

Mapping Electronic Resources to Identify Regional Stakeholders for the Master of Science

Degree in Applied Psychology


by

Mariah M. Chastan

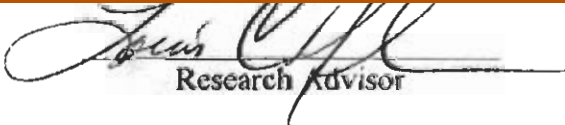
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Abstract

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Mapping Electronic Resources to Identify Regional Stakeholders for the Master of Science Degree in Applied Psychology  
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The following applied research is a description of information contained in public websites or domains and the ultimate purpose is to create a link between students enrolled in the University of Wisconsin-Stout's Master of Science in Applied Psychology (MSAP) program and community employers. This applied research of mapping electronic resources to identify regional stakeholders for the MSAP has two main purposes. The first is to promote the University of Wisconsin-Stout's MSAP program and the services the program is potentially able to provide to outside organizations and the community as a whole. The second function is to establish resources to support the MSAP program and its anticipated growth.

The following applied research produced a resource list containing Universal Resource Locators (URL) that will be integrated into a Masters of Science in Applied Psychology (MSAP) learning community, assessable to all students within the program. The resource list easily

enables MSAP students to examine the labor force and potential internship/employment opportunities within the region. Consequently, MSAP students have an initial resource for gaining knowledge and information prior to reaching out to businesses/organizations and establishing a reciprocal relationship.

### Acknowledgements

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## Chapter I: Introduction

The purpose of this applied research is to launch an outreach effort to the businesses/organizations within the surrounding communities as stakeholders in the University of Wisconsin-Stout's Masters of Science in Applied Psychology program. It can be expected the graduate program within the institute of higher education and the businesses/organizations within the surrounding communities would benefit from a reciprocal relationship. The Masters of Science in Applied Psychology program has the capability to offer the outside stakeholders expertise in the area of consulting, program evaluation, survey development/analysis, and research strategies. The businesses/organizations, on the other hand, are able to extend practical on-site opportunities and real-world problems to graduate students and faculty. Consequently, MSAP students practice, refine, and extend their knowledge, skills, and abilities gained in the classroom. Both the Masters of Science in Applied Psychology program and businesses/organizations are in the position to prosper from an affiliation with the other party; therefore linking the two groups is practical and functional.

### *The History of Education, Training and Socio-Economic Status in the United States*

Since the founding of the United States, there has been vast numbers of immigrants making the voyage from numerous countries, often in waves. These immigrants were largely uneducated, particularly in early times, and chose to migrate to America for various reasons. War, unemployment, famine and crop failures, economic crisis, political revolutions, industrialization, and better transportation drove the pattern or trends in immigration (An Immigrant Nation, 1991). Past settlers and many contemporary immigrants have great optimism and a vision of a better existence in their new homeland. Education and training have been the foundation for enhancing the lives of these immigrants and their decedents. Through education



and training each generations' knowledge base, skills, and abilities were further developed, practiced, and refined.

In addition to the opportunities sought by United States immigrants, the nation offers its natives appealing education and training possibilities to help enhance their subsistence and its status as a global economic power. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, better known as the GI Bill of Rights, is perhaps the best illustration. The Act was passed on June 13, 1944 and was signed into law on June 22, 1944 by President Roosevelt (GI Bill History, n.d.). "Four elements of the GI Bill were revolutionary as post-war benefits for all veterans: readjustment allowance while unemployed, educational opportunity in colleges and universities, vocational education and on-the-job training, and loans for purchase of a home, farm, or business" (Greenberg, 1997, p. 16).

The educational aspects of the GI Bill were generous, as well as successful. Out of a veteran population of 15,440,000, over 2.2 million took advantage of the education benefits and attended colleges and universities (GI Bill History, n.d.). An additional 3.5 million attained training through enrollment in other types of schools (Greenberg, 1997). The GI Bill "changed the very idea of who could be a university student" (Greenberg, 1997, p. 51). It gave veterans access to education which many men and women may not otherwise have received. Consequently, their knowledge, skills, and abilities were amplified allowing for the likelihood of economic advancement and increased quality of life.

In addition to one's personal desire to actively seek higher education and training, the United States' employment market has evolved requiring the labor force attain higher levels of education. Specifically, since 1945 there has been a shift towards a service-based economy verses a goods-based economy (Report on the American Workforce, 1994; Judy & D'Amico,



1997; Prywes, 2000). Fourteen percent (14%) of employment from 1969 to 1993 shifted from goods-producing to the service-producing sector (Report on the American Workforce, 1994). By the year 2025 it is estimated by the Bureau of Economic Analysis that 83% of the American workforce will be in the service sector (Judy & D'Amico, 1997).

In terms of occupations, the economy shift has accompanied an increase in employment in managerial and professional occupations since the late 1960's (Report on the American Workforce, 1994; Judy & D'Amico, 1997). "The proportion of workers in such jobs grew from about 20% of the total employed in 1972 to 27% in 1993" (Report on the American Workforce, 1994, p. 22). During that same time, employment in less-skilled operator, fabricator, and laborer occupations have declined from 21% of the total employed to 14%. Between 1994 and 2005 occupations requiring a modest level of skill/education were expected to be reduced in size while it was anticipated the major occupational categories of professionals, service workers, and technicians would show the greatest growth (Judy & D'Amico, 1997). These expanding occupations require a high level of skills where as the occupations which have declined in growth require low or moderate skills.

The shift from goods production to service production is projected to continue in the future along with the decreased demand for unskilled or low skilled workers (Judy & D'Amico, 1997). According to the Report on the American Workforce (1994) the past decade has seen the largest growth in occupations which require formal education, specific knowledge, and training; this trend is projected to continue in the future with jobs requiring even higher levels of education. Unskilled or low-skilled workers in the U.S. are likely to face increasing constraints on their employment opportunities, and consequently their quality of life. Given these predictions, higher education credentials are even more crucial in one's effort to prosper through

stable employment and a secure future. The knowledge, skills, and abilities resulting from quality higher education instruction and curriculum offer a person a competitive advantage when entering the workforce. This is particularly the case when the specific field of study sought and completed by the individual is encompassed by an expanding occupation.

