

NEWS RELEASE

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UW-Stout design students collaborate to combine couture, dance, video game

Blue Devils dance team choreographs Boogie Beyond, featured at Stout Game Expo on May 2

[Story Link](#)

Photos attached

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Menomonie, Wis. – Collaboration across disciplines is just one part of the [polytechnic experience](#) students receive at University of Wisconsin-Stout.

For students in the game and fashion design programs, recent collaborations even crossed over into athletics, as they worked with members of the [Blue Devils dance team](#) on two projects.

Dance team members **Alayna Reps** and **Izzy Swanson** switched from their dancewear to don motion capture suits and helped a game design team bring their game to life in UW-Stout's state-of-the-art Vicon [Motion Capture Studio](#) in Micheels Hall.

While the dance team's Head Coach **Samantha Ziwicki** worked with [fashion design and development](#) senior **Reem Emerson** on new costumes for a winter jazz routine.

Crossing over into Boogie Beyond

Reps and Swanson helped **Tristen Rice**, [animation and digital media](#), Menomonie; **Eric Gritzmacher**, [computer science](#), Hayward; **Bryce VanDyke**, [game design and development-art](#), Hudson; and **Sarah Ziebarth**, computer science and game design and development-art double major, Lake City, Minn., on their creation of Boogie Beyond, a virtual reality rhythm game.

The students are looking forward to sharing Boogie Beyond at [Stout Game Expo](#), western Wisconsin's largest game developers' event. SGX will be held from 6 to 9 p.m. on Thursday, May 2, in the Memorial Student Center Great Hall.

In the game, players act as investigators chasing down leads of “boogie fever” spreading throughout the city. They find themselves in the chaotic confines of Club Cosmic. Players groove their way through the mysterious nightclub looking for evidence and engaging in dance battles. They must uncover the figure behind the smoke and mirrors before they succumb to the fever themselves.

After meeting with the game design team to talk about the vibes they wanted for each character, Reys, a fashion design major from St. Charles, Minn., and Swanson, a [manufacturing engineering](#) and [mechanical engineering](#) double major from Becker, Minn., choreographed a song from the game’s soundtrack, drawing inspiration from Just Dance.

“The UW-Stout dance team was instrumental. They not only developed multiple era-specific choreography for our characters, aiming for an early 1980s and late 1970s aesthetic and sound, but they also motion-captured the dance itself,” Ziebarth said. “The characters wouldn’t have come to life nearly as much if it weren’t for their talent.”

Swanson called the recording in the mo-cap studio “an experience to remember. We danced to the music, taking breaks between each part. Then the game design team worked their magic to integrate the dances into the game,” she said.

Following the Stout Game Expo, the [SOAD Senior Show](#) will feature capstone projects by nearly 120 graduating School of Art and Design seniors from 6 to 9 p.m., on Friday, May 3, in Applied Arts and Micheels Hall.

Dancewear leads to small business venture

Emerson, a freelance designer and bridal consultant in St. Paul, was contracted through University Athletics to design 20 custom, [hand-sewn dance costumes](#) for the Blue Devils.

The team wore the costumes for their winter jazz routine, Stand in the Light, choreographed by Ziwicki, who chose a soft but powerful rendition of “Stairway to Heaven” for the performance. She wanted the costumes to be light, airy and feminine.

“The process and steps it took to design, pattern and sew all the costumes was similar to how we design our collections within the fashion program. The team didn’t have a costume in light colors, so we chose a blue hue that would still represent the Blue Devils,” she said.

After ideations, Emerson created five garment prototypes and presented them to Ziwicki. They discussed revisions and changes in the applique décor and fabric choices to allow for body movement and eliminate gaping.

The final design included a high neckline and backstrap. The asymmetrical knee-length skirt allowed for two different looks and was made of stretch knit performance mesh. Applique and crystal rhinestone details and a hand-made, detachable applique clip on the waistband added a touch of winter grace.

Emerson learned much of her hand-sewing techniques while interning last summer at Beauty By Design, in Minneapolis.

“One thing that I did not expect when going into this project was that I would come out of it as a small business owner,” she said. “Taking on the dancewear project was much more than sewing beautiful costumes. It helped give me career options that I never knew I could have. It was a fantastic experience.”

Ten fashion design seniors, including Emerson, will model 45 pieces in their capstone clothing collections at the **WEAR Fashion Show** at 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 27, in the Memorial Student Center Great Hall. Tickets are required and are [available to purchase online](#).

WEAR is part of [UW-Stout's Spring Showcase](#) of student-centered events in April and May. It is hosted by the WEAR Fashion Association student organization.

Emerson, who also has a degree in [industrial design](#) from UW-Stout, will graduate on Saturday, May 4. She is interviewing for full-time positions where she can help companies bring ideas to life.

The Blue Devils dance team competed in the Dance Xtreme Americup Championship in Minneapolis in February, receiving many recognitions, including the Andrew Lawrence Sportsmanship award. They won second place in the collegiate contemporary division for Stand in the Light, which was recognized for its positive message and the performers' stage presence.

The [team will host tryouts](#) on Saturday, April 20, and Sunday, April 21, in Johnson Fieldhouse. Tryouts are open to all 2024 high school graduates or older, and auditionees must be considering or committed to UW-Stout for fall 2024.

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

Fashion design and development senior Reem Emerson designed 20 costumes for the UW-Stout dance team's winter jazz routine, Stand in the Light. Photo provided by UW-Stout Athletics.

Concept art for Heather, a character in Boogie Beyond, a dance-based video game by game design and computer science students. Boogie Beyond will be featured at Stout Game Expo on Thursday, May 2. Digital art provided by Sarah Ziebarth.

UW-Stout dance team members Alayna Reps and Izzy Swanson in the Motion Capture Studio. Photo provided by Sarah Ziebarth.

Reem Emerson's ideation sketches for the dancewear. Digital art provided by Reem Emerson.