

# UW-Stout: Blue Devil grads get blue-chip jobs with Fortune 500 firms

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Menomonie, Wis. – Amazon. Cigna. CVS Health. General Motors. Citigroup. What do all these blue-chip companies have in common? In addition to being among the 25 largest American corporations on the latest Fortune 500 list, they've also hired recent University of Wisconsin-Stout graduates over the past year.

According to a new report, Blue Devils who graduated between fall 2024 and summer 2025 went to work for 54 firms on the Fortune 500, including 13 of the Top 25 companies on the prestigious list. Among the Fortune 500 employers who have hired UW-Stout graduates in the past year alone are 3M, Boeing, Boston Scientific, FedEx, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, IBM, Nike, Oshkosh Corp., Rockwell Automation, Target, Tesla, Walt Disney and Xcel Energy.

Over the past five years, UW-Stout grads have been hired by more than 125 companies in the Fortune 500 — and counting. And wherever they are working for household names or small startups, fully 99% of recent graduates were either employed or furthering their education within six months of graduation, UW-Stout's annual First Destination Report found.

This success is built on strategic and intentional engagement with students throughout their time at UW-Stout to prepare them for future careers, said Career Services Director Bryan Barts. Initiatives include the fall and spring Career Conferences, among the largest in the Midwest; the Grow, Persist, Succeed (GPS) Program, which was honored by the Universities of Wisconsin Board of Regents; and the new Blaze Forward In Your Job Search effort, a four-week career-readiness program tailored to address specific academic areas and key elements of the job and internship search.

“By providing a space to address barriers students may be facing, provide strategies to outreach to companies, and implement best practices in searching and connecting with companies, we have supported our mission to engage, educate, and empower students to see their potential,” Barts said.

### **Starting salaries on the rise**

According to the First Destination Report survey, recipients of undergraduate degrees from UW-Stout in 2024-25 reported an annual starting salary of \$59,000, a 4% increase from the prior year. The average starting salary for graduate degree recipients was \$62,000.

The average starting salary for undergraduate degree holders from UW-Stout has been the highest among universities in western Wisconsin for the past six years for which figures are available, representing the ongoing return on investment in an education at Wisconsin’s Polytechnic University.

The new report found average starting salaries were higher than average in multiple undergraduate career clusters, including:

- Science, engineering and math, \$69,000;
- Information technology and communication, \$61,000;
- Business and management, \$63,000.

Numerous UW-Stout degree programs offered even higher starting salaries. For example, graduates with a B.S. applied math & computer science had an average starting salary of \$80,000, while those with B.S. computer & electrical engineering and B.S. plastics engineering degrees both averaged \$77,000. And the first cohort of graduates from the B.S. cybersecurity program started their careers making an average of \$74,000.

Graduates of the B.S. management & leadership program had starting salaries that averaged \$83,000, while B.S. construction management grads earned an average of \$70,000. In education, the B.S. career, technical education & training program led the way with starting salaries averaging \$74,000.

### **Alumni incomes among highest in state**

Such salaries, of course, are just the beginning for UW-Stout graduates embarking on new careers. Blue Devil alumni can expect higher lifetime earnings than many of

their peers. According to the latest data from the U.S. Department of Education, the median UW-Stout graduate makes \$63,997 annually four years after graduation, the third-highest figure among the 13 Universities of Wisconsin schools.

UW-Stout also offers some of the highest-paying degree programs in the state, the federal data shows. Four years after graduation, Blue Devils employed in computer networking have a median income of \$106,116, placing the program among the Top 10 highest-paid statewide offered by public and private universities. Other Top 25 programs include applied mathematics, whose graduates earn \$100,475 four years into their careers, and construction management, whose alums have median salaries of \$99,787.

Other data, collected on behalf of UW-Stout through the 2024 National Alumni Career Mobility (NACM) survey, paints a similar picture. Blue Devil graduates from the classes of 2019 and 2014 were asked about their careers. For undergraduate alumni five years after graduation, the median income was approximately \$63,300 in 2024. That same year, the median income for undergraduate alumni who were 10 years into their careers was about \$84,000.

Nationally, the median bachelor's degree holder between the ages of 22 and 27 makes \$20,000 more annually than the median worker with only a high school diploma, according to research by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. The gap is even wider for UW-Stout degree holders: Four years after graduation, their median salary is more than \$26,000 per year higher than those who didn't continue beyond high school, the U.S. Department of Education data shows.

UW-Stout's average starting salary has been the highest among universities in western Wisconsin for the past six years, and represents the ongoing return on investment in an education at Wisconsin's Polytechnic University. UW-Stout's value has been recognized by the likes of Money Magazine, which for the second year in a row has included UW-Stout on its Best Colleges list focused on affordability and student outcomes. Numerous UW-Stout programs — from cybersecurity to game design to packaging to hotel, restaurant and tourism management — are among the top-ranked in the nation and even world.

### **Most find jobs before graduation**

For the fourth year in a row, the First Destination Report found that 99% of recent graduates were either employed, furthering their education, or serving in the

military or a service program within six months of commencement. That rate hasn't dipped below 97% for at least 16 years, and it has never been below 90% over the more than half a century the survey has been conducted.

In the new report, the employment figure rose to 100% for graduate degree recipients as well as for military veterans in all degree programs.

Most graduates didn't have to wait long for employment: In fact, nearly two-thirds of those who obtained UW-Stout undergraduate degrees accepted job offers a month or more before graduation, while another 15% were hired within a month of graduation, the survey found.

Graduates also believe UW-Stout readied them for post-college careers: The survey showed that 88% of 2024-25 graduates said they agreed or strongly agreed that their experience at UW-Stout prepared them for the next step in their career path.

Providing career-focused experiences is one of the key tenets to the polytechnic approach at UW-Stout, which is designated as Wisconsin's Polytechnic University. All UW-Stout graduates receive applied learning experience before they receive their diplomas. Every year, the Cooperative Education & Internship Program oversees nearly 1,000 co-op and internship experiences. These internships and co-ops lead to professional positions for 35% of students.

UW-Stout, a member of the Universities of Wisconsin, 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.