### *The History of Wisconsin Education*

The Wisconsin Idea has an extensive history and remains clearly evident at many levels within the Wisconsin's educational system. The University of Wisconsin-Stout, which originated as the Stout Manual Training School in 1891 exemplifies the Wisconsin Idea. According to Stark (1995), the Wisconsin Idea can be defined as

“The University's direct contributions to the state: to the government in the forms of serving in office, offering advice about public policy, providing information and exercising technical skill, and to the citizens in the forms of doing research directed at solving problems that are important to the state and conducting outreach activities”.

(p.102)

Stout Manual Training School was founded by James Huff Stout who possessed the philosophy of learning through involvement (Bigony, 1991). The school opened its doors on January 5, 1891 and was wholly committed to the subject matter of manual training and domestic science (*University of Wisconsin-Stout: A rich history*, revised 2004; Bigony, 1991). With over a 100 year history, the school has undergone many name changes. In 1908, the Stout Manual Training School became The Stout Institute and then in 1955 it became Stout State College. The school was re-named again in 1964 and became known as Stout State University. Since the unification of all “state” universities into a central system of administration in 1971 the school has and is known as the University of Wisconsin-Stout (*University of Wisconsin-Stout: A rich*

*history* revised 2004).

Despite the name changes and other transformations to the University of Wisconsin-Stout, the core philosophy of learning through involvement, initiated by the institute's founder James Huff Stout, endured over time. James Huff Stout's philosophy of learning through engagement can also be paraphrased and expressed in popular phrases as the current "hands-on minds-on" motto adopted by the university. This hands-on minds-on approach is extensively engrained throughout the university's system. It is evident particularly at the graduate level, more specifically the Masters of Science in Applied Psychology program.

The University of Wisconsin-Stout's Masters of Science in Applied Psychology (MSAP) program exists within the College of Human Development and was put into operation in 1995 (University of Wisconsin-Stout: College of Human Development, Psychology Department, Introduction, n.d.). Preceding its establishment, there was a recognized need and a departmental motivation to develop the MSAP program. More specifically, there were three influential factors that acted as the driving force behind the program's development (Administrative Action on Program Development: M.S. in Applied Psychology, 1996). The Psychology Department staff's capability and interest in the delivery of a particular curriculum offered vital energy to the program's progress. In addition, discussions/interviews were held with business, industry, and government professionals to assess the needs or requirements of potential candidates within different occupations/career fields. Finally, the deficiency within existing programs to pass on specific knowledge, skills, and abilities deemed imperative by the aforementioned professionals was revealed.

Since 1995, the MSAP program has expanded and matured into three separate concentrations: Industrial/Organizational Psychology, Health Psychology, and Program

Evaluation. As a terminal masters program, MSAP students generally complete coursework and requirements, receive their degree, and make a relatively direct transition into the professional world. The program requires a total of 48 graduate credits; 26 of which are core credits in the sense that every MSAP student must take the courses and the remaining 22 credits are specific to each concentration (University of Wisconsin-Stout, College of Human Development: Masters of Science in Applied Psychology, Program Requirements, 1999). Graduate students selecting the Industrial/Organizational Psychology concentration examine the behavior of people at work and in group settings (University of Wisconsin-Stout, College of Human Development: Masters of Science in Applied Psychology, Concentrations, 2003). Those enrolled in the Health Psychology concentration focuses on psychological and behavioral factors in illness, dysfunction, and medical treatment. Finally, graduate students within the Program Evaluation concentration conduct applied studies in organizational planning, decision-making, and accountability.

According to the Master of Science in Applied Psychology homepage, the MSAP program is “designed to provide students with the knowledge, experience, and skills to apply the theories and methods of psychology toward the identification and solution of a variety of organizational and social problems in business, health, community service, and educational settings” (University of Wisconsin-Stout, College of Human Development: Masters of Science in Applied Psychology, Introduction, 2003).

In 2004, the MSAP program at the University of Wisconsin-Stout ranked within the top twenty Industrial/Organizational Masters’ degree program in the nation (Krueger & Avalos, 2004). These rankings were based on quality ratings given by the program’s students on such variables as program costs, culture, and resources. In order to maintain this success and strive to achieve even more, the Masters of Science in Applied Psychology program needs to increase

student enrollment and completion of the curriculum, while sustaining educational quality.

Various resources are deemed necessary in the effort to expand and thus remain a viable graduate program of high quality. More specifically, organizational sites willing to extend internship opportunities to second-year students need to be located, contacted, and committed to offering support. Professionals working in business/industry within the community who are willing and able to serve as Program Advisory Committee members also need to be recognized and recruited for such positions. Finally, scholarship opportunities for graduate students within the program need to be initiated and actively pursued. Securing these particular resources will enhance the quality and appeal of the program to prospective students, as well as those currently enrolled.

A critical first step in improving the outreach efforts of a graduate program within a higher education institution is identifying who to contact within efforts to gain aid and support. Consequently, it is necessary to enumerate the populations of businesses/organizations within a proximal region. In this particular case, the largest businesses/organizations within a one-hundred mile radius of the University of Wisconsin-Stout will be preferred and specified. A resource list will be compiled to include search engines, Universal Resource Locators (URL), and books containing information on employers as well as the labor market. Future endeavors, by Masters of Science in Applied Psychology (MSAP) students and staff, to contact the appropriate personnel and establish lasting relationships with the businesses/organizations will be put forth in an effort to secure much needed resources. In the interim, the resource list will be integrated into a MSAP electronic learning community.

This applied research of mapping electronic resources to identify regional stakeholders for the MSAP has two main purposes. The first is to promote the University of Wisconsin-



Stout's Master of Science in Applied Psychology program and the services the program is able to provide to outside organizations and the community as a whole. The second function of this applied research is to recruit resources to support the MSAP program and its anticipated growth. The resources the applied research study will recruit are in the form of prospective internship sites that can be extended to future MSAP students, external members for the Program Advisory Committee, and scholarship opportunities for graduate students within the program. It is assumed the regional focus will be sufficient, to begin with, in locating an adequate number of businesses/organizations who would be willing to lend their support to the Master of Science in Applied Psychology program. Future efforts to expand the proximal region, and thus the number of businesses/organizations would likely be beneficial to the MSAP program and its scholars.

