



University of
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Wisconsin's Polytechnic University

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NEWS RELEASE

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‘Outstanding results’: National award for UW-Stout’s internship program underscores student career success

Experience that builds confidence and skills and often leads to a full-time job is recognized by higher education association

[Story Link](#)

Photos attached

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Menomonie, Wis. — For a college student, a job that pays nearly \$20 an hour, provides academic credit, is in their career field and could lead to a full-time job sounds too good to be true.

But it is true at University of Wisconsin-Stout. The [Cooperative Education and Internship Program](#) is so successful that it has received the annual Excellence & Innovation Stewards of Place award from the [American Association of State Colleges and Universities](#) “for its outstanding results and potential to influence and serve as a model for other institutions.”

“As Wisconsin’s Polytechnic University, UW-Stout is uniquely dedicated to preparing students for success in their careers and communities. Our Cooperative Education and Internship Program is a fundamental element of our students’ learning, and we are honored to receive AASCU’s national recognition for this outstanding program,” said Chancellor Katherine Frank.

“Through the CEIP and other workforce initiatives, Stout graduates are not only employed within six months of graduation at an unmatched rate, but their impact is also real on day one,” she added.

UW-Stout will receive the award in November at AASCU's annual conference to be held in Puerto Rico. AASCU is based in Washington, D.C.

CEIP, which has a long record of success, perfectly aligns with the three tenets of UW-Stout's [polytechnic education](#) — applied learning, business and industry collaboration and career-focused experiences.

Managed by Career Services, CEIP plays a major role in UW-Stout's employment rate of 99% among recent graduates with an average starting salary of \$58,000, both the best among regional universities in west-central Wisconsin.

More than 1,000 UW-Stout students — typically juniors and seniors — take part in CEIP annually while earning an average of \$19.74 an hour, academic credits and making potential future job connections.

In fact, more than a third — 35% — of students who have co-ops eventually receive and accept full-time job offers from their co-op employer. The program is supported by 750 employers.

Between 88% and 96% of students report that a co-op experience improved their leadership skills, self-awareness, ability to navigate workplace expectations and gain a competitive edge over their peers.

Also, in a national career readiness survey, UW-Stout students rated their experience above their peers' in eight key categories, such as critical thinking, technology, teamwork, communication and professionalism.

Key aspects of CEIP's success include the biannual [Career Conferences](#), held spring and fall, some of the largest in the Upper Midwest with more than 300 employers on campus to hire for co-ops and full-time positions.

The AASCU award is the third recent national honor for CEIP. In the spring, mechanical engineering graduate [Julia Hellquist](#) received the 2024 national co-op student of the year honor. Hellquist had four co-ops with General Motors and was hired full time as an engineer after graduating in December 2023. A UW-Stout student also won the national co-op award in 2018.

General Motors was one of 56 Fortune 500 companies that hired UW-Stout graduates from 2022-23.

Career Services works closely with employers, academic departments and faculty mentors to ensure a "personalized and impactful work experience," said Bethany Henthorn, CEIP manager.

"When students land their positions, they are often uncertain about their abilities. Upon completion of their work experience, I see students confident in their abilities along with a record of success in the workplace that will springboard them into their first professional position," Henthorn said.

More than 27,000 UW-Stout students have benefited from the program since its inception in 1982.

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

A UW-Stout student visits with recruiters from Market & Johnson construction company of Eau Claire during the 2024 spring Career Conference.

Recent UW-Stout engineering graduate Julia Hellquist was hired by General Motors after having four co-op experiences with the Fortune 500 company.