

# UW-Stout: Near record number of employers recruiting at UW-Stout Career Conference

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Menomonie, Wis. — At University of Wisconsin-Stout's semiannual Career Conferences, hundreds of employers from across the state, Midwest and country are the norm. The events, with wall-to-wall company recruiters, are acknowledged as some of the largest in the Upper Midwest — one reason UW-Stout has a UW-System-best employment rate for recent graduates of 98.4%.

The Fall Career Conference, which began Sept. 26 and ends Thursday, Sept. 29, has been no exception with a near-record total of 407 companies recruiting, some for multiple days, at the Memorial Student Center.

On Tuesday, designated for manufacturing-related jobs, 183 employers were on hand recruiting students for jobs in engineering, packaging and printing.

Companies from Wisconsin and with facilities in the state on Tuesday included: 3M, Andersen Corp., Ashley Furniture, Colony Brands, Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery, EVCO Plastics, Fastenal, Five-Star Plastics, Foremost Farms, Great

Northern, Green Bay Packaging, Greenheck Group, Harley-Davidson, Jack Link's, Johnsonville, Kimberly-Clark, Kohler, Menasha Packaging, Milwaukee Tool, Nolato Contour, Phillips-Medisize, Plexus, Prent, Sargento Foods, TTM Technologies, Vets Plus, Wausau Supply and Weather Shield.

The demand for engineering majors continues to be strong, one reason for an average starting salary for graduates of more than \$60,000. UW-Stout offers programs in manufacturing, mechanical, plastics, and computer and electrical engineering, along with related programs in packaging and engineering technology.

UW-Stout's Robert F. Cervenka School of Engineering has moved up 40 places — into the top 70 nationally — in the past two years in the U.S. News & World Report rankings for engineering schools without doctoral programs.

The university's engineering programs are the only ones offered at a university in the state north of Madison.

The turnout Tuesday and all week hasn't surprised Bryan Barts, Career Services director. Manufacturing is one of the strengths of Wisconsin's economy.

"A return to prepandemic recruiting on campus, including interviewing requests, is a resounding reflection of our polytechnic value to employers no matter the industry," said Barts, whose office oversees the conferences.

About 1,500 students have visited the events — each day has focused on different career fields

— making the exhibit areas in the Great Hall and ballrooms busy places.

With unemployment low and workforce needs high in Wisconsin and surrounding states, the turnout was a positive sign for students nearing graduation and others seeking a co-op or internship opportunity.

Other focus days have been:

- ☐ Monday — Computing: data software and cybersecurity
- ☐ Wednesday — Construction
- ☐ Thursday — Management: business, hospitality and humanities

Employers are attracted to the type of graduate they find at UW-Stout, Barts said. In addition to the career-focused majors, students' comprehensive education includes liberal arts studies to help build analytical and critical thinking skills.

For example, nearly half of the packaging engineers at Milwaukee Tool are UW-Stout graduates, Barts said.

Students have a required experiential learning component in all majors, such as a co-op or internship. The university's Cooperative Experience and Internship Program set a record in 2021-22 with 1,130 students.

Classes have an applied learning focus, with three times as many labs as classrooms and strong industry partnerships. Most UW-Stout graduates have full-time jobs before or within

one month of graduation. That was true for 74% of the most recent graduates.

Student success is the leading goal of UW-Stout's FOCUS2030 strategic plan. In a recent survey of UW-Stout alumni from 2011 and 2016, 93% of graduates were pleased with the career advice they received, more than 10% higher than the national average. UW-Stout is Wisconsin's Polytechnic University, with a focus on applied learning, collaboration with business and industry, and career outcomes. Learn more via the FOCUS2030 strategic plan.