwo-to-offer-first-civic-engagement-program-in-wis/>

A new academic program at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh — the first of its kind in the state — will help students become effective leaders who make positive contributions in their professions and communities.

The new civic engagement minor and emphasis will be offered through UW Oshkosh's political science department starting in spring 2011. Students now can register for the first course, "Essentials of Civic Engagement," which teaches how to analyze and navigate the policy process. The course has been designed to be both inspirational and practical and will require students to job shadow a community leader.

"Involvement in the community is not a side project for UW Oshkosh; it is our lifeblood. The University exists to benefit the state of Wisconsin, and we take that mission very seriously," said David Siemers, a political science professor who led the effort to create the minor."

"Students come to college to learn, but they also should find a sense of purpose in life — a calling. Civic engagement is one way to inspire students and instill in them the skills they need to effectively pursue their passion and effect real change in the world," Siemers said. "Successful civic engagement requires the development of knowledge, skills and a sense of how values can be mobilized to drive community organizations and public policies. In short, civic engagement moves people from having ideas to having the skills to do something about it."

The intellectual and practical skills that students will acquire in the civic engagement minor reflect what a recent national Association of American College and Universities (AAC&U) survey of employers identified as most important in the workforce, such as complex problem solving, critical thinking and analytic reasoning.

- Read more about the AAC&U employers' survey at [www.aacu.org/leap/public\\_opinion\\_research.cfm](http://www.aacu.org/leap/public_opinion_research.cfm).

"Many students already are involved in service projects and volunteerism; however, today's workplaces demand an even broader set of intellectual skills beyond a traditional major," Carleen Vande Zande, assistant vice chancellor for curricular affairs and student academic achievement, said.

"Majors across all fields call for the development and application of this knowledge. The completion of a minor in civic engagement will provide students with additional opportunities to apply what they know from their major to solve problems, think critically and become engaged beyond campus," Vande Zande said.

Braden Frederickson, an education major at UW Oshkosh, said there was no better time than the present

to implement the civic engagement program.

“The civic engagement minor is not only a great addition to a student’s resume, but it also is a necessity for society,” Frederickson said. “While some have given up on the younger generation, this area of study proves there are still people who value service to the community, state and nation.

“By adding the civic engagement minor to a portfolio, you benefit yourself, your school and your society,” Frederickson said.

UW Oshkosh offers numerous leadership and volunteer opportunities for students, including the annual Hands on Oshkosh program and Alternative Spring Break, which sends students throughout the country to help those in need. Additionally, UWO’s chapter of the American Democracy Project focuses on higher education’s role in preparing the next generation of informed, engaged citizens to participate in a democracy.

“The civic engagement program demonstrates how the University promotes the ideals and values of democracy,” Chancellor Richard H. Wells said. “The new minor and emphasis is an excellent example of how UW Oshkosh prepares students to be active leaders in society.”

Added Provost Lane Earns, “I am extremely proud of our new civic engagement program, which provides multi-disciplinary structure that builds upon existing engagement efforts and establishes new platforms for expanded leadership opportunities both on and off campus. The program epitomizes UW Oshkosh’s long-time commitment to the value of broad-based liberal education.”

- For more information about the civic engagement minor, visit [www.uwosh.edu/political\\_science/degree-requirements](http://www.uwosh.edu/political_science/degree-requirements).
- For more information about leadership and involvement programs for UW Oshkosh students, visit <http://reeve.uwosh.edu/involvement>.
- For information about the American Democracy Project, visit <http://www.uwosh.edu/adp>.