



Submitted photo

From left to right, alumna Jill Hampton, alumnus Kevyn Wiskirchen, senior Jenny Rawson and graduate student Jeremy Hess perform at the Truman Talent show during February 2011. The core team, which dances competitively, practices four hours a week and participates in hour-long, weekly group lessons to perfect their dance routines.

Swing dancers share passion

The competitive University Swingers team spreads their love of dance to new members

BY ANNA GRACE
Staff Reporter

Whether it's jitterbugging on The Quad or chalking free lesson advertisements around campus, the University Swingers always are trying to find new ways to share their love for dancing with other students.

The University Swingers competitive team consists of 14 members who qualify after trying out during the spring. Graduate student member Jeremy Hess said team participation consists of group lessons, which are an hour to an hour and a half each week, and two practices lasting two hours each during the week. He said their practices usually are an hour and a half of choreography practice for the two major routines the team learns per semester, then a half hour to rehearse for the lessons they teach that week.

The Swingers attend a competition in Iowa during the spring, which Hess said has been in Des Moines the last two years. The competition has an individual division, in which dancers can dance with either a partner they know or an unfamiliar partner, but Hess said Truman's Swingers focus on the team competition. The team competition consists of a three to four minute routine, which



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The University Swingers pose for a photo after performing at the Kirksville Airshow Sept. 9. The swingers offer weekly lessons to share their passion for dance.

Hess said the team practices for two to three months. There usually are seven to 10 teams from as far away as Arizona and Colorado, Hess said.

"It's been really interesting because in the time I was on the team, it's changed a lot," Hess said.

He said the team has gone from learning from YouTube videos to taking lessons from instructors with a greater focus on technique.

Hess also said the Swingers are an understanding group — they are sympathetic to time conflicts. He said as long

as dancers put in outside work for practice they missed, it's not detrimental.

The competitive team wants to share swing dancing with other students, which Hess said is one reason the club is so enjoyable.

"It's really nice to be continually improving, but the main draw is dancing with new people," Hess said.

The team attracts new members with their free introductory classes, which are available to all students, University Swingers President senior Kyle Eggemeyer said. The general group meets Wednesdays at the small gym in Pershing for lessons followed by a dance. The group usually begins the year with 150 to 300 members but usually ends up with 50 to 70 members, Eggemeyer said. He said the first two lessons are free, but after those, interested students can pay \$13 to receive a semester's worth of lessons or \$20 for a year.

Truman students such as sophomore Hannah Brockhaus, who has been going to the general group for more than a year, said she appreciates the group because it is run by a team and recommends it to anyone interested.

"It is a great way to socialize with lots of people and a fun form of exercise," Brockhaus said.

The team tries to spread the fun of swing dance, but doesn't lose their own close ties.

"With as much time as we spend with each other, you get to know everyone like you're family," Hess said.

Organization doubles in size

Beta Omega Beta's membership doubles after first official rush

BY TAYLOR THOMPSON
Staff Reporter

After recruiting 37 new Roberts this semester, Beta Omega Beta is expanding their sisterhood across campus, President senior Kirsten Self said. Through the use of rush themes such as Bobmageddon, she said the organization has more than doubled its size this semester.

The organization's first official rush week attracted new members, many of which joined because of Beta Omega Beta's distinct differences from more traditional sororities, Self said.

Using events such as Mayan Your Own Business, a game night called Arma-Game-It-On and a Mushroom Cloud themed smoker, Beta Omega Beta has set itself apart from other sororities on campus, Self said.

Such rush events appeal to girls who normally might be turned off by the Panhellenic style of recruitment, but unlike Panhellenic rush, the moment you decide to be a Beta Omega Beta you already are, Self said.

This sense of inclusion separates Beta Omega Beta from sororities that choose to associate with the Panhellenic Council, Self said.

She said due to the group's

recent growth, more people are starting to take notice of them across campus. This increase is beneficial to Beta Omega Beta because it puts their name out amongst other organizations, and it helps to attract future members, Self said.

