

**NEWS RELEASE**

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**Heartland Business Systems named Employer of the Year by UW-Stout’s Career Services**

*A commitment to ‘being employer friendly’ keeps industry partnership strong, prepares students for information technology careers*

[Story Link](https://www.uwstout.edu/about-us/news-center/heartland-business-systems-named-employer-year-career-services)

**Photos attached**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 10, 2023

Menomonie, Wis. – Heartland Business Systems has been named the 2023 Employer of the Year by University of Wisconsin-Stout.

The award, presented at the third annual [Employer Recognition Event](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.uwstout.edu%2Facademics%2Fcareer-services%2Femployer-resources%2Fcareer-services-employer-recognition-event&data=05%7C01%7Cgoersab%40uwstout.edu%7C88859d89191a4f4e825f08db740e0255%7Cb71a81a32f9543819b89c62343a66052%7C0%7C0%7C638231375757122705%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Q1FfjOgHjuVaW1kCKlZ%2FkRLKyuqKWNShH9CE1U3vImc%3D&reserved=0), honors HBS’ commitment to go above and beyond in collaboration with [Career Services](http://www.uwstout.edu/career-services) to support students’ applied learning experiences.

About 70 business partners attended the recognition event, when Career Services provided campus updates, recruitment strategies and engagement opportunities. Career Services began the Employer of the Year award in 2021. Past recipients are [Menards](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.uwstout.edu%2Fabout-us%2Fnews-center%2Fmenards-named-inaugural-career-services-employer-year&data=05%7C01%7Cgoersab%40uwstout.edu%7C88859d89191a4f4e825f08db740e0255%7Cb71a81a32f9543819b89c62343a66052%7C0%7C0%7C638231375757122705%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=WafmxlSUmc7OA10pNLxejwP9q3TgFZHautJKJ5ojRaE%3D&reserved=0) and [Fastenal](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.uwstout.edu%2Fabout-us%2Fnews-center%2Ffastenal-named-universitys-employer-year&data=05%7C01%7Cgoersab%40uwstout.edu%7C88859d89191a4f4e825f08db740e0255%7Cb71a81a32f9543819b89c62343a66052%7C0%7C0%7C638231375757122705%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=5ptrUANHOdsTcGrjsO5Klc95s031d0Tqq3V1Igsm%2BJc%3D&reserved=0).

Headquartered in Little Chute, with 10 locations throughout the Midwest, Heartland Business Systems employs more than 700 people and provides complete, local, end-to-end technology solutions to commercial, public sector and small- to medium-sized businesses.

HBS was awarded for its continued:

* Commitment to professional development and hands-on learning for interns
* Participation in the [computer networking and information technology](https://www.uwstout.edu/programs/bs-computer-networking-and-information-technology) capstone project
* Partnerships with CNIT faculty and staff and the program advisory board
* Engagement with the Women in IT and Security and the Information Security Professionals student organizations.

“Our partnership with UW-Stout has been incredibly beneficial to our organization. We are fortunate to work with such a supportive institution,” said HBS College Recruiter Kristin Robinson. “Career Services actively works with us, seeking our input, inviting us to events and creating new opportunities for collaboration. I have enjoyed all the relationships we have built with staff and faculty. They show unmatched support and dedication to their students and our team members. Faculty advisers and professors prioritize student success in job placement. When all parties are supportive and helpful, it makes our jobs easier.

“UW-Stout has demonstrated a strong commitment to being employer friendly and recognizing the value of employers in their role to prepare their students. It has proven to be an exceptional institution that consistently produces top-tier graduates who are well-prepared for the demands of the industry. Our partnership with the university has been invaluable in attracting and training talented young professionals,” Robinson said.

HBS primarily seeks talent from the CNIT program, but it also recruits [computer science](https://www.uwstout.edu/programs/bs-computer-science) and [cybersecurity](https://www.uwstout.edu/programs/bs-cybersecurity) graduates and interns, hiring many over the years.

“We choose to hire UW-Stout graduates because the education they are provided prepares them for a seamless transition into full-time positions at HBS. Stout consistently produces high-quality candidates who exhibit exceptional professionalism and a strong work ethic,” Robinson said.

**A supportive culture, instrumental in career-preparation**

HBS has hosted 59 interns since 2006, with nine interns this summer. It has offered internships through Career Services’ [Cooperative Education and Internship Program](https://www.uwstout.edu/academics/career-services/cooperative-education-and-internship-program) since 2016 and has been involved in the [Partnership Program](https://www.uwstout.edu/academics/career-services/employer-resources/career-services-partnership-program) since 2020.

“When working at HBS, you are not an intern – you are an associate, a team member,” said HBS Engineering Services Manager Tyler Elwood, a UW-Stout 2018 [information and communication technologies](https://www.uwstout.edu/programs/bs-information-and-communication-technologies) alum.

