

UW-Stout: Donation by Green Bay Packaging boosts packaging program

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Menomonie, Wis. — A national leader in the packaging industry has stepped forward to support a national leader in packaging education, University of Wisconsin-Stout.

The George Kress Foundation, part of [Green Bay Packaging](#) based in Green Bay, donated \$180,000 to UW-Stout for an upgraded, interactive packaging classroom and a new high-tech specialty printer.

The gift was celebrated recently with a dedication event in the classroom, room 128 of the Applied Arts Building. The room has been renamed for the company and the George Kress Foundation.

George Kress founded Green Bay Packaging in 1933. The company has 35 facilities in 16 states and Mexico.

UW-Stout is one of only a few schools in the United States, and the only school in the UW System, that offers a [bachelor's degree in packaging](#).

“The George Kress Foundation believes education is the cornerstone to building bright futures and strong communities, and it’s important that we invest in education and provide students with the best experience to set themselves up for future success,” said Michelle Hansen, George Kress Foundation president.

The new room and equipment will “give students a state-of-the-art, hands-on experience that will enhance their education and develop career readiness skills to thrive in the workplace,” Hansen said.

The highlight of the classroom is a new audiovisual system, with speakers, microphones and cameras for interactive virtual meetings, discussions and presentations.

The Mimaki printer allows packaging students to print on a wide variety of materials and 3D objects. This includes objects up to six inches thick made of corrugated, wood, plastic, paper and glass. Students majoring in [graphic communications](#) also will use the printer.

Chancellor Katherine Frank, speaking at the dedication, said new virtual learning and collaboration opportunities are part of the future of higher education. The audiovisual system will help students connect across academic disciplines and remotely with business and industry partners, she said.

[CollegeValuesOnline](#) recently ranked UW-Stout No. 26 in the U.S. for its ties to business and industry and how those ties benefit students.

“What we learned through the pandemic is that we’re going to be doing so much more of this,” Frank said, citing the university’s new [FOCUS2030](#) strategic plan that addresses a post-pandemic learning environment.

“This kind of investment in UW-Stout changes lives, not just now but how we’re moving forward. We must be responsive and nimble,” she said.

The dedication took place during a meeting of the Packaging Advisory Committee, which includes industry professionals. One of the professionals is Rick Luftman, vice president of sales and marketing for Green Bay Packaging.

Also, there was a virtual audience that included committee members, thanks to the new audiovisual system.

“It has been a pleasure working with Green Bay Packaging over the years and making these updates become a reality for the students and university,” said Associate Professor Robert Meisner, packaging program director.

The company and its foundation also have supported UW-Stout and its students over the years. The George Kress Foundation Packaging Scholarship began in 2010. A \$1,000 scholarship is awarded annually to one junior and one senior packaging major from Wisconsin or Minnesota.

Additionally, Green Bay Packaging works closely with UW-Stout's [Cooperative Education and Internship Program](#) through Career Services to provide students hands-on industry experiences and has recruited for many years the university's career conferences.

Willie Johnson, vice chancellor for University Advancement and Alumni Relations, said the "significant gift" highlights one of UW-Stout's strengths and education advantages.

"This donation really is an example of the comprehensive partnerships we establish with our external stakeholders to ensure student success in their education and future careers," said Johnson, who also oversees the Stout University Foundation.

*Started in 1933, **Green Bay Packaging Inc. (GBP)** is a family owned, vertically-integrated company consisting of corrugated container plants, a folding carton facility, recycled and virgin containerboard mills, pressure-sensitive label rollstock plants, timberlands, a paper slitting operation, and a sawmill facility. Headquartered in Green Bay, Wis., Green Bay Packaging Inc. employs over 4,000 team members and operates over 35 facilities in 16 states each with a dedication to innovative development of its products and forestry resources, with a focus on safety, sustainability, quality, and continuous improvement. For more information about Green Bay Packaging Inc., visit www.gbp.com.*

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