

UW-Stout: School of Education's Teach Day gives high school students opportunity to 'explore teaching in an interactive way

Posted on Monday, Nov 28, 2022

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Menomonie, Wis. – Nearly 150 high school students from 27 schools around the state attended Teach Day at University of Wisconsin-Stout on Nov. 14.

Hosted by the School of Education, the event is an opportunity for high school students to learn from UW-Stout teacher education students and for university students to practice their skills as future teachers.

"We are thrilled to be hosting so many students from across the state," said SOE Director Deanna Schultz. "The interest in teaching as a future career is exciting to see, and we hope these young people will leave with information and the determination to continue on this career path."

University students led much of Teach Day, with support from program directors. Students shared why they chose the university, why they plan to enter the teaching profession and led breakout sessions where high school students learned about their program of interest. Isabelle Whited, a visiting student from Wausau West High School, joined the technology education group. "I found technology was an area I excelled in. I wouldn't have explored it if it weren't for my teacher Mr. Peterson. I want to help other students explore and excel in technology," Whited said.

High school students learned how to write a lesson plan, which they could take back to their schools and use to teach a class. They also toured campus and met with university students during lunch to talk more about their programs of interest.

Event responds to growing need for teachers

Last year's pilot program focused on family and consumer sciences education; marketing and business education; and technology education. About a dozen Wisconsin high school students attended.

Teach Day, this year, expanded to include nearly all undergraduate SOE programs: art education; early childhood education; family and consumer sciences; marketing and business education; math education; special education; and technology education.

"The expansion resulted in an increase in numbers, especially those interested in early childhood education. The event was also marketed to teachers at the UW-Stout Family and Consumer Education Conference in September, and many of them brought their students to Teach Day," Schultz said.

Students interested in early childhood education and family and consumer sciences made up nearly two-thirds of the attending registrants.

Sarah Korte, a junior in family and consumer sciences, volunteered during Teach Day "because I know that not only do we need teachers, but I love to inspire and encourage others to find what they love to do in life."

Korte was in Family, Career and Community Leaders of America in high school. FCCLA and her family and consumer sciences teacher helped her learn that she loves to teach.

"I love this event because I get to share my passion for teaching, and I get to teach other people about my major and UW-Stout. This event gives people the opportunity to explore teaching in an interactive way," Korte said.

Technology education majors Sam Konieczny and Ben Schmitt also volunteer during Teach Day. Their high school technology education teachers were influential in their decisions to teach.

Schmitt assisted his teacher in high school, working with his classmates and stepping up into a leadership role. "I hope my involvement with Teach Day gives high school students that opportunity to experience teaching for a day and gain clarity about a path to teaching through UW-Stout," he said.

"Teach Day gives high school students who are looking at a career in education a chance to see the other side of the desk and what Stout has to offer them," Konieczny added.

Konieczny believes education is one of the most rewarding careers. "It is the best thing to be working with someone and watch what they weren't understanding click and make sense. And to work and inspire students to find themselves and prepare them for a future in a career that excites them," he said.

Korte, of Wisconsin Rapids, hopes to student teach at Mauston High School before graduating in spring 2024. She plans to teach in central Wisconsin. Konieczny and Schmitt plan to student teach in fall 2023 and graduate that semester. Schmitt, of Somerset, would like to teach in western Wisconsin.

Konieczny, from Oak Creek, a Milwaukee suburb, would like to "go back to the Milwaukee area and give back to the community that helped me get to where I am today," he said. "When I look back at some of the people who made the biggest difference in my life, it was my teachers. For me to think I can make that same difference and influence someone in that way is something that excites me."

UW-Stout's School of Education, housed in Heritage Hall, offers seven undergraduate teaching degrees, as well as postgraduate degrees in career and technical education, education, school counseling and school psychology and eight education certificates and certifications.

SOE programs are among the many workforce-ready programs administered in Heritage Hall, a near-50-year-old building that is scheduled for major renovation after receiving priority approval from the UW System Board of Regents. The project is ranked No. 1 in the Chippewa Valley and No. 3 for UW System academic buildings.