

**Profile of
University Custodial Program
University of Wisconsin–Stout
2024 Regents University Staff Excellence Program Award Recipient**

Highlights from nomination materials:

- The UW-Stout custodial program of 54 custodians is organized into three operational areas: Academic/Service Buildings; University Housing, and Student Centers. In 2007, the university custodial unit was merged under one supervisory umbrella to seek operational efficiencies. In 2016, the custodial team was reorganized into the current three operational areas.
- The custodial team maintains excellence in an environment of declining resources and reduced staff following the reorganization.
- Ensuring that labs, studios, classrooms, student centers, and living spaces are clean and safe positively contributes to the overall student experience.
- As Wisconsin's only Polytechnic University, UW-Stout has three times as many laboratory and studio spaces as classrooms, which requires additional and specific care by the custodial team.
- Components that maintain and build a culture of excellence include the longevity of the team (nine years of experience on average); taking pride in the work; and passing down knowledge.
- In residence halls, the responsibilities of custodial team members go well beyond providing care for students' personal spaces; custodians play a role in recognizing changing student behaviors, alerting on-call staff when a student may need mental health support, intervention, or medical care.
- The custodial team now uses four primary green chemicals for nearly all cleaning functions, an effort piloted in 2015 and adopted in most areas in 2016. The products are safer and healthier for the university community. The system replaced 26 previously used chemicals and resulted in 67% (\$44,954) annual cost savings; custodial staff restoring terrazzo flooring of 10,000 square feet during the COVID-19 pandemic saved almost \$100,000.
- UW-Stout was named a 2024 Green Ribbon Award Winner by the U.S. Department of Education. Custodial team members were a significant part of several areas within Green Ribbon Award application, including waste reduction efforts, winter salt management, chemical controls and reduction, clean spaces and indoor air quality efforts, as well as custodial membership on several campus sustainability committees.
- Examples of creativity include a tennis ball mounted on a broomstick to remove marks on floors and using a leaf blower to remove debris in the charcoal drawing room so as not to disturb easels.
- The custodial team is instrumental in the success of large, specialized events involving business and industry partners, such as Career Conferences, Stout Game Expo, fashion shows, and more.
- The custodial team was acknowledged for the COVID-19 response effort to clean and remove furniture to allow for social distancing, placement of signage, ever-changing cleaning protocols, and managing COVID housing.

In the words of colleagues:

- “The custodial team is an amazing group of dedicated employees essential to upholding our mission as Wisconsin’s Polytechnic University and supporting the success of our students and our university.”
—*Katherine P. Frank, Chancellor, UW-Stout*
- “Regardless of the operational unit in which they work, our custodial team is comprised of dedicated, hard-working, and long-serving individuals that take great pride in maintaining and servicing our facilities across campus. The university staff that make up our custodial team are professionals. They know they do more than just keep our buildings clean. They provide daily care and services for spaces that provide and support living, dining, and learning both in and out of the classroom. They create first impressions for recruitment and the care and feeding of the campus spaces they take such pride in contributes to retention. Daily, their work helps us live out our polytechnic mission.”
—*Sandi Scott, Senior Student Affairs Officer/Dean of Students, UW-Stout*