



NEWS RELEASE

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Harley-Davidson, SMK Global, Nicolet Plastics, NorthStar Medical internships prepare UW-Stout students for careers

Students awarded for efforts, share experiences at national companies in Q&As

[Noah Klenner's full co-op Q&A](#)

[Ayush Patel's full co-op Q&A](#)

[Scott Stewart's full co-op Q&A](#)

Photos attached

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 13, 2026

Menomonie, Wis. – Student success is the leading goal of University of Wisconsin-Stout's [FOCUS 2030 strategic plan](#), ensuring students are career-ready before graduation. The [Cooperative Education and Internship Program](#) is one lane on that road to success.

This past year, Career Services' CEIP program connected more than 980 students with co-ops and internships at nearly 600 employers, including [Harley-Davidson](#), one of the world's most recognizable motorcycle brands; [Nicolet Plastics](#), recently honored with the Small Business Wisconsin Manufacturer of the Year Award; [SMK Global](#), a nutritional supplement manufacturer; and [NorthStar Medical Radioisotopes](#), a radiopharmaceutical company that develops and distributes lifesaving products.

Three students shared about their internships with these employers, through Q&As:

- [Noah Klenner](#): Harley-Davidson and Nicolet Plastics
- [Ayush Patel](#): SMK Global, New Jersey
- [Scott Stewart](#): NorthStar Medical Radioisotopes, Beloit

Klenner, of Slinger; Patel, of Anand, India; and Stewart, of Twin Lakes, were among 24 UW-Stout students who received the university's 2026 [Outstanding Cooperative Education and Internship Program Student of the Year Award](#).

Noah Klenner, Harley-Davidson and Nicolet Plastics

Klenner, a dual major in [plastics engineering](#) and [mechanical engineering](#), completed two internships this year, one with Nicolet Plastics and another with Harley-Davidson.

"I most enjoyed seeing what it's like to work in an engineering environment at both a smaller-scale company and a larger, more well-known manufacturing plant. I have a better understanding of how different teams operate, how communication and responsibilities vary, and how engineering work changes depending on the size and structure of the company," Klenner said.

As a plastics engineering intern at Nicolet Plastics, Klenner worked closely with the processing team lead on injection molding process support, including helping with mold changes, machine start-ups, and adjusting processing parameters, like injection speed and temperature, to improve part quality and consistency. He also monitored and adjusted processing parameters and spent time on the production floor troubleshooting issues and working with the team to reduce defects and improve overall efficiency.

At Harley-Davidson, as an advanced manufacturing engineering intern, Klenner worked with the new product development group on projects such as supporting validation testing efforts for new 2026 police motorcycle parts, helping ensure parts met quality and production requirements before launch.

Ayush Patel, SMK Global

Patel, a [food science and technology](#) major, was a quality assurance specialist intern at SMK Global. He is interested in how science directly connects to real food production, especially in food safety, quality control, and making sure products are safe and consistent for consumers.

"This experience with SMK helped me grow both professionally and personally," said Patel. "As an international student, adapting to a new work environment and contributing to a real production system gave me a lot of confidence. It confirmed that I want to build my career in food safety and quality assurance."

Patel's experience at SMK gave him a better understanding of how quality systems are maintained in the industry. His internship responsibilities included inspecting powder products and packaging, reviewing ingredients and labels in compliance with FDA regulations, ensuring product quality and safety, and more.

"What I enjoyed most was being part of a real production environment and seeing how everything we learn in class actually applies. It was rewarding to know that even small checks, like label reviews, compliance verification, or packaging inspections, can directly impact product safety and consumer trust," Patel said.

Scott Stewart, NorthStar Medical Radioisotopes

Stewart, a [supply chain management](#) and [business administration](#) double major, completed a cooperative experience at NorthStar as a supply chain analyst intern. He was interested in working with NorthStar Medical "because of its innovation in health care and its role in producing

radiopharmaceuticals that improve patient outcomes, along with the opportunity to work in a complex, highly regulated industry,” he said.

Stewart’s main roles included supporting procurement and planning, creating purchase orders in Sage X3, assisting with inventory forecasting, and contributing to process improvement projects.

He also helped map material process flows to improve visibility and reduce confusion in operations, and researched and evaluated production scheduling software, where he recommended a new system to improve efficiency and planning. The new system is currently being implemented.

“I enjoyed the hands-on experience and working cross-functionally with different departments and seeing how my work directly supported operations,” Stewart said.

UW-Stout Career Services

Career Services’ annual [First Destination Report](#) declared that 99% of recent graduates are employed or furthering their education within six months of graduation.

[Career Services’ programs and events](#) invites students to connect with employers and include the biannual [Career Conference Week](#), the [Built Environment Career Fair](#), [Wisconsin BioHealth Summit](#), [Government & Nonprofit Career Fair](#) and [Internship Draft Day](#).

CEIP received the 2024 annual Excellence & Innovation [Stewards of Place award](#) from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, “for its outstanding results and potential to influence and serve as a model for other institutions.”

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.

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Photos

Noah Klenner

Ayush Patel

Scott Stewart