

# UW-Stout: Student jobs prepare art and design, STEM students for careers

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Menomonie, Wis. — From dining services to residence halls, technical help to tours, recreation to research, nearly 1,900 student employees across University of Wisconsin-Stout, including 63 first-year students in the Student Jobs Program, are continuing their applied learning in campus jobs and engaging in meaningful work experiences.

“Students employed in meaningful work are more likely to continue through to graduation. This opportunity provides the students a way to feel connected and part of the campus community, not just as a student in the classroom but as a significant contributor to work performed on campus,” said Julie Delikowski, Planning, Assessment, Research and Quality operations program associate.

For three students, campus job experiences have helped prepare them for their desired careers in the diverse fields of illustration, arts administration and medicine.

## **Gaining illustration techniques as a student designer**

Eliana Fergus loves drawing and exploring her many creative talents. Whether developing video game art with her fiancé for their newly released game Everything is Mayo, or posting YouTube videos about at-home printmaking, Fergus is constantly creating.

Fergus, of Minneapolis, is a senior in the graphic design and interactive media program. In her internship as a graphic designer for the Memorial Student Center, she designs posters and other advertising material for MSC’s initiatives and events.

"I chose GDIM because there is a need for good designers in the world," she said. "My classes were crucial in preparing me for my internship. I would be at a loss without the experience I've gained in my various courses, mostly in regard to the Adobe Suite."

Fergus wants to be an illustrator and would love to illustrate children's books someday. Her classes and experiences as a student designer prepare her as she builds her portfolio and strengthens her own library of artwork.

"The program has many helpful classes for a career in illustration, such as publication design and typography. And minoring in studio art gives me the opportunity to try out various media and art styles," she said. "I am constantly coming up with designs for MSC that help me to improve my creative process."

The best part about Fergus' internship is working with her team at MSC, she said. But COVID-19 has changed the team dynamic. All meetings are held virtually and only one person is scheduled in the office at a time to maintain social distancing, making critiques and ideation more difficult.

"Ellie is someone to watch out for. She is an amazingly talented illustrator, artist and designer," said Krista Proksch, MSC involvement coordinator. "While the dynamic of our team has been different this semester, Ellie has continued to push forward and is such an asset to our team. I've been so impressed with her resilience and even-keeled approach to what has been a challenging semester."

To students seeking a creative major, Fergus said, "Figure out what you love to do. Try new things. Make mistakes. Take a breath. It's OK to not have everything figured out." Fergus will graduate in spring 2021.

## **A head start in art administration**

Beck Slack, a senior majoring in studio art, plans to go on to graduate school and seek a career in art administration and curation. His experiences as a gallery assistant at UW-Stout's Furlong Gallery are giving him a head start.

Slack, of St. Paul, is concentrating in photography to explore the experimental side of film photography and video work. He was initially hired as an event photographer for the gallery. The skills he's learning in his studio art and photography classes translate

well to his gallery assistant role.

At Furlong, Slack helps with art installations, research and record maintenance, curation, event planning, framing and matting, gallery maintenance and lighting.

“Being able to do gallery work in an academic institution allows me the time to learn the ins and outs of how professional galleries are run. The Furlong has given me plenty of samples of situations and jobs I’ll run into when working in the art world outside of Stout,” he said.

Renee Carrell, Furlong Gallery assistant director, assigned Slack a special project cataloging and archiving posters, booklets and cards from past events at Furlong and Gallery 209, the student gallery. He’s also logging the items into an online collection. Carrell had been planning to do this for years, and she appreciates Slack’s attention to detail, she said.

“These remnants are really interesting to look through to understand the history of the School of Art and Design,” Slack said, sifting through the collection. “Some of the cards I found even date back to the 1960s. I even found a flyer with my high school art teacher’s name in the exhibit.”

Slack is president of UW-Stout’s Fine Arts Association and hopes to hold an SOAD vintage print sale fundraiser using the duplicate flyers.

Along with his art and art history classes, Slack’s gallery experiences have given him “a better understanding of art and how to talk about it. I can really dive into some of the greater philosophies of life, asking what is beauty and how does one properly communicate what art is?”

His favorite part about working at Furlong is having access to its permanent collection and its selection of historical photographic prints. “It has been very interesting to be able to sit down and analyze a lot of these physical prints. I often find myself in the back rooms falling down the rabbit holes of art history,” he said.

Slack encouraged other fine arts students interested in becoming a gallery assistant to “just go for it. For all of my jobs and internships at Stout, all I had to do was walk in and ask about it. And don’t be afraid to ask for advice from professors and fellow students. There are tons of helpful resources at Stout. You just need to seek them out.”

Slack is a 2020-21 Student Artist in Residence. His works will be on display in Furlong in spring 2021. He will graduate the following fall.

### **Perseverance in research lab is a step towards medicine**

Tyler Luke is interested in all things STEM. This fall, he's has been working in the campus research lab with biology Professor Jennifer Grant and other student research assistants. They collectively research with professors Dmitry Kadnikov and Marlann Patterson.

Luke, of Bloomer, is a second-year student majoring in applied science, concentrating in industrial chemistry and minoring in biology.

"I would love to further my education in graduate school and be a chemical engineer or a professor. I have a strong interest in medicine too, so going on to medical school is an option," he said. "I have a strong love for biology and my studies help me reach the prerequisites for medical school."

He feels his learning experiences conducting undergraduate research in the lab will prepare him for his future.

"We are using all of Stout's innovative technology, including the SEM scanning microscopes and electrophoresis," Luke said. "We are trying to innovate the methods of detection of proteins that are citrullinating by labeling them with biotin through detection methods and using chemiluminescent to see them."

Students have worked on this project in the research lab with Grant through the summer and fall.

Their research is part of the WiSys grant to improve the detection of citrulline. "The perseverance does say something, all despite the pandemic," she said. "Tyler has carried this work all the way forward to show we have the technology working."

Luke enjoys learning about proteins, enzymes and the biochemistry behind them, and his classes allow him to master the skills needed in the research lab.

For students interested in lab research on campus, Luke said, "Be assertive, with the intent to give the research your all. Be strong and know that failure is part of the path to success. Work hard now to be ready for your future in STEM."



UW-Stout is Wisconsin's Polytechnic University, with a focus on applied learning, collaboration with business and industry, and career outcomes.