## Chapter II: Literature Review

Recession in contemporary times has brought about intense competition for public resources. States are endlessly confronted with fiscal pressures/demands from various programs and services. Governors and legislatures struggle to manage the limited budget and allocate funds appropriately. Medicaid, elementary/secondary education, welfare, courts, prisons, homeland security, and higher education expenses are just some of the contenders in the battle to receive state money (Rekindle & Bower, 2001; *Losing Ground*, 2002). Since higher education is better equipped and able to utilize other sources of revenue, appropriations reserved for higher education often diminish in weak economic times (Rekindle & Bower, 2001).

This trend in decreasing state appropriation has caused a shift in the funding of higher education from the public sector to the private sector (Rekindle & Brower, 2001). According to Rekindle and Brower (2001) and other sources, government support for higher education in the form of appropriations has been on the decline in recent years (*State issues: Budget and tuition update*, 2004). "In 1988-1989 state appropriations represented 39.9% of current fund revenues at public four-year colleges and universities," a decade later such revenue declined had to 31.5% (Rekindle & Brower, 2001).

As a result of the state supplying a reduced amount of revenue to colleges and universities, these institutions have found it necessary to establish alternative sources of income, particularly from the private sector (Rekindle & Brower, 2001). Increasing tuition and fees has been the norm in recent decades and is a significant means for supplementing the decrease in public investment in higher education (Rekindle & Brower, 2001; *State issues: Budget and tuition update*, 2004; *Trends in college pricing*, 2000; *Losing ground*, 2002). "Between 1988-1989 and 1998-1999, the current fund revenues generated by tuition and fees at public four-year



institutions increased 107.4%" (Rekindle & Brower, 2001; *Losing ground*, 2002). The average tuition increases at public colleges and universities for the 2001-2002 academic year was 7.7%, much higher than nation's 2.6% inflation rate (Losing Ground, 2002). Raising tuition and fees places more of the responsibility for financing ones education on the student and his/her family, thus broad student access to higher education may be jeopardized due to the fact not everyone is willing/able to finance a post-secondary education (Rekindle & Brower, 2001; *Trends in college pricing*, 2000; *Losing ground*, 2002).

*Measuring Up 2004: The National Report Card on Higher Education* (2004) evaluates or grades each of America's states in terms of five categories of college opportunity and achievement. Affordability is one such category that asks the question: how difficult is it to pay for college when family income, the cost of attending college, and student financial assistance are taken into account (*Measuring up*, 2004). For most families college has become less affordable than it has been in the past (*Measuring up*, 2004; *Losing ground*, 2002). The highest grade given in the affordability category was a "B" and only one state, California, received this mark (*Measuring up*, 2004). Two other states received a "C" score and eleven states were given a grade of "D". Thirty-six (36) of the 52 states received a grade of "F" on affordability. The lowest rating given to the state of Wisconsin was a "D" and this score was in the affordability category.

To cope with the elevated tuition, fees, and other costs of a higher education many students and families are taking out loans to finance their schooling (*Losing ground*, 2002). In 2000, 58% of all financial aid for students was in the form of loans, where as grants represented only 41%. "Three-fifths of all graduating seniors at four-year institutions in 1999-2000 had borrowed through the federal student loan programs at some time, and their average cumulative

federal loan was almost \$17,000” (Berkner, Berker, Rooney, Peter, & Malizio, 2002).

Given the decrease in public investment in higher education and the affordability issue faced by many families regarding financing such, an increased need for support from other sources within the private sector is vital. In addition to the students and their families, the private sector may include companies, businesses, and organizations offering private gifts, donations, and scholarship opportunities.

Without an abundance of public or private revenue for universities and colleges many institutions are facing hardships. Increasing the number of students allowed per class, reducing faculty/staff, delaying major purchases, cutting existing programs, and initiating few new programs are just a few tactics universities and colleges are using to cope with the crisis (*Financing higher education: A crisis in state funding*, n.d.). These actions seem to contradict or challenge future projections of education statistics. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, “by 2011-12, the number of degrees awarded are expected to increase across all (educational) levels” (Projections of Education Statistics to 2012: Chapter 4 Earned Degrees Conferred, 2002-2003). In 1986-87 there were 289,349 master’s degrees granted. Just over a decade later this number increased by 58%. It is predicted by the year 2011-12 the number of master’s degrees awarded will be 501,000.

As previously mentioned, the University of Wisconsin-Stout’s Masters of Science in Applied Psychology program has a relatively short history, yet the program has managed to mirror the aforementioned data reported by the National Center for Educational Statistics. More specifically, the MSAP program has increased the number of students who are accepted on an annual basis into the program over the past decade (L. Milanesi, personal communication, April 13, 2005). To date, the largest number of applicants accepted during a one year span has been 20;

and the smallest number of students granted acceptance into the MSAP program has been 7.

The need for resources must be met or exceeded to ensure the continuation of growth and development displayed by the MSAP program. In particular, expansion of the Masters of Science in Applied Psychology program will occur when internship sites are located and secured for/by students, external members for the Program Advisory Committee are found and dedicated to serving a term, and scholarships are extended as well as sought after by current/future students. This applied research project is a preliminary step taken to assist MSAP students in establishing professional relationships with community employers. Once a partnership is created between MSAP students and community employers, the employers will be more aware of their role as stakeholders in the program. Consequently, the community employers will be more receptive to the program's need for resources and extend the necessary support.

### Chapter III: Methodology

The ultimate purpose of this applied research is to create a link or partnership among the University of Wisconsin-Stout; particularly students enrolled in the Masters of Science in Applied Psychology program, and community employers. Community employers are important stakeholders to the program and therefore ought to have an invested interest and be closely linked to the university. The applied research will produce a list of resources, easily enabling MSAP students to examine the labor force and potential internship/employment opportunities surrounding the University of Wisconsin-Stout.

