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## NEWS RELEASE

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## In a happy place: UW-Stout graduates hit new highs in First Destination employment report

*Percentage employed, starting salary, number of graduates staying in Wisconsin all on the rise*

[Story Link](#)

### Photos attached

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 15, 2023

Menomonie, Wis. — Like the majority of University of Wisconsin-Stout graduates, Heather Dietsche and Andrew Campion had jobs in hand before they graduated. It was an exciting but not surprising outcome, given what they had experienced at [Wisconsin's Polytechnic University](#).

Dietsche, of Bloomer, said UW-Stout gave her a “solid foundation to transfer my knowledge and skills to a professional position.” Campion, of River Falls, said UW-Stout’s programs “allow students to discover themselves and truly find their purpose by applying their skills in real-world projects.”

A new [First Destination report](#) by the university found that other graduates like Dietsche and Campion from fall 2021 and spring 2022 also are doing well — exceedingly so. The employment rate, average starting salary, number of graduates hired by Fortune 500 companies and number staying in Wisconsin all rose from the previous year.

The numbers are further evidence that the university’s applied learning, career-focused programs and industry partnerships are a powerful trifecta.

“UW-Stout continues to be a national leader in preparing and placing students in successful careers,” Chancellor Katherine Frank said. “Our approach to career placement is intentional and strategic; it depends on in-depth and long-standing relationships with industry and

business partners who help to inform student preparation throughout the university and across all academic programs.

“Successful career placement through applied learning and collaboration with external partners is embedded [in our mission](#) as Wisconsin’s Polytechnic University,” Frank said.

The overall employment rate of graduates rose to 99.4%, up from 98.4%, the best in the region. It entrenches UW-Stout in the upper echelon of universities across the country for graduate outcomes. Since at least 2000, the average employment rate for graduates has been above 97% and has averaged above 98% for the past six years.

The report covered approximately 1,600 graduates. Prior to graduation, 60% of them had jobs; within four months, 96% had jobs. The graduation classes included 65 veterans and 488 first-generation college students, both with a nearly 100% employment rate.

### **Average salary, STEM salary, other figures strong**

The average starting salary for graduates rose to nearly \$53,500, up \$4,000 in two years. Among graduates in STEM fields — science, technology, engineering and math — starting salaries were even higher at nearly \$63,000.

The number of Fortune 500 companies hiring graduates rose from 50 to 54, including 3M, Amazon, Andersen Corp., Best Buy, Boeing, Boston Scientific, Dow, General Mills, Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Kohl’s, Oshkosh, Rockwell Automation, Target, Visa, Walmart, Walt Disney World and Xcel Energy.

The percentage of graduates finding work directly related to their major also was strong, 94.5%.

“We have continued to build upon our long-standing history of high rates for career outcomes of our students, as well as deepening and widening the career opportunities for our students through expanded partnerships, new employers and industry supported collaborations,” said Bryan Barts, director of Career Services, which produced the First Destination report.

The report also was good news for Wisconsin, which has acute workforce needs caused in part by low unemployment. The number of graduates staying in Wisconsin to begin their careers rose from 56% to 59%. Another 29% found work in Minnesota.

“We are again seeing increases in several areas that continue to show the value of a UW-Stout degree as well as its impact to our communities locally, statewide and across the region,” Barts said.

Overall, graduates landed jobs in 38 states and six foreign countries.

The 99.4% employment figure includes 4.6% of students who are continuing their education, serving full time in the military or working in a service field. Among undergraduates seeking work, the employment rate was 93%, best in the region.

### **Career preparation supports graduates**

Dietsche, a first-generation student and mother who returned to school at age 27, is a STEM graduate who earned a degree in [plastics engineering](#) in December 2021. She accepted an engineering job at Phillips-Medisize in Menomonie before she received her diploma.

“Stout (was) a positive and supportive environment for me to earn an engineering degree. I feel 100% prepared to work in a manufacturing environment,” she said, noting 2½ years of co-op field experiences.

Campion, a [professional communication and emerging media major](#), said research experiences and an internship helped set him up for success when he landed a technical writer position before graduation at Entrust, an information security solutions provider, in Shakopee, Minn.

“This is an advantage compared to those who are stuck without experience or first-hand accounts of what they are studying,” said Campion, adding that he was able to “take on the workforce with confidence and credibility.

“UW-Stout helped me find my true passion for technical writing, and the professors, curriculum, internship experience and relevant coursework helped me stay focused and excited to be successful,” he said.

UW-Stout's undergraduate and graduate programs require at least one [experiential learning](#) activity before graduation. This includes co-ops, internships, practicums and field experiences.

Two reasons for UW-Stout’s strong hired-before-graduation tradition are the [Cooperative Education and Internship Program](#) and the biannual [Career Conferences](#). They continue to connect students, especially juniors and seniors, to business and industry. In 2021-22, more than 1,100 students participated in CEIP, and recently more than 325 state and national employers attended the Spring Career Conference.

“We often hear students express that they would have never known about the career opportunities that were out there if not engaging in our career events, programs and resources,” Barts said.

“It’s the students themselves who see the value of applied learning experiences as pivotal to their career success, often serving as a launching pad to their first position after graduating from UW-Stout.”

Student success is the leading goal of UW-Stout’s [FOCUS2030](#) strategic plan.

*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**

Andrew Campion, a spring 2022 UW-Stout graduate, is employed as a technical writer at Entrust in Shakopee, Minn. He is among the 99.4% of graduates from 2021 and 2022 who are employed or are continuing their education.

Heather Dietsche, a fall 2021 UW-Stout graduate, was hired before graduation as a plastics engineer at Phillips-Medisize in Menomonie.

Students meet with employers at UW-Stout’s recent Spring Career Conference, which drew more than 325 companies from around the state and nation.

Chancellor Katherine Frank

Career Services Director Bryan Barts