



WINNING COMBINATION

Don't just sit there and learn –
DO SOMETHING!

Classroom boundaries are drawn with invisible lines at UW-Stout. The blend of theoretical case studies and jump-in-and-get-your-feet-wet applications prepares students for life beyond their formal studies.

When students aren't in classrooms or laboratories, they are successfully competing for cooperative education opportunities, solving real business challenges, conducting research alongside faculty members, solving community problems or winning student competitions.

Experienced – that's how one can describe a UW-Stout student.

Cooperative Education

In cooperative education, students alternate time in the classroom with paid work directly related to their majors. Co-op students have an enviable head start in their careers by virtue of their on-the-job experience, marketable skills, impressive credentials and networking connections. Many are hired by the companies at which they completed their co-ops.

"Cooperative education is a partnership between students, employers, the university and the community," Amy Lane, coordinator of cooperative education, said. "These partners work together to give students the opportunity for applied learning in a real-world experience. Because of these co-op experiences, UW-Stout students are even more valuable to businesses and organizations who are looking for career-focused, innovative graduates."

To prepare students to compete for these work experiences, the Career Services Office provides more than 40 workshops each semester to help students develop their resumes, interviewing skills, job-search strategies and professional communication skills.

BELOW: Career Conference 2006



Career Services also holds an annual career fair to introduce students to potential co-op, internship or career employers. Arguably the largest and longest-running conference of its kind in the Midwest, UW-Stout's Career Conference brings in 250 to 300 employers from across the country, and more than 2,200 job seekers flood the Memorial Student Center for the event.

It is no wonder that UW-Stout's co-op program is nationally recognized. Boasting more than 800 participating students and more than 600 employers, it is the largest program of its kind in the UW System and one of the largest in the nation.

And co-ops pay off; UW-Stout students earn an average of \$12 an hour on co-op assignments. The 2005–06 co-op class earned a total of \$6 million.



ABOVE: The Timberland wall at the Industrial Design Senior Show.

Business Partnerships

Students also work collectively with businesses. They learn teamwork and develop critical thinking skills when they help businesses tackle challenges.

For instance, art students in the senior industrial design course this past spring designed new work boot concepts for 10 years in the future. As their senior project, the students worked with the PRO Division product development team of The Timberland Co. in Stratham, N.H., to research new product work boot opportunities in construction, maintenance and factory work.

The students' concepts varied from boots targeting specific jobs, such as roofing, to boot innovations in comfort, safety and stability. Each student constructed a physical model of his or her design and created two-dimensional presentation boards. Final designs were shared with Timberland executives.

"Our show featured the work of 16 students in two parts: individual design research projects and a sponsored project with the Timberland Footwear company showcasing 14 new work concepts for the future," Noah Norton, assistant professor of industrial design, said.

It is conceivable that by 2017, UW-Stout alumni from the construction program could be wearing the work of alumni from the art program.

The expertise of UW-Stout students has been applied in businesses large and small. Other student teams have designed packaging solutions for Target Corp.; created a workplace safety program for Menomonie-based Prototype Solutions Group; and written technical manuals for a variety of businesses and organizations, including UW-Stout.

These students are strengthening their skills and building their portfolios. They are more likely to hit the ground running when they launch their careers.

Research

Every spring UW-Stout Research Day brings together students, faculty and staff to showcase their research and scholarly findings, build their portfolios, share ideas with one another, network and initiate new collaborative efforts.

The research of one student participant this year bears another mark of accomplishment. Michael Bellecourt, an applied science major from Stillwater, Minn., received a grant from the National Science Foundation.



ABOVE: Presentations from Posters in the Rotunda.

Fifteen UW-Stout students participated in Posters in the Rotunda—A Celebration of Undergraduate Research at the Wisconsin Capitol Rotunda April 18. The students were among many who presented more than 100 research posters. The posters demonstrated the substantial contributions students, faculty and the UW System institutions make to advance knowledge and address critical problems confronting the state and nation. The students also presented their research to state legislators during their visit to the capitol.

