

# University News

## The rigorous review:

Chancellor Charles W. Sorensen explains the Baldrige Award process and benefits

### Why did UW-Stout apply for the Baldrige Award?

Very simply, we felt that we fit the criteria rather well. For at least three decades, UW-Stout has focused sharply on databased decision making—something reinforced by the UW System. Since the Board of Regents officially adopted the Baldrige criteria in 1990, we took the next logical step and applied.

We believed we were always strong in the area of performance, and this provided an opportunity to go through a rigorous application process, have the application reviewed by examiners for approximately 1,000 hours, and then undergo four days of intensive on-campus interviews by seven site visitors.

Winning proves what we always knew—that we practice performance excellence here, and our processes demand continuous improvement.

### What type of effort went into preparing for the competition?

We worked with a consultant to review our practices against the Baldrige criteria, and once we decided that they did, we moved forward. We first adopted the Baldrige criteria for the campus. The Faculty Senate did voice some concern, but we guaranteed that we would not change what we do to apply for the award, nor would we create a new office of quality for UW-Stout.

We first applied in 1999 and achieved consensus status, meaning that we made the first cut but did not receive a site visit. In 2000, we received a site visit, the first university to do so. Then in 2001, we received the award.

In each year, we used a similar process. We assigned a team to each of the criteria made up principally of members of the Chancellor's Advisory Council. While each team member had a role to play, each team had a primary contact and a primary writer. We worked closely with a consultant familiar with the process.

In 1999 and 2000, we used the extensive feedback reports to analyze where our application needed to be strengthened. More importantly, we analyzed where we could improve our processes or where new processes were necessary to support our data. In each of our two site visits, seven examiners spent four days on campus in a very intensive discussion on the application to clarify what we stated and to verify that what we put in the document was accurate.

### How will other institutions of higher education benefit from UW-Stout's experience in preparing for and winning this award?

There are some very straightforward ways other institutions will benefit. First and foremost, UW-Stout is now a benchmark university so others have a model to follow. During our application process, we realized that

there were not such universities in that category since no awards had yet been given. So, we first relied heavily on comparing UW-Stout to other UW schools. When that was not acceptable to the examiners, we searched for national schools with similar missions or similar programs. For the most part, we had to compare ourselves to major research schools, not state universities. Now, we do provide benchmarking data, which should assist others as they apply for the award.

Second, we have demonstrated that the Baldrige criteria do apply to higher education and can be used effectively to demonstrate performance excellence. At a time when states are demanding more accountability, this is clearly a way to demonstrate that we are accountable.

Third, we have shown that it is possible to win the award and not make fundamental changes in the way we behave as an educational institution.

### Overall, what does this award mean for UW-Stout?

The award will have a significant impact on UW-Stout. We have already received a great deal of national attention from professional educational organizations; local and state news media; national media, such as *USA Today*; and state quality councils.

As the first university to receive either a site visit or the award, we are in a unique position to serve as a role model in how we apply quality performance standards to public higher education.

We have always had strong partnerships with business and industry, and this will clearly strengthen those ties. More companies will seek our students. We expect corporate giving to increase; we expect that we will have an easier time in recruiting in key areas; and we expect we will receive more applications to attend UW-Stout. Perhaps the greatest benefit will be the recognition that faculty, staff and students will receive.

In my opinion, the Baldrige criteria will change in a fundamental way how colleges and universities are accredited. We are in the vanguard of that movement.

### What does this award mean for UW System?

While this is an institutional award to UW-Stout, it reflects the strength of the UW System. As part of the application process and the on-site review process, we discussed real advantages of being part of a nationally recognized system. Support from the System and from the Board of Regents is fundamental to our overall success and critical to permit each campus to fulfill its primary mission. Clearly, the UW System played an important role in this award process, and the entire System benefits from it.

## Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Acceptance Award Ceremony — March 7, 2002 Washington, D.C.