“Throughout the summer, you are consistently working on new technologies, hardware and software. You will be part of a group that studies together for a certification over the summer, at no cost to the associate which is not common in our industry. You will be working with your mentor and going through day-to-day tasks, meetings with the customers, and going onsite for device replacements and installations. This experience is one of the best for hands-on experience and can give you different skills to add to your resume,” Elwood added.

“The internship program at HBS allows me to build upon the knowledge I gained in the classroom with real world experience that goes beyond anything a book could have taught me,” said Max Banner, a computer science major from Colgate.

Banner, an engineering associate intern, chose HBS for his summer internship for a few reasons.

“HBS offered internships in nearly every corner of Wisconsin, specifically an office not far from my hometown. HBS has a long history of hiring Stout students after graduation. I knew the experience of working in an environment where I was introduced to new technologies would be instrumental to excel in my future career,” he said.

The culture at HBS also played a big role in Banner’s decision. “My team members are always supportive of me and push me to achieve the goals I set. Whether it is a new certification or a project I have little experience with, they are there to support me and help me work through it. The culture at HBS is the reason that I have learned as much as I have,” he said.

**Solving real-world business problems**

HBS works closely with students to provide learning opportunities through capstone projects that allow them to apply their knowledge and skills to solve real-world business problems. This past academic year, the company partnered with UW-Stout’s CNIT program to create a project to Implement Software-Defined Access.

“Creating a worthwhile capstone project for the students allows them to experience exactly what they would see in industry, solving a common problem that we see across our customers,” explained HBS Senior Network Engineer Pierce Lannue, the capstone adviser.

Just like it would for a customer, HBS drafts a Statement of Work and defines a set of deliverables and timeline for students to accomplish the project.

“We place the students in our engineers’ shoes, give them all the materials and software, and have them implement the same solutions into a demo environment. It's as close to real-world experience as you can get, outside of an internship or co-op,” said Lannue, a 2018 CNIT alum.

**Strengthening student experiences through faculty partnerships**

HBS’ partnership with CNIT Program Director Holly Yuan and faculty helps strengthen student experiences as well.

HBS employees also serve on the CNIT advisory committee, support students through mock interviews and offer classroom presentations on topics such as Who is HBS?; What is Computer Networking?; Career Paths in IT; Technologies used Within the Industry; and Q&A panels.

“Holly and the CNIT advisers work tirelessly to make the program align with industry needs,” Robinson said. “Our involvement on advisory boards allows us to contribute to the curriculum and provide valuable insight into our business and customer needs.”

Applied learning and collaboration with external partners, like Heartland Business Systems, is at the core of UW-Stout’s mission as [Wisconsin’s Polytechnic University](https://www.uwstout.edu/about-us/our-polytechnic-advantage).

A record-setting 1,130 students engaged in hands-on learning experiences during the 2021-22 [Cooperative Education and Internship Program](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.uwstout.edu%2Facademics%2Fcareer-services%2Fcooperative-education-and-internship-program&data=05%7C01%7Cpolingj%40uwstout.edu%7C8c740c46357540e2e84608da94e51b89%7Cb71a81a32f9543819b89c62343a66052%7C0%7C0%7C637986009010849819%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=7GAxQvS9%2Bhi%2FltiM%2BF3t4w0eBxBV%2Fg%2BS6K1ph0jgwFc%3D&reserved=0) season. And according to Career Services’ most recent [First Destination report](https://www.uwstout.edu/about-us/news-center/happy-place-graduates-hit-new-highs-first-destination-employment-report), the overall employment rate of graduates was 99.4%, the best in the region.

The [Career Conference](https://www.uwstout.edu/academics/career-services/career-and-professional-events/career-conference-we) this fall semester is scheduled Monday, Sept. 25, through Thursday, Sept. 28. Career Conferences are open to UW-Stout students, alumni, faculty and staff. Employers recruit students and alumni for professional positions and co-op and internship opportunities. More than 325 companies from across the United States participated in [Career Conference Week](https://www.uwstout.edu/about-us/news-center/spring-career-conference-will-connect-students-more-325-state-and-national-companies) last spring.

*UW-Stout is*[*Wisconsin’s Polytechnic University*](https://www.uwstout.edu/about-us/our-polytechnic-advantage)*, with a focus on applied learning, collaboration with business and industry, and career outcomes. Learn more via the*[*FOCUS2030*](https://www.uwstout.edu/focus-2030-plan-initiatives)*strategic plan.*

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**Photos**

HBS college recruiters Kristin Robinson and Abby Vandenberg with the Employer of the Year award. Photos provided by Heartland Business Systems.

Summer interns Jacob Whitney, Noah Kamenick, Hannah Schwenke, Yue Yang, Zang Vang and Mariana Pena, with HBS Senior Network Engineer Pierce Lannue and Engineering Services Manager Tom Larson (back row). Photos provided by Heartland Business Systems.

Students in the CNIT Server Lab at UW-Stout.

The CNIT Server Lab and HBS internships prepare students for IT careers with hands-on experiences.