The largest businesses/organizations within the Northwestern Wisconsin region, particularly within a hundred mile radius of the University of Wisconsin-Stout's campus, will be given primacy based on the assumption that these establishments are most likely to be receptive of the services the Master of Science in Applied Psychology program has to offer. In addition, it is anticipated the establishments are better equipped and likely to offer their outside support to the program than smaller companies or establishments.

#### *Participants*

The applied research is a description of information contained in public websites or domains. Hence, there are no subjects or participants per se. All the major businesses/organizations that are open for business prior to January 2005 and that are within a proximal region of 100 miles from the University of Wisconsin-Stout campus can be considered applicants for the applied research. This includes the following sectors and any combination thereof: for-profit, non-profit, private, and public. Numerous industries will also be represented by the businesses/organizations. The businesses/organizations that employ the largest number of employees will be ideal candidates.

### *Data Collection Procedures*

A resource list will be compiled to include Universal Resource Locators (URL) containing information on the labor market as well as employers. This list will be integrated into a MSAP electronic learning community, accessible to all students within the program.

Using the University of Wisconsin-Stout's Library Learning Center homepage, an extensive internet search was conducted to locate useful Universal Resource Locators (URL). Each of the three icons under the subtitle "Internet Research" on the aforementioned homepage was explored (See Figure 1). The search engine Google was employed to search the internet for labor market information, as well as listings of community employers. The Company and Brand Directories contained under the Subject and Reference Guide icon was viewed and considered. Finally, the sites within the Wisconsin Sites icon were examined for potential resources. University of Wisconsin-Stout librarians/reference personnel were approached and questioned regarding potential ideas or resources via the World Wide Web and books within the University of Wisconsin library system. Suggestions offered by the University of Wisconsin-Stout Library Learning center staff were thoroughly considered, pursued, and investigated by the researcher.



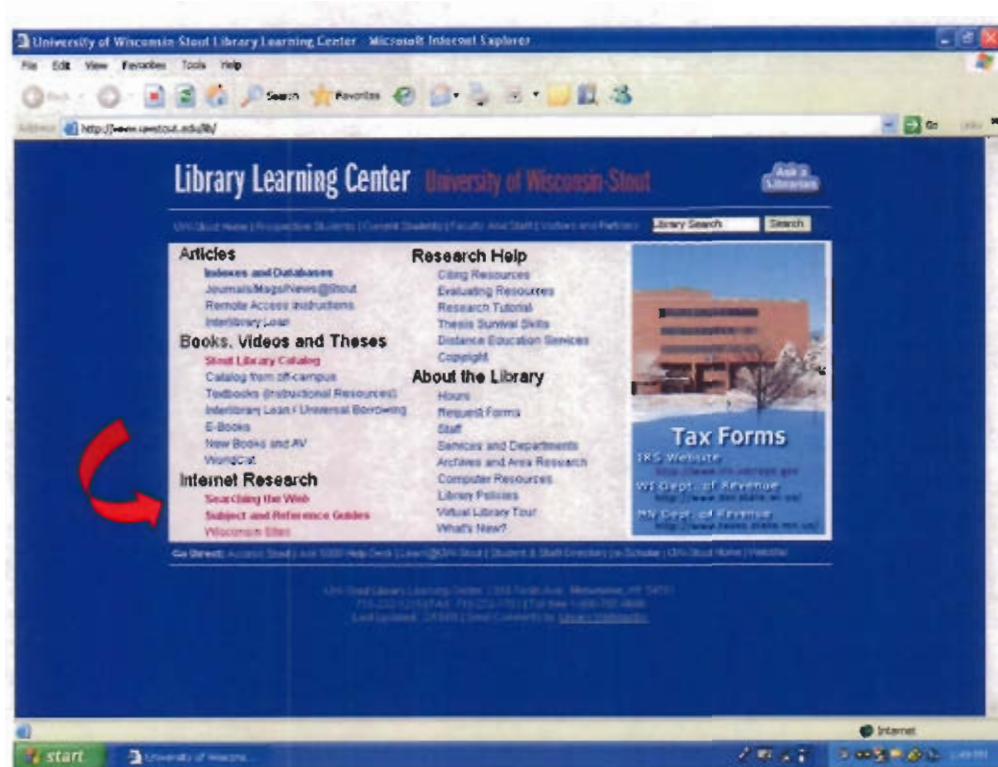


Figure 1. Library Learning Center University of Wisconsin-Stout

The resource list offers **MSAP** students an initial point to explore information regarding the labor market and community employers. Subsequently, the students can carry out further investigations and locate such variables as: the name, address, and telephone number of the business/organization, its fax number/website/email address, the county in which it resides, the number of employees, the sector and industry to which the business/organization belongs, the existing service/product/material put forth by the business/organization, the date it was founded/ownership, yearly sales, the position within the business/organization in which to contact for information or with questions, and its distance from University of Wisconsin-Stout campus. It is believed these variables are the most valuable aids in the effort to bridge the Masters of Science in Applied Psychology program to the larger community.

## Chapter IV: Results

After a thorough investigation, four separate Universal Resource Locators (URL) were identified and recognized as valuable resources for generating a bridge that would link University of Wisconsin-Stout's MSAP students to community employers. The supporting organizations for these resources are the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, West Central Wisconsin Workforce Resource, and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

### *Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development*

*<http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/default.htm>*

According to the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) homepage (2005), the DWD "is a state agency charged with building and strengthening Wisconsin's workforce in the 21st century and beyond (and it's) primary responsibilities include providing job services, training and employment assistance to people looking for work, at the same time as it works with employers on finding the necessary workers to fill current job openings." The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development can be found through an internet search and is located at <http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/default.htm>. The Wisconsin DWD offers many programs and services to a variety of audiences; hence it is the supporting organization for two of the resources aforementioned.

### *Office of Economic Advisors*

Within Wisconsin's Department of Workforce Development (DWD) there is the Office of Economic Advisors (OEA). The OEA can be located through the DWD homepage by clicking on the Office of Economic Advisors icon under the heading DWD programs or going to web site map icon and looking under the heading job seekers. The OEA can be located more directly by



going to <http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/oea/>. The OEA's homepage cites its three main responsibilities or undertakings as: "assist[ing] economic data users to better understand the relationships between labor markets and other economic and demographic specifics; help[ing] users interpret labor force data and focus on the issues and trends influencing employment growth in the State of Wisconsin; and publish[ing] monthly and annual reports that provide an overview of county and state trends" (Wisconsin DWD: Office of Economic Advisors, n.d.).