Charles W. Sorensen, Chancellor, University of Wisconsin-Stout



President Bush, Secretary Evans, ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased, I am proud, I am humbled to accept the prestigious Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award on behalf of a fine university—the University of Wisconsin-Stout. While I have this privilege of being on stage today, this award—the first ever given to a university—is really the reflection of a quality, dedicated faculty, academic staff, and clerical and service staff who made this possible. The beneficiaries are the 8,000 students that we serve annually, the taxpayers of the great state of Wisconsin, and of this country. The Baldrige Award is a demonstration of American dedication to hard work, focus and commitment to excellence.

In many respects, UW-Stout began this journey over a century ago when James Huff Stout established the Stout Institute to meet the workforce challenges of the industrial revolution. Women were to study domestic sciences, and men mechanical arts. We have traveled a long way since 1891, but our mission remains constant—provide program and educational quality to meet the new challenges of the 21st century, a digital century, a century of the knowledge revolution. When we officially adopted the Baldrige criteria in 1999, we did so because they offered the opportunity to demonstrate that we practiced performance excellence, and to demonstrate that public higher education could and must be accountable.

Mr. President, serving in a public state university is a privilege for me. Following World War II, we witnessed one of the great educational revolutions in world history—the establishment of the GI Bill that sent tens of thousands of men and women to colleges and universities who otherwise would not have or could not have attended a post secondary educational institution. We saw an explosion of state universities in the 1960s to serve this new population. This transformed our society not only economically, but politically and socially, as well. Now we are called upon to provide the same service—educate men and women ready and able to keep this country competitive economically, and to preserve this great experiment in democracy.

We protect the great American dream by providing access and educational opportunities for men and women. In the best tradition of public higher education in America, we feed both the economic engines of society and provide a constant stream of educated men and women ready to defend the great principles of democracy. We now have a way to judge our excellence—the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. I proudly accept this on behalf of a great university, and I thank you, Mr. President, for recognizing how important this is to our future.

**“While I have this privilege of being on stage today, this award—the first ever given to a university—is really the reflection of a quality, dedicated faculty, academic staff, and clerical and service staff who made this possible.”**



**“Winning proves what we always knew—that we practice performance excellence here, and our processes demand continuous improvement.”**



# An Employer's Market

## UW-Stout's employment rate remains strong despite dampening economy

Within six months of graduating, 98.5 percent of UW-Stout's 2000–01 graduates are working or continuing their education. Of those employed, 89.3 percent secured jobs in or related to their major, according to the UW-Stout Placement and Co-op Services annual employment report.

Graduates from 21 of 29 degree programs or concentrations reported 100 percent employment. The median yearly salary reported by all working graduates was \$31,000. The survey's response rate reached an all-time high of 95 percent.

This year, UW-Stout also introduced a new graduate program employment report for 2000–01 graduates. According to this report, 97.5 percent of graduates from UW-Stout's masters and education specialist degree programs are working or continuing their education.

"What is really interesting about the graduate program grads is where they are now working and what their job titles are," said LaMont Meinen, director of UW-Stout's Placement and Co-op Services. He pointed out that many of the graduates are administrators, directors, managers or coordinators, indicating high responsibility levels. They work for a wide variety of organizations, from Johns Hopkins University to Intel to the American Cancer Society.

Although UW-Stout's employment rates are strong,

Meinen said that the job search climate is certainly changing. "In less than a calendar year, the student's market has transformed into an employer's market," he said. "The students have had to approach the employment process differently, and learn of new ways of connecting with potential employers," he added.

Since the economic downturn, fewer employers have come onto campus to recruit students. "A typical on-campus recruitment visit costs an employer between \$4,000 and \$7,000. They are beginning to cut back on these expenditures," said Meinen.

While the university's 2001 three-day career conference drew fewer employers and more students, Placement and Co-op Services has developed new services to offset this trend.

According to Meinen, more employers have been posting open positions on Placement and Co-op Services' weekly job vacancy list. In addition, the office recently developed online resume databases for students seeking co-op/internships or full-time employment. Select employers are given anytime access to these resume databases, he explained.

