

## NEWS RELEASE

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## School of Hospitality Leadership students get ‘red carpet’ treatment at leading state resorts

*Industry partnerships with Kohler Hospitality, Sand Valley Golf Resort help them make career connections*

[Story Link](#)

### Photos attached

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dec. 21, 2021

Menomonie, Wis. — Some University of Wisconsin-Stout students received the red carpet treatment as they learned about opportunities at [Kohler Hospitality](#) in Kohler and [Sand Valley Golf Resort](#) in Nekoosa.

About two dozen students from the School of Hospitality Leadership traveled to the resorts. The Kohler trip was Nov. 11-12 and Sand Valley Nov. 18-19.

For junior Logan Haws, a [hotel, restaurant and tourism management major](#), the trips meant being able to connect with industry professionals and helped him to understand more about what internship he wants to complete.

“My favorite part of the Kohler trip was the dinner and social event,” Haws said. “We got to meet and learn so much from different departments in a more casual way and form connections. My favorite part of the Sand Valley trip was the chance to interview and interact with the professionals. I got to meet so many people and had one-on-one conversations with them, and now I have connections with most of them on LinkedIn.

“I would recommend these kinds of trips for all students,” Haws, of Marshfield, said. “You get the opportunity to meet the people, stay on property and feel like a guest. They want us as students to come to their companies. They laid out the red carpet for us and you get to understand their business.”

This was the first time UW-Stout students had an overnight with Kohler and the second time at Sand Valley. The last time students were able to go to the 1,700-acre destination golf resort

with two-world class courses was in 2019, according to John Sobota, [School of Hospitality Leadership](#) lecturer.

### **Partnerships help enrollment and employment**

“These partnerships are good for both the university and the industry partners,” Sobota said. “It helps enrollment when prospective students see our students touring exceptional properties and accepting co-op positions for hands-on learning opportunities. It also helps our industry partners with their employment needs, both short-term and sometimes for full-time positions. The trips give students access to network with industry leaders and many different areas of hospitality at exceptional properties.”

The industry partners pay for the trips so there is no cost to students or UW-Stout, Sobota said. The trips allow students to experience five-star and five-diamond service and accommodations and learn the expectations of hospitality leaders. They met with general managers and staff from hotels and suites, food and beverage, golf operations, event planning, retail merchandising, real estate management and convention and event sales.

At Kohler, the students toured [the American Club](#), [Blackwolf Run Golf Course](#) and the private Riverbend Country Club while staying at the [Inn on Woodlake](#). They took part in a private event at the [Kohler Swing Studio and Golf Shop](#) with appetizers and golf simulators, Sobota said.

At Sand Valley, the students stayed on site at a hotel and toured the resort, including [Mammoth Dunes](#), [the Sand Box](#) and a re-creation of the Lido golf courses, the latter which is under construction. They also had on-site interviews with department leaders.

The Lido, which was originally in Long Island, N.Y., and closed when the land was taken over by the U.S. Navy during WWII, was considered one of the best golf course designs in the world. It was designed by architect C.B. Macdonald.

### **Industry partners look forward to future student visits**

Ryan Oakes, a Kohler senior recruiter-hospitality, said Kohler hopes to host an overnight event again.

“It is a great experience for the students to meet and network with some of the top hospitality leaders in the industry,” Oakes said. “Our staff also enjoyed meeting with some of the best and up and coming hospitality talent. I think it is important for students to visit to show them a great hospitality experience. It is one thing to learn in the classroom and out of a book and a whole different experience to hear and learn directly from industry leaders.

“Yes, we would like to use this visit to help attract interns and post-graduate associates, but we also want to motivate and show hospitality students what a great industry they are getting into. Our leadership team was extremely impressed with the students, how they represented themselves and UW-Stout. We look forward to hosting this event again in the future,” Oakes added.

Kohler Hospitality employs five UW-Stout alumni, Oakes said.

Alyssa DeBoer, human resources manager for Sand Valley, said her company looks forward to hosting the events for many years to come. The company has two full-time, year-round UW-Stout alumni and four alumni who are seasonal employees.

“Sand Valley enjoys the opportunity to showcase everything the resort has to offer,” DeBoer said. “They get the guest experience when it comes to lodging and dining that our team

members usually don't get to experience. It is also a great opportunity for the students to network with our leadership team while getting to know them on a more personal level that doesn't happen during a typical interview process.

"It is important to have students visit Sand Valley to allow them to tour the property and learn about future growth and employment opportunities. It allows students to get a feel for our company culture to make sure we are a good fit before choosing us for an internship or employment," DeBoer added.

### **Students: Visits are a great opportunity**

Gabriella Stone, a junior hotel, restaurant and tourism management major from Chicago, took both trips and learned a lot. She most enjoyed the food and tours of the facilities.

"It is super cool to see new clubs and how they are similar and different from one another," Stone said. "The food is always super good."

She urged other students to take part in the trips if they have the opportunity. "You meet more people within your program, and you gain more of a perspective within this field."

Noah Bifulk, a senior double majoring in [golf enterprise management](#) and hotel, restaurant and tourism management from White Bear Lake, Minn., said he enjoyed touring the resorts.

"It's a great opportunity to start making new relationships in the industry," he said.

Sobota said many UW-Stout students have already received co-op offers for next summer.

"Opportunities like this, being career-focused, put our students at an advantage when they graduate, hence our 100% placement after graduation."

The School of Hospitality Leadership also offers a degree in [real estate property management](#).

[Career Services](#) manages UW-Stout's Cooperative Education and Internship Program.

*UW-Stout is [Wisconsin's Polytechnic University](#), with a focus on applied learning, collaboration with business and industry, and career outcomes.*

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### **Photos**

UW-Stout students met with and interacted with professionals at the Sand Valley Golf Resort last month. / Submitted photos

UW-Stout students toured the site of the Lido course that is under construction at Sand Valley Golf Resort in Nekoosa.

Students toured Kohler Hospitality properties and learned about the company during the overnight trip in November.

A student takes a shot during a Kohler Hospitality overnight trip at a golf simulator in the Kohler Swing Studio and Golf Shop.