The Office of Economic Advisors' homepage has an icon leading viewers to a collection of products. Many of these products or links are essential tools in the effort to bridge the MSAP students to community employers; they enable MSAP students to examine the labor force and potential employment opportunities surrounding the University of Wisconsin – Stout. Among others, the products include: employment by industry, employment projections, regional and county information, and employer information (See Figure 2). The employment by industry link allows a viewer to choose a particular Wisconsin county and examine the number of people employed within certain industries (i.e. goods producing, service producing, manufacturing, etc.). The employment projections icon allows a viewer to investigate both the long and short-term predictions for employment either state-wide or by region. The regional and county information icon leads viewers to a host of information or other links, including county workforce profiles. The county workforce profiles are particularly useful; they contain data/information on the county's population, future population and labor supply, current labor force, industry and employers by size, commuting, key occupations and wages, employment and wages, and per capita income. Finally, the employer information icon leads a viewer to the top 50 employers by county, either exclusively private or private and public combined.

The Office of Economic Advisors offers a breadth of information and resources imperative to the MSAP students' endeavor of establishing professional ties to community employers. Consequently, the Office of Economic Advisors is contained within the resource list.

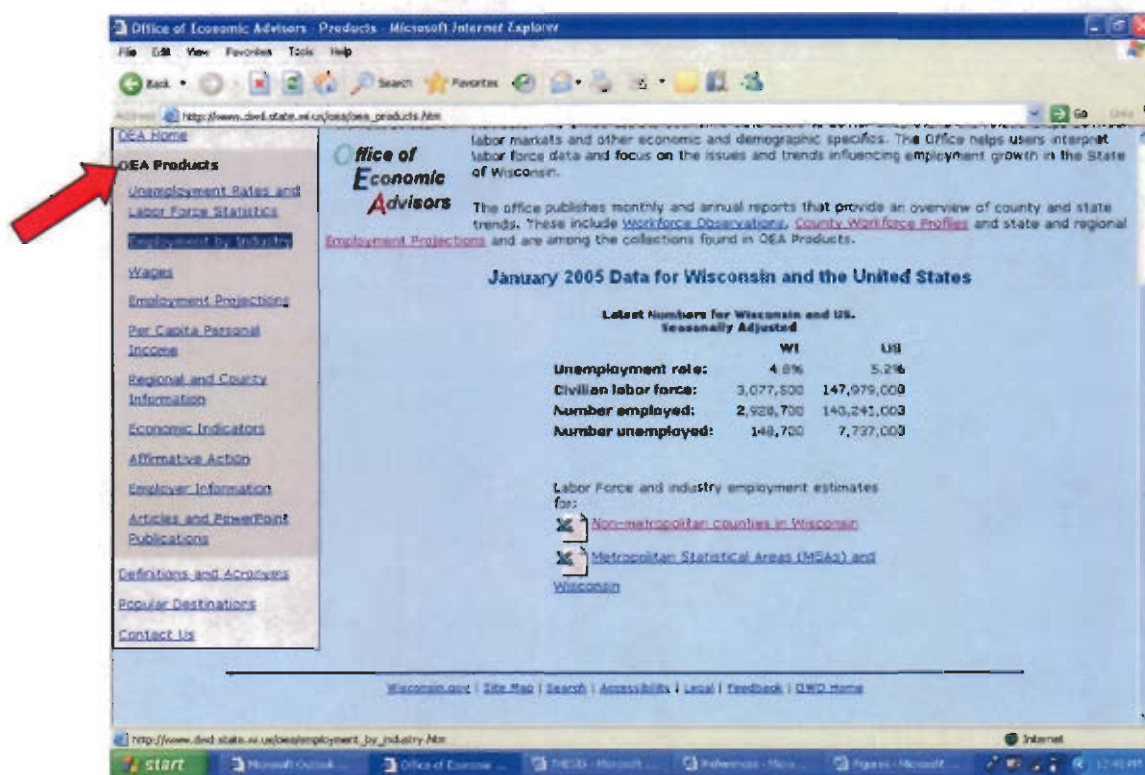


Figure 2. Office of Economic Advisors

### Wisconsin's WORKNet

Wisconsin WORKNet also resides within the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD). According to its homepage (n.d.), Wisconsin's WORKNet is the states "workforce and labor market information system". Wisconsin's WORKNet can be located through Wisconsin's DWD homepage by clicking on the labor market info icon or the WORKNet/LMI icon under the heading DWD programs. One can also go to the web site map icon within the DWD homepage, and look under the heading workers. WORKNet can be more directly located by going to <http://worknet.wisconsin.gov/worknet/>.

There are many dimensions to Wisconsin's WORKNet website. The area most valuable to this applied research is that which is directed toward job seekers (See Figure 3). The job seeker icon guides the viewer to make a more precise selection of information, such as: county summary, most job openings, and high-growth jobs. Choosing the county summary icon allows a viewer to examine a particular county within the state (See Figure 4). The summary provides the top employers by employment, top industry by employment, top paying hourly occupations, unemployment rates, population and miscellaneous information, as well as other helpful links. The most job openings icon allows the viewer to investigate which occupations are expected to see the most openings between 2002 and 2012. With further examination, the viewer can choose to learn more about the skill-set required for a particular occupation and possible posted jobs. Finally, the high-growth jobs icon enables a viewer to inspect the jobs which are expected to grow the fastest between 2002 and 2012. Again, with further examination the viewer can learn about skill-sets and posted jobs for a particular occupation.

Like the Office of Economic Advisors, Wisconsin's WORKNet puts forth extensive information/data that is vital to the quest to bridge community employers and MSAP students. Therefore, Wisconsin WORKNet is included in the resource list.