Placement and Co-op Services has also extended the length of time employment services are available to students, after they graduate, to up to six months.

In addition, more employers are hiring UW-Stout

students as co-op/interns than ever before. During the 2000–01 school year, 557 students, up from 465 the previous year, received valuable work experience through UW-Stout's co-op program.

"Employers are hiring students to fill positions of retired employees, and rolling their co-ops so that one student can train the next one," said Meinen. "This hands-on work experience gives our students an edge in the job market."

UW-Stout's 2000–01 employment rates are based on students who received their degrees in December 2000, and January, May and August 2001. Since that time, several factors have weakened the employment outlook. "Layoffs have become somewhat commonplace, the stock market continues to sputter and the events of September 11 dampened consumer confidence," noted Meinen.

Because the economy is currently unpredictable, Meinen urges this year's graduates to begin looking for a job early and to take advantage of every opportunity that may increase their qualifications. "Students will need to set realistic expectations, start the search process earlier and be willing to go where the jobs are. The convenience of picking and choosing is less likely," he said.

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**LaMont Meinen**

## AskABLE

### UW-Stout Web site answers questions about disabilities to 'level playing field'

*"It's better to know some of the questions than all of the answers."*

*James Thurber, American writer, cartoonist, illustrator*

UW-Stout recently introduced AskABLE, a groundbreaking online disability resource. This question and answer Web site, at <http://www.askvrd.org/askable>, provides important information to people who work with disabled students.

Users who submit a question to the site receive a human response from a UW-Stout expert within two business days. Users may also choose to answer their questions by searching the site's archive or online resource links.

Though the site was developed for university faculty and staff, anyone who seeks an answer to a disability-related question can use the service. The site may be especially helpful to parents, teachers and guidance counselors who are helping disabled high school students with the transition to college, said Christine Varnavas, the project's coordinator.

As a major part of UW-Stout's Teachable Moments Faculty Development Project, the AskABLE initiative is funded by grants from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Post-Secondary Education.

"The goal of the project is to provide instructors with the resources that allow them to offer disabled students a quality education on a level playing field. Ultimately, we want to recruit, retain and graduate more students with disabilities," said Varnavas.

The AskABLE service is free to users who complete the site's 10-question registration process. After registering, AskABLE users submit questions in one of the following areas of interest: academic accommodations, Americans with Disabilities Act, Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, assistive technology, auditory disabilities, cognitive disabilities, employment issues, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, visual disabilities, psycho/behavioral issues, research and vocational rehabilitation.

### The ability in disability

As a former K-12 teacher, Varnavas became familiar with Ask Eric, a question and answer site that offers information to anyone interested in education, including parents, counselors and teachers. "I felt that post-secondary education needed a similar site as a disability resource. K-12 education has countless disability resources, but there are very few for college educators," she explained. She decided to name the site ABLE to bring focus to the ability in disability, she added.

According to Varnavas, the site's "just-in-time" nature is a main concept of the Teachable Moments Project, because faculty and staff are simply too busy to sit through disability training sessions. "This is not information that they readily seek out. They don't need to know about disability services and accommodations until they need to know—for example, when they need to accommodate a student with a disability in their class," said Varnavas.

### Online experts

Varnavas is currently marketing AskABLE locally, regionally and at international conferences. The site now has 70 registered users, including out-of-state patrons from Utah and Nebraska. "I expect the site will follow the same pattern as Ask Eric. The response was slow for the first year. Then, as people became aware of the service, use of the site exploded," she said.

As Varnavas receives AskABLE user's questions, she determines which UW-Stout experts can best answer them. Campus experts include Kathleen Deery, rehabilitation and counseling department; Amy Schlieve, education, counseling and psychology department; Bob Peters, rehabilitation and counseling department; Dave Swan, UW-Stout Projects With Industry; Mike Lawler, Assistive Technology and Assessment Center; Debra Shefchick, Student Support Services; Amy Riddle-Swanson, Student Support Services; and Donna Weber, assistant to the chancellor for Affirmative Action.

