

December graduates share their stories

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<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/1551/december-graduates-share-their-stories/>

Nearly 1,000 graduate and undergraduate students will receive degrees at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh's 44th midyear commencement ceremony Saturday, Dec. 13.

Three graduating students have agreed to share their stories.

Pioneer firefighter

A firefighter and paramedic with the Oshkosh Fire Department, J.J. LaDue is the first person to graduate from UW Oshkosh with the Fire and Emergency Response Management bachelor's degree. This is the first and only bachelor's degree for fire and emergency leadership advancement in the state of Wisconsin.

"This is a humbling experience to know that I was the first person in Wisconsin to graduate from this program," said LaDue. "To have completed this degree while working full-time is a pretty awesome experience."

With a family that has inspired lifelong learning, LaDue feels this bachelor's degree will keep his options for a career in firefighting open for the future.

"Firefighting is a physically demanding career," LaDue commented. "With this degree I will have a better ability to move into leadership ranks within a department, should something unthinkable happen to me healthwise."

Professional prelude

Even before they land their first jobs after graduation, students who take part in the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh's Student Consulting Program can report such impressive experiences on their resumes. Kate Maly, of Antigo, a senior majoring in marketing and supply chain and operations management, worked with a group assigned to consult with ReStore, of Appleton, which sells new, gently used and salvaged building materials to benefit its parent store, the Greater Fox Cities Area Habitat for Humanity.

The students worked to determine whether it was feasible for ReStore to open a second location in its service area, which includes Calumet, Outagamie and Winnebago counties.

"Throughout the project, we have been able to take everything we ever learned from being in the College of Business and apply the knowledge. We have been exposed to the real world with this project, giving us a taste of what we will be entering upon graduation," she said.

Pay it forward

Nontraditional student and single mother Katherine G. Devereaux knows the true value of her education. The first recipient of the Carla Roberts Scholarship, which was established by a single mother who graduated last December, Devereaux earned her first bachelor's degree from Cornell University. She found pursuing a second bachelor's degree to be a very different experience.

“Although I am proud of my first degree, the education I received from UWO I value as much or more than my Ivy League education,” she said. “It has been a wonderful experience. Dedicated educators and intelligent classmates have made me excited to encourage everyone, no matter their age, to continue their education.”

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