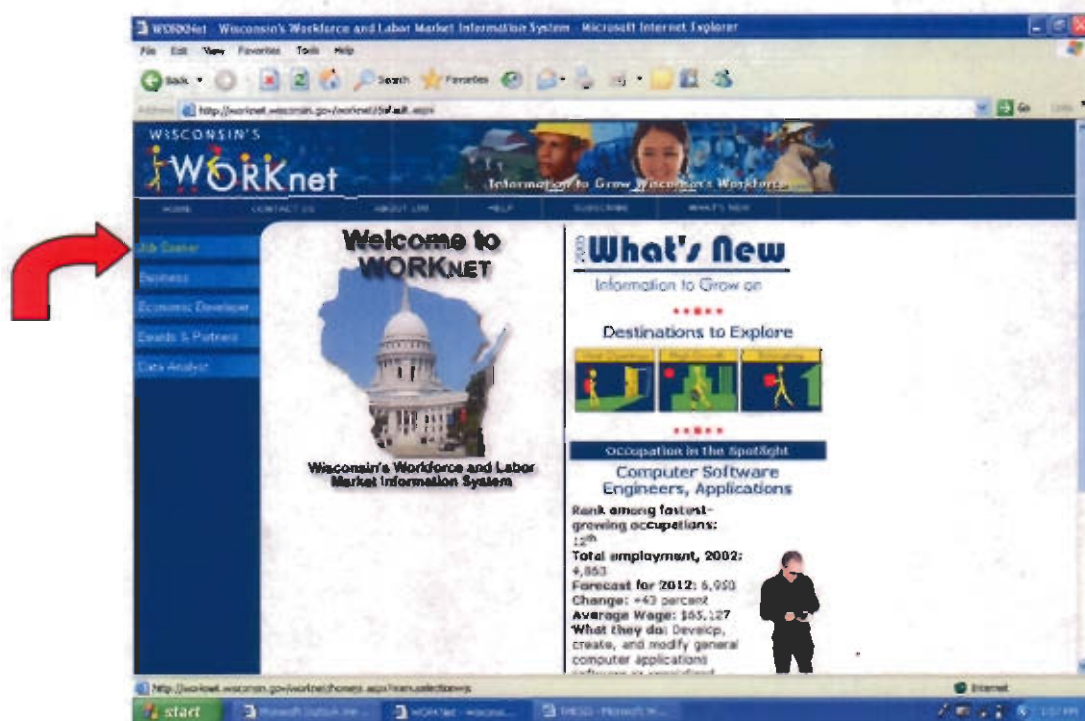


Figure 3. Wisconsin's WORKNET

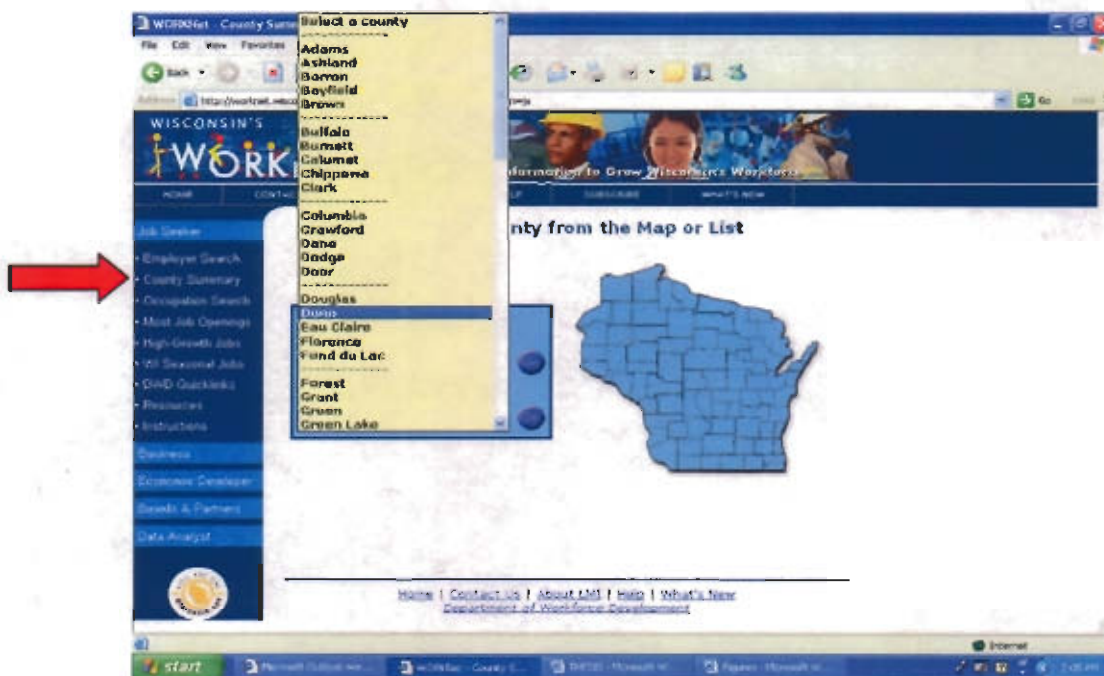


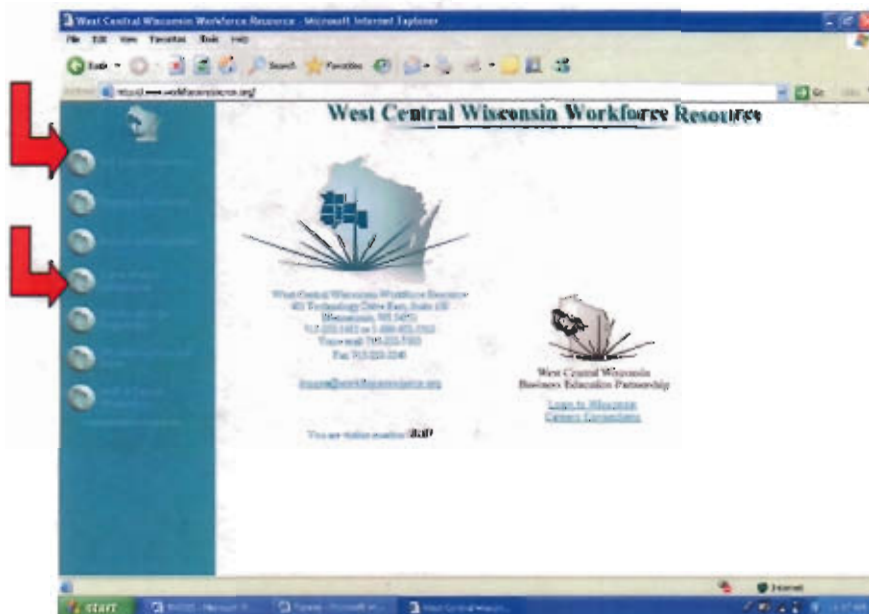
Figure 4. Wisconsin's WORKNET County Summary



