

# Universities of Wisconsin: Students use AI to solve real-world business challenges in multi-university partnership

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MADISON, Wis.—Three Universities of Wisconsin partnered with Royal Credit Union to launch an innovative internship program that used artificial intelligence (AI) to address real-world business challenges. The collaboration connected students from UW-Eau Claire, UW-River Falls, and UW-Stout with Royal's AI Innovation Lab to explore how machine learning can improve member experiences for the local financial institution.

The internship program brought together four computer science students and faculty mentors from all three universities to design and test AI models that could help Royal better understand member behaviors and recommend personalized products. Students worked on projects typically reserved for research and development teams, gaining hands-on experience with large datasets, predictive modeling, and technical communication.

“By pairing student learning with real business challenges, this initiative shows how the UWs and industry are working together for Wisconsin,” said Universities of Wisconsin President Jay Rothman. “Royal Credit Union’s Innovation Lab, working with our universities, was able to connect to students whose talents matched the work at hand. It’s a great collaborative partnership across three UWs.”

Royal Credit Union President/CEO Brandon Riechers said the decision to work with students rather than consultants was intentional.

“Students have such natural curiosity and a drive to solve problems with unique and bias-free insight,” Riechers said. “They look at what we are already doing with no preconceived ideas, giving honest feedback and ideas for change.”

This collaboration demonstrates how Wisconsin’s 13 public universities can serve as a resource for businesses facing a range of challenges, including navigating technology transitions and talent development.

By leveraging student talent and faculty expertise, businesses can innovate cost-effectively while students gain skills that prepare them for high-demand careers. These partnerships strengthen Wisconsin’s economy and create a talent pipeline that benefits communities across the state.

**Learn more about how the collaboration was formed, the economic impact of the collaboration, and perspectives from the students and faculty involved:**

- [Launching the Collaboration](#)
- [Economic Development Perspective](#)
- [Student Experience](#)
- [Faculty Collaboration](#)