As the site becomes busier, Varnavas plans to add

experts, including some from off-campus locations. "I have had people from other cities and states volunteer to be involved," she said.

Thus far, most of the questions submitted to the site have been about accommodating individuals with disabilities in the classroom. For example, one instructor asked about math and science classroom modifications for a blind student. Another asked about extended test time for a student with a learning disability.

Questions regarding learning disabilities, which are often the most puzzling for instructors, are also frequent, said Varnavas. "These are invisible disabilities that still carry a lot of stigma. Students don't always want to self identify, because they have always had to in the past. They often fall behind before they will seek the services they need," she explained.

### Extending the vision

Additional disability resources are available on the Teachable Moments Web site, including an instructor manual and a resource library. The site, at <http://www.uwstout.edu/stusrv/teachable/>, also links to a 45-minute online disability training session, complements of Penn State University's Project Opportunity and Access.

As replication sites for the project, UW-Milwaukee, UW-Green Bay and UW-Platteville have access to all of the Teachable Moments project materials and resources. Varnavas will also help them market AskABLE on their campuses.

This year is the last year of the Teachable Moments grant. Varnavas is currently writing a proposal to compete for another three-year grant, in which she will propose bringing a faculty member on board as a Teachable Moments Faculty Outreach Liaison.

The AskABLE site uses software developed by the Virtual Reference Desk of Syracuse University's Information Institute. VRD is also supported by the U.S. Department of Education.

**"Ultimately, we want to recruit, retain and graduate more students with disabilities."**

**Christine Varnavas**





# Equal Opportunity

## Equality for Women Initiative improves campus climate

Spurred by UW System's one-year evaluation of university life for women, UW-Stout launched an Equality for Women Initiative to examine and improve the campus climate for women. To set the project in motion, 49 students, faculty and staff from across the campus examined the following areas: hiring, promotion and retention of women employees, educational opportunities for women students, learning and work environment, and balancing work and personal life.

As a result, UW-Stout hired Kathleen Laurila as the university's first halftime coordinator for Women's Issues. As coordinator, Laurila advocates women's issues and acts as a liaison with the various offices and programs that serve women on campus.

Laurila began her new position in July 2001. She has had 25 years of local and national-level volunteer leadership roles in the American Association of University Women. As the current vice president of the International Federations of University Women, she also manages seminar programs that focus on the impact of globalization on women and girls.

According to Laurila, the initiative addresses a variety of women's issues, including gender stereotyping, equal job opportunities and pay, dependant care needs, balancing work and personal lives, equal access to education and athletics, comprehensive welfare programs, access to health care, reproductive rights, freedom from sexual harassment and assault, and "missing" women in history, literature and policymaking.

Housed in UW-Stout's Affirmative Action Office,

Laurila began exploring many of these issues by having one-on-one conversations with individuals and directing several campuswide forums. "This is an outreach position, so I need to go where students, faculty and staff are. I talk to people and get to know them in order to understand what is happening with women's issues on campus," she explained.

The Equality for Women Steering Committee, which acts as Laurila's board of directors, continues to meet to help her implement the recommendations made by the subcommittees.

The following are some of the recent accomplishments of the initiative:

**Developing a campus resource center** — Individuals have access to books, periodicals and Internet links at <http://www.uwstout.edu/affirm/women.htm>. The Affirmative Action Office recently moved to UW-Stout's Library Learning Center, where the office is more accessible and includes space for women's resources.

**Expanding the women's mentoring program** — The existing program supports new women faculty. The campus is working to expand the program to all women staff members.

**Increasing leadership opportunities** — Open discussions have concentrated on developing leadership skills. UW-Stout hosted the Wisconsin Women in Higher Education Leadership Conference. Forty UW-Stout women attended the conference, several of whom

gave presentations. In addition, several attended and conducted talks at the Wisconsin Women's Studies Consortium Conference.