### *West Central Wisconsin Workforce Resource*

West Central Wisconsin Workforce Resource is based in Menomonie, Wisconsin. The organization possesses a universal resource locator on the World Wide Web and can be located through an internet search. On the other hand, it can be located more directly by going to <http://www.workforceresource.org/>. According to the West Central Wisconsin Workforce Resource website (West Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Area Boards and Committees, n.d.), there are nine counties included in West Central Wisconsin area; the region has a population of approximately 400,000 and all sectors of the economy are represented by a business community comprised of over 10,000 establishments.

The West Central Wisconsin Workforce Resource website extends information to a variety of audiences including employers and jobseekers. A viewer can easily navigate the numerous dimensions of the website by using specific icons to narrow their subject area (See Figure 5). The topic areas most valuable to University of Wisconsin-Stout's Masters of Science in Applied Psychology students are the job seeker resources and the labor market information.



**Figure 5.** West Central Wisconsin Workforce Resource

The job seeker resources icon allows a viewer to explore either education and training links or county resource links. Once a county is selected from the county resource links list, a viewer is able to thoroughly investigate a particular county (See Figure 6). Within the county resource links list is the local Jobnet resources icon. Local Jobnet presents the viewer with job postings located in the selected county based on eight career/job categories.

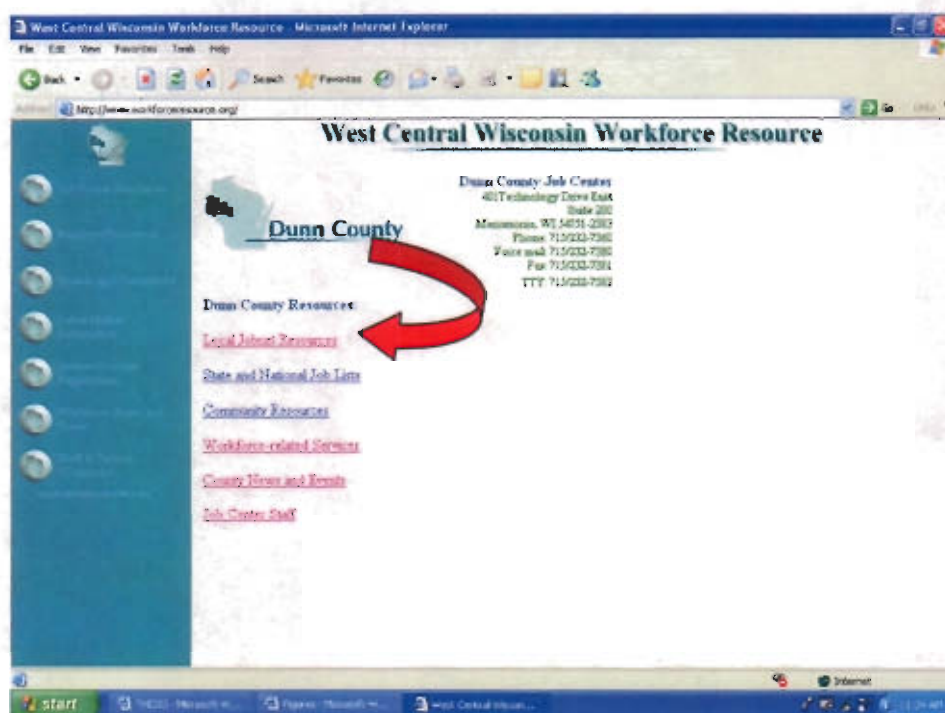


Figure 6. West Central Workforce Resource County Resource

The labor market information icon directs the viewer to select a county. Once a county is specified, its workforce profile and labor report can be examined. Wisconsin economic indicators, area wages by occupation, and census information/data can also be inspected. The county workforce profiles displayed by West Central Wisconsin Workforce Resource are the same county workforce profiles offered by and, previously discussed in the Office of Economic Advisors section.

From a regional level, West Central Wisconsin Workforce Resource provides valuable information to a variety of people. University of Wisconsin-Stout MSAP students, in particular, can utilize the West Central Wisconsin Workforce Resource website to gain knowledge about the local labor market and discover potential career opportunities. Consequently, the West Central Wisconsin Workforce Resource is included in the resource list established in an effort to create a partnership among MSAP students and community employers.

*Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development*

According to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) homepage (2005), DEED "is the state's principal economic development agency, with programs promoting business recruitment, expansion, and retention; workforce development; international trade; and community development; the agency's mission is to support the economic success of individuals, businesses, and communities by improving opportunities for growth." Minnesota's DEED can be located through an internet search or by going directly to <http://www.deed.state.mn.us/index.htm>.

Minnesota's Department of Employment and Economic Development is a comprehensive organization consisting of four main divisions which offer numerous services targeted toward individuals, businesses, and the community. The information/data put forth by Minnesota's DEED, via its website is extensive. The topic areas most pertinent to MSAP student are perhaps the labor market information and the job seeker services (See Figure 7).

The labor market information icon permits a viewer to read economic highlights or navigate to other subject fields such as: careers, economy, industries, jobs, regions, unemployment, wages and salaries, workforce, publications, and data tools. The subject field titled jobs contains links to employment projections, job vacancy survey data, and market



conditions faced by workers in Minnesota. The information/data within these three areas are particularly useful to a Masters of Science in Applied Psychology student attending the University of Wisconsin-Stout who wishes to establish professional contacts/relationships.

The job seeker services icon allows a viewer to examine services provided to job seeker by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. The job seeker services icon also directs viewers to job openings by means of various job bank links. These job banks can be a vital resource for MSAP students seeking to enter the professional world.

