Good investments

By UW-Eau Claire, UW-Stout news bureaus

In recent months, respected publications and organizations have rated UW-Eau Claire among the nation's best colleges and universities when measuring everything from academic quality to student debt to finding well-paying jobs after graduation.

"Taken together, these rankings and other measures tell our students and alumni that their investment in a UW-Eau Claire degree pays off," said Chancellor James Schmidt. "Our graduates' return on investment (ROI) is greater than it would be had they gone to college almost anywhere else in Wisconsin or Minnesota."

The high ROI rankings are especially meaningful given UW-Eau Claire's liberal arts emphasis, Schmidt said, noting that while students graduate with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in today's workplace, they also take with them the kinds of interpersonal skills that set them apart at all stages of their careers.

"Our graduates are critical thinkers, creative problem-solvers, innovators and effective communicators," Schmidt said. "These are the kinds of interpersonal skills that employers in all fields tell us they highly value. Investing in a liberal-arts-based education is paying off for our graduates."

Schmidt noted that more encouraging news comes from reports regarding graduate indebtedness. UW-Eau Claire graduates have the lowest average debt among Wisconsin's four-year public comprehensive universities, according to the UW System's 'Student Financial Aid: 2012-13' report.

That figure at UW-Eau Claire for students obtaining a bachelor's degree is $19,186, less than the $21,563 UW System school average.

"Our high ROI rankings and low student indebtedness are increasingly important criteria for prospective students and their parents as they consider their college options," Schmidt said. "Given these rankings, I can confidently tell them that it really does pay to be a Blugold."

UW-StoutROI

A new report confirms that a degree from UW-Stout is worth the money invested in getting an education at the university.

The 2014 PayScale.com College Return on Investment (ROI) Report indicated that the 20-year net return on investment for a student paying in-state tuition and receiving financial aid was $309,200. The annual return on investment rate was 9.3 percent, which ranked fifth among all public universities in Wisconsin, including UW-Madison.
“Everyone knows that UW-Stout students have tremendous success in the workplace,” Chancellor Charles Sorensen said. “We are proud of our 97 percent placement rate. This report confirms that a UW-Stout education is well worth the investment to obtain that degree.”

UW-Stout also commissioned an independent study on the return on investment of a degree from the university.

That study, by the EMSI consultant group, showed:

• Students enjoy an attractive 15.3 percent rate of return on their UW-Stout educational investment.

• The average annual income of the typical bachelor's degree graduate at the midpoint of his or her career is $47,600, 94 percent more than someone with a high school diploma.

• Over the course of a working lifetime, bachelor's degree graduates earn $947,100 more than someone with a high school diploma.

The PayScale.com report measured the 20-year return on investment as the total income that a graduate will earn after 20 years of working, minus what they would have earned as a high school graduate and the cost of college, minus the average financial aid amount awarded to students. The result is their net earnings in 20 years as a college graduate.

The annual ROI rate is the return on investment of investing in a degree as opposed to investing in other ways, like the stock market or bonds.