Focus on Education
University of Wisconsin-Stout

By Rachael Moore and Pete Schlosser

The University of Wisconsin-Stout is Wisconsin’s only Polytechnic University and was the first university to receive the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, recognizing UW-Stout’s long history of performance in excellence in higher education. Being a polytechnic university, UW-Stout has a career focus, offering comprehensive curriculum that prepares graduates for professional careers in a wide range of fields. The university is committed to applied learning that blends theory with practice to produce innovative solutions to real world problems throughout all of the majors on campus. The campus greatly values collaboration and works closely with business, industry and other educational institutions, particularly companies that employ UW-Stout graduates, to better prepare students for their future careers.

The bachelor of science degree in graphic communications management (GCM) at UW-Stout is the premier graphics program in the Midwest. Its focus is on preparing graduates to be managers, leaders, motivators, and communicators who can deal with graphics, workflows, business issues and production efficiency as well as design, imaging, reproduction processes, and technology. The program turns out graduates who are high in demand because of their thorough knowledge of the entire graphics process, from design to delivery. Course work includes general education, professional management, and focused classes in hands-on graphic communications technology.

General education courses provide the foundation for the entire curriculum. Courses in humanities, social science, psychology and speech introduce students to methods of communication, motivation and personal interaction. Science and mathematics courses build analytical thinking and problem solving skills. Professional management courses are designed to provide students with a solid background in business and management and include courses in production management, accounting, manufacturing economics, organizational leadership, marketing, quality systems and customer service. These prepare students to manage projects and processes, make decisions and lead others.

Technology courses cover the entire workflow of graphic communications, from design to delivery. Hands-on laboratory experiences develop skills in creation and reproduction of graphic products and services. The curriculum is designed to cover such areas as digital photography, scanning, digital image editing, color management, layout and design, proofing, print reproduction, digital output, multichannel output, bindery and finishing. In addition to the technical skills learned, students understand how these processes are managed and coordinated by studying project planning, quality control, cost estimating, production management, customer relations, and plant management.

Two capstone classes—graphic communications practicum, which deals with production, and publication production—provide an opportunity for students to combine management and technical skills in extensive applied projects that deal with real-life customers.

An elective portion of the GCM program allows students to choose an emphasis area tailored toward their own personal areas of interest. These emphasis areas include digital photography, layout and design, packaging, industrial safety/loss control, information technology, production operations, production supervision, quality, sales and market-
ing, technical writing, and training and development. Students also are given the option to arrange a custom emphasis area to combine courses from more than one area.

The GCM program requires a cooperative learning experience (co-op) to be taken for credit during the summer after the junior year or combined with a fall or spring term. This is a full-time, paid industry work experience that is approved and screened as a valuable learning experience. The co-op ranges from a minimum of three months to as long as six to eight months. Many students find the extended co-op to be more beneficial because it allows them to really delve into the company and take on various leadership roles. Many employers recruit on campus for co-op students, but students can also seek out their own co-op opportunities for approval if they wish. The real-world experience is greatly valued by employers and many co-ops turn into full time job offers.

Common job titles among graduates of the UW-Stout Graphic Communications Management Program include imaging specialists, graphic artists, management trainees, estimators, customer service representatives, account managers, print buyers, sales trainees, project planners, graphics coordinators, print marketing coordinators, production schedulers, research and development analysts, quality control specialists, and production department supervisors. Graduates find positions across the entire span of the graphic communications field and are hired by publishers, marketing firms, printing companies, retailers, vendors and suppliers. The employment rate for graduates of the GCM program has exceeded 97 percent over the past 18 years, and starting salaries average in the low 30s, with top salaries in the low to mid-40s.

The Graphic Communications Program at UW-Stout has a community feel and is staffed by a group of highly-qualified and passionate individuals who dedicate countless hours both in and out of the classroom, assisting in after-hour lab activities and taking on roles as advisors for the two on-campus graphics student organizations. These include the Stout Typographical Society, which focuses on real-life production for on-campus and off-campus clients, and the Technical Association of the Graphic Arts, which is a student chapter of the industry group focused on industry research.

Dr. Ted M. Bensen is the program director for the GCM B.S. degree program. He has the opportunity to put into practice what he has learned in the classroom. Hands-on laboratory experience allows students to develop skills in creation and reproduction of graphic services.
earned degrees from UW-Stout in industrial/technology education and a doctorate from Iowa State University in industrial education and technology. He is an active presenter in workshops and seminars for printing industry professionals and graphic communications educators. His professional interests include digital imaging, prepress and premedia workflow, digital printing, digital asset management, color management, variable-data printing, cross-media marketing and leadership.

Dr. James Tenorio has been teaching courses in graphic communications technology and management since 1975, in particular the capstone graphic communications practicum course. He has degrees from UW-Stout, Rochester Institution of Technology and University of Minnesota. Tenorio holds memberships in the Printing Industries of America/Graphic Arts Technical Foundation, Printing Industry of Minnesota, Gravure Association of America, Flexographic Technical Association, and the International Graphic Arts Education Association.

Dr. Pete Schlosser has been teaching at UW-Stout since 2000. With degrees from UW-Stout and University of Minnesota, his specialties are in the cross media, premedia file preparation and photography sectors of the industry. He has more than 20 years of management experience and has been active in many professional associations in the fields of photography, education, and graphic communications. His research delves into visual and technology literacy, along with photography and illustration as language.

Dr. H Naik Dharavath received degrees from the Rochester Institution of Technology, Arizona State University, and University of Wyoming. He teaches several courses for the GCM degree program in the areas of color management, print planning, estimating and costing, and postpress and print distribution management. During his time at UW-Stout, he has successfully acquired industry support for the GCM program from national and international corporations including Fuji, CGS-ORIS, Data Color, IDEAlliance, Kodak, X-Rite, Metrix/Litho, and others.

Peter Galante is an internationally published, award winning designer, photographer, and filmmaker. Presently, he holds an appointment of assistant professor of photography and serves as the applied photography minor advisor. He received a MFA from Colorado State University and is currently a doctoral candidate at Cardinal Stritch University.

Bhaskar Gaddam joined UW-Stout after nearly 10 years of service to the graphic communications industry, specifically in the commercial printing and packaging divisions with strong exposure to offset lithography, gravure and flexography technologies. Since joining UW-Stout, Gaddam has maintained printing and post-press laboratories for the GCM program with duties including maintaining equipment and supplies, assisting faculty, and working with students in the GCM labs. He is working toward an educational specialist degree in career and technical education under the supervision of Dr. Tenorio.