

NEWS RELEASE

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UW-Stout career development jobs program for students honored with statewide Innovation Award

Grow, Persist, Succeed combines campus work opportunities with career counseling

[Story Link](#)

Photos attached

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Menomonie, Wis. — With applied and [experiential learning](#) and a career focus, students who attend University of Wisconsin-Stout know they will graduate ready to enter the work world.

Some students, like first-year [mechanical engineering](#) major Thomas Shamla, of South Range, will benefit from additional career preparation thanks to a reimagined on-campus jobs program, [Grow, Persist, Succeed](#). GPS pairs jobs with career support to help students better understand how the skills they're learning impact future career opportunities.

Recently, the program was honored with the Innovation Award from the [Wisconsin Association of Colleges and Employers](#), WI-ACE, for unique and creative approaches to student programming, university/employer relations and required supervisor training related to inclusive workplaces.

Shamla is working as a lab technician in the university's Discovery Center [Fab Lab](#). The job dovetails nicely with his career plans.

“Even though this is my first semester at Stout, I feel that I've benefited greatly from the GPS program,” Shamla said. “I believe the experience that it has given me in working with people will be very helpful in my career as an engineer. I'm also glad that this program has given me an opportunity for employment, even as a freshman.”

Shamla has been trained to help people use the Fab Lab's special equipment, such as the laser cutter and engraver, but he's also working on developing a cost-saving lab tool. “This device would allow us to utilize partial rolls of 3D printer filament, which were previously unusable.

Working on this project is helping me develop engineering design skills that can be directly applied to my future career in industry,” he said.

In 2021, [Career Services](#) took over GPS, which was founded in 2011 as the Student Jobs Program. The goal was to further build student skills, career awareness and support student retention.

“There was greater potential to be intentional and align with our polytechnic tenets in deeper, more meaningful ways,” said Bryan Barts, director of Career Services, which oversees other career-focused initiatives such as the Career Conferences and the [Cooperative Education and Internship Program](#).

“GPS centers on the value and meaning of on-campus experiences and the role they play in the bigger career and professional developmental process students have at UW-Stout,” Barts added.

The program supports first- and second-year students and transfer students, with an effort to increase representation from underrepresented student communities, by helping prepare them for impactful upper level undergraduate experiences such as a co-op or internship.

This academic year, the first for GPS, 26 students have jobs in 15 campus offices with two more still hiring. Among the job locations are the University Library, Multicultural Student Services, Athletics, Alumni Association, Marketing Communications and five academic departments.

Along with Shamla’s position, other examples of student jobs, which pay an hourly wage, include visual media assistant, graphic designer, journalism researcher and science lab assistants.

Faculty and staff who oversee students in the program receive training on inclusive workplaces, part of the university’s efforts to promote [equity, diversity and inclusion](#).

“The students I have met with are excited to connect with Career Services early in their college career and discuss how their on-campus job can help develop their career readiness skills,” said Sara Anger, career development manager with Career Services.

GPS includes career conversations and career self-assessments before and after students’ work experiences.

GPS uses national career readiness competencies developed by the [National Association of Colleges and Employers](#).

Students are recruited for GPS through job postings on Handshake, a national online platform used by UW-Stout that connects students to job opportunities.

UW-Stout 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

Thomas Shamla, a first-year UW-Stout student in mechanical engineering, operates a laser cutter and engraver in the Discovery Center Fab Lab as part of his Grow, Persist, Succeed campus job.

UW-Stout Career Services Director Bryan Barts and Sara Anger, career development manager with Career Services, hold the Innovation Award from the Wisconsin Association of Colleges and Employers.

UW-Stout's Innovation Award from WI-ACE.