With a strong focus on service, Beta Omega Beta's community involvement can be seen in charitable organizations across campus. Self said many members choose to volunteer and raise awareness for the Women's Resource Center and Victim Support Services. Such choices of volunteer activity reflect the sense of female independence at the core of the group's identity, she said.

"[We're] pretty much 'go women,'" Self said. "We're pretty awesome in that sense that we want to support fellow females."

Sophomore Ashley Berg, a new member of Beta Omega Beta, already has started to feel more at home with the group. All the members are friends with each other, she said. She said it's an accepting group with a strong sense of sisterhood, even though Beta Omega Beta traditionally has been different from other sororities on campus.

"I don't think our level of sisterhood has anything to do with being involved with other sororities," Berg said. "I think it actually increases our solidarity knowing we are separate from the rest."

Homeschooled students adjust to life on campus

BY EMILY WICHMER
Staff Reporter

Freshman Bethany Boyle's high school football team is undefeated. She was at the top — and bottom — of her class and her mom was her teacher. Boyle was homeschooled.

This year, many students made the transition from a class size of one to a campus of about 6,000. For these students, the transition has been eye-opening.

"I was homeschooled my entire life, kindergarten through twelfth grade," Boyle said. "The first week at Truman [State], I had a bit of a culture shock. I just wasn't used to being around so many people all the time, but it wasn't bad at all. It just makes college so much more exciting."

Boyle said she enjoys the different learning styles from her homeschooling experience, even if it required some adjustment. During her military science class, she said all the hands-on work made this course her favorite class.

Freshman Junia Weatherbie, who also was homeschooled, said she enjoys the community at Truman, too.

"I've really enjoyed talking to people who are so different than me and having conversations about crazy interesting things that I've never heard about," she said.

College has offered new academic experiences to homeschooled students because it has allowed her to enjoy a variety of classes, Weatherbie said.

Weatherbie said her math class helped her discover a new passion for the subject. She said she didn't enjoy math while she was homeschooled because she learned everything from a book. At Truman, she said, her calculus teacher presented the concepts in a new and exciting way. She said she enjoyed it so much, she is now considering becoming a math major.

Even though larger class sizes and active participation in class might take some getting used to, Boyle said there are advantages to homeschooling that have helped students in college. She credits her ability to keep up with assignments to her homeschooling experiences.

"The last two years of high school, my mom just gave me my curriculum and I had to pace myself on it, so I know how fast I can get through stuff," Boyle said. "For example, I know I have to start reading pretty far in advance. I think homeschooling helped me develop study habits and know what I'm capable of."

Sophomore Stephanie Bleikamp said she thinks homeschooling gave her a leg up during college. She said that homeschooled students have to be self-motivated and responsible for their own education. She said the transition to college was easy because of homeschooling. Bleikamp said she has found it easy to make friends.

"There are a lot of cool people here," she said. "It's funny, though — a lot of people know me for a while before they

find out I was homeschooled. They're really surprised and say that I 'don't seem like a homeschooled,' which is probably meant as a compliment."

Boyle said she thinks some people have a stereotype associated with homeschoolers — and not a positive one. She said other people have told her that the 'homeschool stereotype' is someone who doesn't know how to relate to people, is a nerd, only stays in his or her room and doesn't get involved in anything.

"It's a stereotype from a while ago that hasn't been re-defined to what homeschoolers are really like today," she said.

Boyle thinks the "homeschool stereotype" needs to be re-defined, pointing out that homeschoolers are involved around campus.

Boyle is involved with several on-campus groups, including TSODA and University Swingers. She's also applying for Casa Hispánica, the Spanish Romance Language House in Missouri Hall.

"I think a lot of people I've talked to were surprised that I was in band and played soccer in high school, or that I had a graduation ceremony," she said.

Boyle said the Truman community has been welcoming to homeschoolers and recommends the university to any homeschoolers looking at colleges.

"Truman is a great, friendly place where you can enter college and feel just like everyone else," Boyle said. "I love it here."