**Enhancing harassment prevention and hiring procedures** — Donna Weber, UW-Stout's assistant to the chancellor for Affirmative Action, has created a new process to ensure open positions are advertised according to the university's nondiscrimination policies, and a better system for reporting sexual harassment and discrimination complaints. The Sexual Harassment Prevention Committee, chaired by Laurila, is developing additional methods to reach campus women with information.

**Surveying needs** — The UW-Stout Women's Studies program is analyzing how many courses include gender-specific topics to determine appropriate curriculum reforms and professional development activities. The campus is also conducting a survey of child-care needs.

**Initiating a local American Association for University Women branch** — Facilitated by Laurila, several UW-Stout employees have joined the Menomonie branch of AAUW, which offers many beneficial networking and educational opportunities, as well as research data about the education of women and girls.

**Examining balance** — Laurila represents UW-Stout on a UW System committee that is developing new policies and practices that will help employees balance their work and personal lives.

"I talk to people and get to know them in order to understand what is happening with women's issues on campus."

Kathleen Laurila

# Poetry of Crisis

## Students create poetry posters to reflect tragedy of terrorist attacks

To help people cope with their feelings following the September terrorist attacks, select poetry posters have been displayed at various locations around the UW-Stout campus. The posters were created by a group of UW-Stout students who were challenged during the fall semester by UW-Stout's Literature Committee to illuminate the emotions in chosen poems using typography. The Graphic Design I class, taught by Bill DeHoff of UW-Stout's department of art and design, then collaborated with the committee to create posters that offer insight into the tragedy of September 11, and symbolize survival.

Titled "The Poetry of Crisis," the project also encourages audiences to reflect on the artistic response to crisis and stress. According to Jonna Gjevre, of UW-Stout's English and philosophy department, "the events of September 11 inspired members of the Literature Committee to select, and create, poems that address the problem of human suffering and inspire reflection upon it."

Robert Schuler, professor in UW-Stout's English and philosophy department and a widely published poet and essayist, wrote a poem specifically for this project, titled "What is Art?" Other poems typographically illustrated by the students include Langston Hughes's "Still Here," an excerpt from Walt Whitman's "Long, Too Long America," two excerpts from HD's "The Walls Do Not Fall," Emily Dickinson's "After Great Pain, A Formal Feeling Comes" and "Try to Remember Some Details" by Yehuda Amichai, a popular Hebrew poet from Jerusalem. These poems address war, oppression and loss, and offer insight in a time of crisis.

The students enhanced the poems, which were randomly assigned to them, with brilliant typography designs. "A lot can be done with type through controlled

spacing, size, thickness and layout. A successful illustrator can control the speed, tone and emotion of the reader by manipulating these variables," said Micah Maraia, a senior art-industrial design student who worked on the poster project.

Maraia chose the typeface "Typewriter Oldstyle" to create a poster of Langston Hughes's poem "Still Here." He said the poem made him "envision a person who had been through a lot, but survived." The poem begins with the lines "I been scared and battered./My hopes the wind done scattered." and ends with the defiant lines, "But I don't care!/I'm still here!"

"The inconsistent font appears as though it came from an old beat up typewriter, and seemed to illustrate the torn and battered theme I was going for. My intention was to make viewers see the poster as something that has been around for a while, and been through the wringer," noted Maraia.

The UW-Stout Literature Committee selected the posters of seven students to display at campus locations. Students whose work is featured include Maraia, John Harsdorf, Abbey Fitzgerald, Lisa Thompson, Matthew Vanderloop, Michael Jueneman and Danielle McDowell.

"This project is an example of the expectations and the resulting quality work that come from beginning foundation classes in the department of art and design," said DeHoff, the student's instructor.

► Danielle McDowell created a typography poster of the poem "What is Art?" by Robert Schuler, of the English and philosophy department.

"I think Danielle did a wonderful job showing that a poem is a collection of little energy packets. Her interpretation is the graphic equivalent of the poem's movement-up and down, pausing and emerging suddenly," said Schuler.

