

# UWSP debuts new live mascot

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It may have been the freshman picnic, but it was McKenzie who made her big debut.

McKenzie, a 2-year-old Pointer rescued from Michigan, introduced herself to the crowd Monday as the college's first live mascot, wearing a University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point bandanna. She'll be at games and activities and even has a pass to roam the halls of the buildings on campus.

"She has authorization to go into the academic buildings," said Rob Manzke, the executive assistant to the chancellor at the university. "I'm sure she'll make her rounds."

He, along with his family, adopted McKenzie. She lives with the Manzke family when not at the university.

Students and existing mascots alike knelt down in a circle to pet McKenzie.

"I think it's fabulous," said junior Heidi Orchard, who is studying communications. "I'm a big pet lover."

The residence hall staff members said other universities might not be able to have live mascots, citing the Badgers as an example.

Manzke described McKenzie as curious and high-energy. They tried to paint her toenails with the school colors, he said, but she



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Rob Manzke brings McKenzie, the new live UWSP mascot, for introductions to the students Monday on the Old Main lawn.

wouldn't sit still.

The black and white dog was originally housed in a Humane Society in Kentucky, where she faced possible euthanasia. She traveled to Michigan via the rescue group Pointers From Oz, where she was adopted by Manzke.

Linda Bunnell, UWSP chancellor, said she was "thrilled" with having a live mascot, and thinks of McKenzie as a "pet away from home."

"This is just a dream come true for me," she said.

But McKenzie wasn't always a McKenzie. Her original name was Hope.

"I just couldn't say no to Hope," Manzke said.