The UW-Stout posters demonstrated research with applications in the biology, biomedical and psychology fields.

For more student research examples, see the Journal of Student Research online at www.uwstout.edu/rs/studentjournal.shtml

Typically faculty members vie for highly competitive federal grants. But, at the encouragement of his professors, Bellecourt decided to try his hand at it, and he won.

"The idea for this grant came at the beginning of the Fall 2006 semester," Bellecourt said. "I spent the fall semester researching isotope analysis, and by the end of December, I had written up the grant."

Bellecourt will begin a new line of research complementary to current NSF-funded research being conducted by Stephen Nold, associate professor of biology at UW-Stout, who is studying sinkholes in the Great Lakes.

Bellecourt is investigating carbon flow through freshwater sinkhole ecosystems using stable carbon isotope techniques. He already has conducted a literature review on carbon isotope analysis.

This summer, he will travel to Lake Huron to collect and analyze samples. His findings may help describe the impact Lake Huron sinkholes have on the Great Lakes' ecosystem. He will write an article describing carbon sources and sinkholes in the Middle Island sinkhole ecosystem; his finished manuscript is expected next year.

At least two other UW-Stout students also secured federal funding this year.

Student accomplishments like this may motivate other students to pursue their highest dreams, which may seem unattainable but, with encouragement and hard work, are indeed achievable.

Competitions

Students also are using their academic talents in regional, national and international competitions to make a name for their student organizations and honor societies—and for UW-Stout.

For instance, the Sigma Lambda Chi student chapter, an international construction honor society, received the International Chapter of the Year Award at this year's Associated School of Construction Conference in Flagstaff, Ariz.

"The university is fortunate to have a special group of dedicated students in the construction program," Tim Becker, co-adviser of the student chapter, said. "The students have a great work ethic."

This is the student chapter's fourth time to win the honor. UW-Stout's chapter has won the International Chapter of the Year Award—the society's highest award—in four of the past five years. Last year, the chapter won the High Achievement Award, which is its second-highest award.

"These students make a sufficient contribution to the construction program, UW-Stout and the community by their service activities," Mitchell Spencer, co-adviser of the student chapter, said.

Students in academic disciplines campuswide participate in competitions related to their majors, with much success. From

student teachers of the year awards to top honors in competitions in apparel design, interior design and construction, UW-Stout students don't merely make the grade, they excel.

Service Learning

UW-Stout students also make a difference in their community. From installing rain gardens to stenciling storm drains, and from designing United Way campaign signs to designing children's playgrounds, UW-Stout students are involved as volunteers in Menomonie and surrounding communities during their university years.

Some projects last for specific periods, and others are ongoing.

One yearlong project coordinated by the students of the Tau Chapter of Phi Upsilon Omicron, a national honor society in family and consumer sciences, culminated in donations of baby blankets, infant formula and money to the local food pantry.

Chapter members were touched by the story of a single mother who, after losing her job, needed the support of the food pantry to feed her 1-year-old child a specific infant formula for babies with allergies. After hearing the mother's plight, students decided to help the food pantry handle such special requests.

"This story brought to light the needs of many of the low-income families in our community who are raising babies," the members wrote in their project notebook. "Every baby needs healthy, adequate nutrition to develop their bodies."

The students held "stuff the truck" and other events to restock the food pantry during the holidays with nutritious foods low in sugar and fat, and high in fiber. They also created and raised money for a 2007 Baby Fund to buy baby food and formula. In addition, chapter members solicited donations of fleece from chapter alumni and made blankets to accompany the monetary donation.

Such outreach efforts benefit the community as well as educate students in how knowledge related to their chosen fields can benefit any community in which they live—now and in the future.

The examples in this story give a glimpse into how UW-Stout prepares its students with hands-on experience. When an education is mixed with the ingredients of applied learning and research, students follow a recipe for success.

BELOW: Students of the Tau Chapter of Phi Upsilon Omicron pose with their handmade baby blankets.

