

UW-Stout: UW System President Thompson helps students celebrate 70% vaccination rate

Posted on Monday, Oct 11, 2021

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A special visitor helped make Monday, Oct. 11, a day to remember in University of Wisconsin-Stout's fight against COVID-19.

On a mild fall afternoon, students celebrated their 70% vaccination rate with free ice cream during a rally led by UW System President Tommy Thompson outside the Memorial Student Center.

"Thank you to all of you," said Thompson, the former state governor who flew in from Madison for the day. "I'm dedicated to keeping these campuses stay open and making sure that we would be as safe as possible. I know how important education is. I know how important these schools are."

Thompson praised students for reaching the 70% goal on Sept. 29 as part of the UW System's [70 for 70 campaign](#), but he encouraged them to keep going. The vaccination effort is a major reason why the System has largely returned to normal operations with 75% of classes in person this semester, he said.



UW System President Tommy Thompson speaks at UW-Stout on Monday, Oct. 11, during an event to celebrate students reaching a 70% vaccination rate. / UW-Stout

“Get vaccinated, stay healthy and enjoy Stout. It’s the finest polytechnic school, in my opinion, in the country,” he said.

[Another vaccination clinic](#) will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 14, on campus.

Chancellor Katherine Frank, who introduced Thompson and also spent much of the day with him and UW System officials on campus, announced that the student vaccination rate is up to 75% and the faculty and staff rate is 90%, well ahead of the Dunn County rate of 45%.

“Stout is doing great and is helping serve as a model for other universities and the community. We couldn’t be prouder,” Frank said.



Chancellor Katherine Frank, right, and interim Provost Glendali Rodriguez attended the vaccination event with Tommy Thompson. / UW-Stout

Student Taylor Mancl, a sophomore from Wisconsin Rapids majoring in [early childhood education](#), and her friends enjoyed some ice cream and the partylike atmosphere, which included free UW-Stout T-shirts.

“It’s exciting to see things coming back to normal and a chance to celebrate our accomplishment,” said Mancl, who is vaccinated. “The next step is no masks — that would be great.”

Masks are required indoors this fall at UW-Stout.

Eli Lemery, a senior from Galena, Ill., majoring in [retail merchandising and management](#), said he feels safer this semester knowing that most students and employees are vaccinated.

“It means a lot to know people are vaccinated and are being respectful and wearing masks. Last semester it seemed like you didn’t know. I was in a house with eight guys. Everyone got COVID but two of us; I didn’t. I got vaccinated in March,” Lemery said.

Vaccinated students will be entered into a drawing later this fall to win one of several \$7,000 UW System scholarships. UW-Stout will award an additional seven, \$7,000 scholarships to fully vaccinated students through a separate drawing.

Any student who has been fully vaccinated and uploads their information to the university's secure database by Sunday, Oct. 31, remains eligible for the scholarships. Learn more at the ["Do Your Part" Vaccination Incentive Program](#) webpage.



Tommy Thompson listens Monday while meeting during lunch with community officials. / UW-Stout

A day at UW-Stout

Thompson spent most of the day on campus, meeting with numerous university officials and groups and taking a tour. He also held a working lunch at the student center with City of Menomonie, Dunn County and regional officials.

"This is a fantastic campus, and more people need to know about it," Thompson said. "Ninety-eight point eight percent of graduates get a job, the highest of any university in the country. We need to tell the story."

He cited UW-Stout's polytechnic designation. "Stout could be a magnet for the country. There's nothing like it," he said, mentioning that he has a sister and nephew who graduated from UW-Stout.

He recalled three other personal Menomonie connections: working for a paving company for about a month one summer while he was in college; playing a role, while governor, in Sam Walton's decision to build a Walmart distribution center in the city; and also while governor helping break ground for the Stout Technology and Business Park on the city's east side.

Thompson stressed that the universities in the UW System need to be good partners within their area to help each other grow. On that point, Menomonie Mayor Randy Knaack commented that residents need to realize how important UW-Stout is to the community and vice versa.

"Let's grow the city, the area and the university," Thompson said.