

UW-Eau Claire: Blugolds stay in Chippewa Valley for employment

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About a third of University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire graduates take jobs in the Chippewa Valley, a trend that is helping local businesses meet their workforce needs, according to a survey of graduates.

The [2021-22 First Destination Report](#) indicates that 32% of graduates are employed in the Chippewa Valley, with top employers including Mayo Clinic Health System, Eau Claire Area School District and Marshfield Clinic Health System.

“The increase in new graduates taking jobs in the Chippewa Valley tells me UW-Eau Claire is an asset to the local economy, offering workforce talent that allows local employers to grow their businesses,” says Staci Heidtke, director of Career Services at UW-Eau Claire. “Additionally, students that stay local after graduation financially contribute to our communities in the areas of housing, goods and services.”

The report outlines outcomes for 1,552 Blugolds who received their undergraduate degrees and 184 who received graduate degrees.

More than 98% of Blugolds who graduated with undergraduate or graduate degrees in August and December 2021 and May 2022 are employed or continuing their education. Of those alumni, 81% are employed and 17% are continuing their education.

A total of 97% of employed undergraduates reported that their position is related to their career goal, a statistic that Heidtke says is significant.

“The high number of recent graduates who are employed in positions related to their career goal shows the benefit of a liberal arts education that prepares students for successful careers,” Heidtke says. “Learning experiences on and off campus,

including internships and practical experiences, ready students for a broad range of careers, not just any one job.”

The results of the First Destination Report are “a true testament to the value of a Blugold degree,” says Billy Felz, interim vice chancellor for enrollment management.

“Regardless of their major, students are going on to do great things when they depart UW-Eau Claire,” Felz says. “I am excited to share these numbers as we recruit future students, as this resonates with our story that not only are we an affordable institution but also an outstanding investment.”

Felz and Heidtke noted that the average starting salary of undergraduate survey respondents is \$50,903, an increase from \$47,544 last year. The salary jump shows Blugolds are finding good paying jobs after graduation and they have “skills, competencies and attributes that are desired by employers.”

Royal Credit Union has more than 100 UW-Eau Claire graduates in its workforce who work in all areas of the business, with over 20 Blugolds in leadership positions, says Jennifer McHugh, RCU’s vice president-community engagement. Higher education partnerships are essential to assembling a high-impact workforce, she says.

“As an employer of over 900 people, Royal Credit Union places a high emphasis on our connection with UW-Eau Claire and actively recruits Blugold graduates to stay within our markets,” McHugh says. “Ask any business leader and they will tell you talent attraction and retention are two of their top strategic priorities.”

RCU offers more than a dozen internships each year, with most filled by UW-Eau Claire students, McHugh says.

In the survey, 60% of respondents reported that they completed at least one internship and 44% completed at least two internships. A total of 23% of graduates who completed an internship were offered a full-time position after their internship, with 71% accepting the position.

UW-Eau Claire’s Career Services team and academic partners work hard to offer students opportunities to engage with employers to prepare them for the workplace, Heidtke says.

Other highlights of the survey include:

- 91% of respondents agreed they were prepared for the next step in their career path.
- 87% received a job offer prior to or within a month of graduation.
- A total of 61% of graduates work in Wisconsin and 92% are employed in the Midwest.

For more information about the First Destination Report, contact [Staci Heidtke](#), director of Career Services, at 715-836-2261 or heidtksl@uwec.edu, or Billy Felz, interim vice chancellor for enrollment management, at 715-836-4877 or felzwl@uwec.edu.