

NEWS RELEASE

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With successful alum like Jones, university stands out in national survey

High percentage of graduates from five, 10 years ago pleased with career preparation, advice, results

[Story Link](#)

Photos attached

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Menomonie, Wis. — After a recent national survey, University of Wisconsin-Stout has a clearer picture of career satisfaction and success among graduates from two recent classes.

In multiple areas, thanks to graduates like De’Andre Jones, UW-Stout stood out compared with other universities and colleges, providing evidence that the university is on the right track with its career-focused undergraduate programs and student services.

UW-Stout ranked 10% or more higher than other public schools and all schools in the survey in several areas, including:

- Career advice, 93% satisfaction
- Career and self-improvement skills, 81% satisfaction
- How well-prepared graduates believe they were to begin their careers, 73%.

The National Alumni Career Mobility survey of 2011 and 2016 graduates was conducted in fall 2021. Results were released recently.

Since taking the survey, Jones, already has advanced his career — his fourth upwardly mobile move since earning a bachelor’s degree in 2016 in [family and consumer sciences education](#). In February, he was named director of alumni engagement at Seattle University in Seattle, moving into his first management position a little more than five years after graduating.

“What I really liked about Stout was the polytechnic emphasis and the way the curriculum was laid out, the courses I took. I received a breadth of experience. I knew there would be a lot

of transferable skills and that I'd be well-equipped to work in any field," Jones said. "Stout was such a transformational place for me."

After graduating, Jones chose to enter graduate school, a benefit of the [McNair Scholars Program](#) in which he took part at UW-Stout. The program supports traditionally underserved student populations, including services to help students with graduate school preparation.

"Overall I felt prepared, and the skills I gained at Stout did prepare me for the rigor I was going to experience," he added.

In 2018, Jones earned a master's in education in student development administration from Seattle University. Then, he spent two years as a K-12 mentor in a national nonprofit organization, Summer Search, in the Seattle area. He returned to Seattle University as assistant director of student involvement for events and traditions.

Now, as alumni engagement director, he has a staff of three and oversees direct contact with the university's more than 86,000 alumni. "It has been fun. It's challenging work, but I think a lot of my work is relationship building," he said.

For the survey question about career mobility, UW-Stout ranked higher in 12 of 13 questions than all public institutions and all colleges and universities involved.

The survey results provide another level of insight into graduates' careers beyond UW-Stout's annual [First Destination Report](#). The most recent report found that 98.4% of graduates advanced their career within six months of earning their diploma, the vast majority with full-time jobs.

"The NACM survey provided key insights into the value and impact of our polytechnic programs straight from our alumni. At five and 10 years out, our alumni responded overwhelmingly that their experience at UW-Stout set them up for future success," said Career Services Director Bryan Barts.

UW-Stout also participated in the [2020 survey of 2010 and 2015 graduates](#) and was one of only two universities ranked exemplary in educational satisfaction.

Along with [Career Services](#), the survey was supported at UW-Stout by [Planning, Assessment, Research and Quality](#), the [Alumni Association](#), and [Learning and Information Technology](#).

Meridith Wentz, assistant chancellor and director of PARQ, was pleased to see that UW-Stout's rating exceeded the benchmark comparisons on many of the metrics.

"UW-Stout's ratings on career mobility questions exceeded the comparison group on 92% of the questions, which speaks to UW-Stout's core competency of career-focused education," Wentz said.

Appreciative of education, support

Jones is from Austin, Texas, but he went to high school in Wisconsin, in Waukesha where his mother lived at the time. After high school, he spent a year at Austin Community College when a plan to attend a hospitality school in Denver, Colo., fell through.

He was at Madison Area Technical College to establish Wisconsin residency when he met UW-Stout Transfer Coordinator Linda Young. The personal connection and a visit to campus "really solidified the deal for me, and the community I found at Stout also was just another big piece."

He cited Young, the McNair program and his undergraduate program director, Dianne Klemme, as important career influences.

Jones came out as gay while in college. He worked at the [Qube](#), the university's LGBTQIA+ resource center, and was in a fraternity. He received multiple awards, including the Samuel E. Wood Medallion for leadership, Outstanding Student of the Year for family and consumer sciences and the Scott Griesbach Award for Excellence in LGBTQIA+ Advocacy.

“Stout was my first time being truly away from home. Each of those different spaces on campus helped me learn different skills that I think highlighted my values and amplified what I knew to be true about myself and where I saw myself headed,” he said.

“Stout really laid the foundation for me to feel confident and believe I could go to graduate school. I really do owe a lot to my time in Menomonie,” he said.

Student success is the leading goal of UW-Stout's [FOCUS2030](#) strategic plan.

NACM survey

UW-Stout contacted about 3,500 alumni who graduated in 2011 and 2016 to ask them to take the survey.

All 13 UW System schools participated, with the System providing the funding.

The Career Leadership Collective, a higher education solutions group, oversees the survey, providing advisory and data services to assist campuses in building capacity around career development effectiveness.

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

De'Andre Jones, a 2016 UW-Stout graduate, is director of alumni engagement at Seattle University.

Jones earned a master's degree in education from Seattle University, where he now works.

Bryan Barts, UW-Stout Career Services director

Jones celebrates his graduation from UW-Stout with former staff member Julie Miller, left, and Linda Young, transfer coordinator.