

UW-Stout: Engineering technology student interns at company helping to stop COVID-19

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University of Wisconsin-Stout [engineering technology](#) junior Matt Rotter found himself this summer, as part of the Cooperative Education and Internship Program, helping supermarkets and other industries strive to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Rotter, of Green Bay, was a co-op student at [PureChem Systems](#) that builds [PureCart](#), a shopping cart sanitizing system. PureCart is about a four- to five-foot shell with an opening that shopping carts are pushed through to sanitize them. The cleaning solutions used are effective against COVID-19 and other viruses, bacteria, algae, mold and fungus. The chemical used is nontoxic and child safe.

Rotter was an engineering technician at the Green Bay-based company. He was building PureCart and a backpack spraying system called MobileMist. [MobileMist](#) has cordless operation and a hand wand that allows for the disinfection of gyms, all types of offices and industrial spaces.

“I got to work with developing upgrades based on customer feedback and service,” Rotter said.. “I enjoyed the hands-on experiences of building and solving problems we would encounter.”

One of improvements he helped with was to add a switch that automatically fed shopping carts through PureCart. He also helped add an indicator light to alert users when the misting chemical product was running low.

Rotter also helped develop packaging to ship PureCart more easily and develop a

smaller MobileMist.

“It was a lot of fun,” Rotter said of the co-op. “We were nonstop busy. I built probably 150 of our smaller machines, It was nonstop people asking questions and finding ways to build faster. I would help pitch for sales. With COVID-19, it was an easy sell.”

Rotter liked that his first experience in sales was a product companies needed.

“It felt more like I was trying to help someone rather than just make a sale,” he added. “It was about helping other businesses stay open and stay safe.”



PureCart is a grocery cart sanitizing system.

The co-op with PureChem Systems was a great opportunity, Rotter said. “I got to see the entire business from the development to building and selling it,” he noted.

Rotter also did a co-op internship the summer of 2019 at [Associated Machine Design](#), which is a parent company of PureChem Systems. AMD provides paper finishing equipment and engineering services for all paper, tissue and nonwoven

markets. AMD was started in 1999. The PureCart product line began around 2010.

Jeff Taylor, owner of both companies, said it was great to have Rotter work with the companies. "He always asked good questions and brought a fresh perspective to the things he was doing," Taylor said. "I have known him for many years, and it is great to see him take on new challenges. Matt will be very successful at whatever he chooses to do after college."

Taylor said he was pleased Rotter enjoyed the internships and said offering a variety of jobs is important for student interns.

"As a small company we ask our teammates to be flexible and adapt to changing situations quickly so we can serve our customers to the best of our ability," Taylor said. "This year especially you have to adapt to survive. I think an internship should incorporate a wide variety of roles and activities, not just doing a single thing over and over. Everyone has gifts and talents, and this is a good time to help find out what you like and what you may not like as much. Usually the things you like are the things that you may be better at doing."

"It is also important to get an understanding there are other activities that may also need to be done as part of a particular job that may not be as enjoyable but may be necessary," Taylor added. "An internship is also chance to do something challenging, or out of their comfort zone, to see what they can do. It is OK to stumble a bit or even fail at something; it is more important what they do after that happens and what they learn. Each time we challenged Matt to try something new, he jumped right in and we both learned from it."

Rotter, who is an offensive tackle on the Blue Devils football team, decided to pursue a degree in engineering technology because he liked the versatility of the program. "I enjoy being able to do hands-on projects that not only allow me to do computer modeling but also allow me to interact with people and build things," he said. "It gives me that full spectrum of working with shop people and customers and being the bridge between them."



Matt Rotter

Rotter plans to do two other co-op experiences before graduating and encourages other students to experience as many co-ops as they are able. "It gives you the ability to experience different kinds of people, work and companies," he said.

UW-Stout Cooperative Education and Internship Program students are ready to start their careers, said Bethany Henthorn, program coordinator and career counselor.

“Matt, like many other UW-Stout students, is career-ready and able to work during this pandemic to make a positive impact by providing workplace solutions,” Henthorn said. “UW-Stout Co-op and Internship students are able to roll up their sleeves, dig in and make a difference in companies across the country and internationally.” The [Cooperative Education and Internship Program](#) is an eight-week minimum paid work experience related to students’ study areas that balances classroom theory with periods of practical, hands-on experience prior to graduation. The program is centrally coordinated through [Career Services](#) in cooperation with academic departments. CEIP serves students who also are in unpaid and volunteer positions related to their field of study.

All degree-seeking students, undergraduate and graduate, are eligible. Each of UW-Stout’s 49 undergraduate and 23 graduate programs has an [experiential learning](#) component.

UW-Stout also offers degrees in [computer and electrical engineering](#), [manufacturing engineering](#), [mechanical engineering](#), [plastics engineering](#) and [packaging](#).