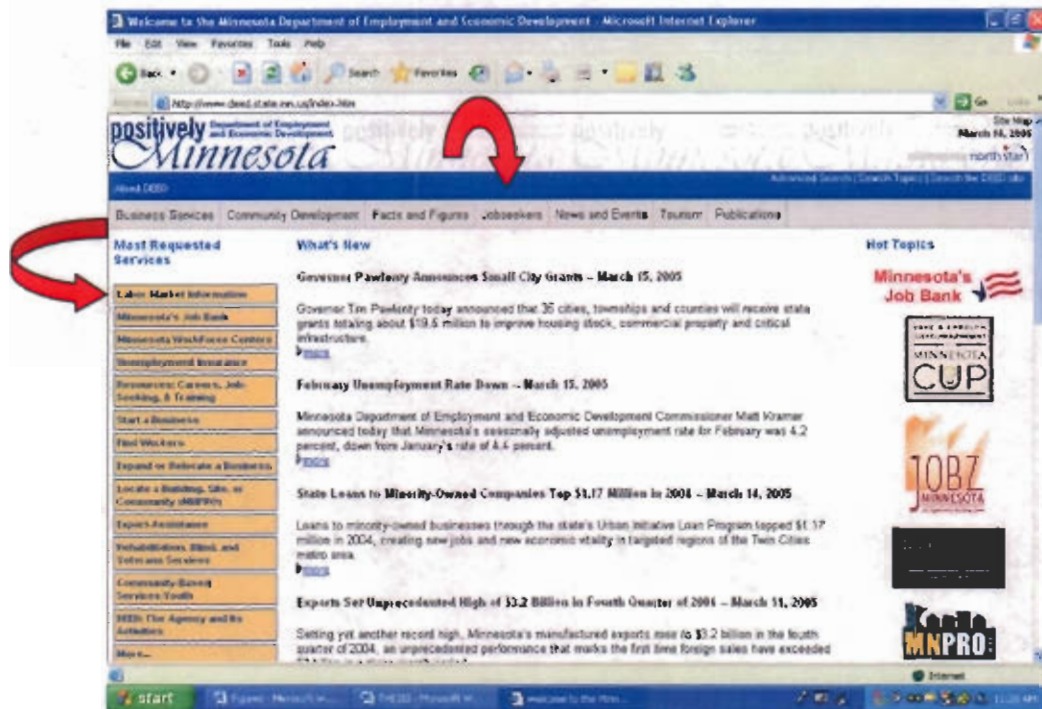


Figure 7. Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

### *Labor Market Information and Job Seekers Services*

Like the three resources already explained and discussed, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development grants the public access to a vast amount of useful information/data and resources. This is in addition to the services the organization provides the

community, businesses, and individuals. Therefore, Minnesota's DEED is included in the resource list created for MSAP students.

## Chapter V: Discussion

Building a reciprocal and professional relationship between community employers and University of Wisconsin-Stout's Masters of Science in Applied Psychology program is imperative to the future growth and success of the program. As recognized stakeholders in the program, community employers need to be aware of the services/resources the MSAP program and students have to offer. Students on the other hand, have to take an active role in seeking out community employers to promote the knowledge, skills, and abilities they possess, as well as convey the need for resources.

This applied research is an initial step or phase in linking the MSAP students and community employers. Equipped with the established resource list, MSAP students have a practical tool to utilize in their study of the labor market and community employers. After exploration of the labor market and community employers, one can expect MSAP students to be more prepared and confident in their professional undertakings; thus, making the transition into the corporate world relatively effortless and having a favorable reflection upon the MSAP program.

The focus of this applied research was specifying resources to assist in locating the largest businesses/organizations within a hundred mile radius of the University of Wisconsin-Stout's campus. It is anticipated these large businesses/organization are better equipped to offer support and be receptive to the Masters of Science in Applied Psychology program services. An examination of the three of the county workforce profiles (Dunn, Chippewa, and Eau Claire) contained within the West Central Wisconsin Workforce Resource and the Office of Economic Advisors websites demonstrates that organizations employing a large number of workers are

generally located in or near the largest municipalities. In other words, there are geographic clusters of jobs centered within Wisconsin cities.

Although resources to assist in locating information on large businesses/organizations were sought after in this applied research, future effort ought to be given to seeking smaller companies or establishments. Companies employing few people are likely to possess unique problems and the ability to extend opportunities to the MSAP student that larger corporations may lack, such as extensive one-on-one guidance. The MSAP program can be enhanced and benefit from a reciprocal relationship with as many community employers as possible, this includes large and small businesses/organizations.

In view of the fact that not every MSAP student wants to permanently reside in the Menomonie area, future research efforts should also investigate and locate potential resources to assist MSAP students in locating businesses/organizations that are farther than 100 miles away from the University of Wisconsin-Stout campus. Organizations existing outside this geographic area are likely to have their own distinct set of problems that may be particularly interesting and insightful to MSAP students wanting to relocate and take advantage of the opportunities. Through the completion of the program, Masters of Science in Applied Psychology students gain expertise in many areas and employers nationwide are in the position to gain from extending internship/job offers to these graduates. Again, the MSAP program can be enhanced and benefit from a reciprocal relationship with as many employers as possible, including businesses/organizations occupying outside of the region and the state of Wisconsin.

Whether a MSAP student chooses to complete the program in its entirety while residing in the University of Wisconsin-Stout community (i.e. Menomonie) or he/she decides to relocate, given the geographic clusters of jobs it is probable a portion of MSAP students will be required

to commute to internship/job locations. Although the internship/professional experience is invaluable, commuting to gain such can have drawbacks or consequences. For example, internships are often unpaid position and the additional expenses associated with commuting may be burdensome for MSAP students. There is also the possibility that MSAP students will chose to decrease their course load when fulfilling the internship requirement or extend the position over two semesters. In both situations the time it takes to complete the program is prolonged.

Through the creation of a resource list intended for utilization by Masters of Science in Applied Psychology students, this applied research is an introductory attempt to launch an outreach effort recognizing the local businesses/organizations as stakeholders in the growth and success of the program. It is vital for the MSAP program to secure need resources and the initial phase in doing this is to build strong, lasting relationships with businesses/organizations. This applied research is a fundamental resource for MSAP students and their efforts to make these professional contacts.



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