

About Wisconsin Grants

The twenty-four private, or independent, nonprofit colleges and universities of Wisconsin operate without direct taxpayer support, but provide an invaluable public service to the state, educating more than 57,000 students a year. Many of Wisconsin's best and brightest need financial help to attend the college of their choice.

The Wisconsin Tuition Grant, now known as Wisconsin Grants, was enacted in 1965 to help qualified Wisconsin citizens to succeed. Each month Wisconsin Achievers brings you success stories of Wisconsinites at WAICU member campuses for whom Wisconsin Grants have made a significant difference.

Wisconsin Achievers is published monthly by the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU), 122 W. Washington Avenue, Madison, WI 53703-2723; 608.256.7761; mail@waicu.org.

Rolf Wegenke, Ph.D.
President & CEO

Rebecca Larson
Senior VP for Advocacy

Cassandra Krause
Director of
Communications and
Marketing, Editor

Alverno College sophomore dedicated to helping others

Lexi Dittrich isn't sure what her life will be like in five years or 10 years, but she does know that it will involve helping others.

"I don't know what that will look like. It might be work in government or global advocacy. But I want to help people to have richer, better lives," said Lexi of Oconomowoc.

The sophomore is studying communications at Alverno College, a Milwaukee college that attracted her while she was still in high school because of its personalized learning style and its small class sizes.

In addition to a Wisconsin Grant, Lexi received the Vanguard Scholarship, Alverno's top merit scholarship, and the Doherty Scholarship, which recognizes students with potential for strong scholarly accomplishment, the ability to collaborate, and an understanding of oneself as a learner.

"Alverno fit everything I wanted. It's an inviting community that's rich in culture and has a focus on service," she said.

It's her passion for others that drives her. And it's likely a value instilled in her by her number one role model, her mom.



Lexi Dittrich

continued on page 2

WG enables Marquette student to be the first member of her family to earn a college degree

Natalie Busalacchi, a senior in Marquette University's college of nursing, soon will be the first person in her family to graduate from college.

A native of Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, Natalie is a nursing major. Natalie believes her Marquette degree will be not only a gateway into the working world, but also an opportunity to further her education.

After graduating, Natalie plans to practice as a registered nurse with a focus in veteran-centered care. She is also interested in continuing her education by attending graduate school to earn a master's degree in a specialized field of nursing.

"Natalie Busalacchi is an exceptional nursing student," said Dr. Kerry Kosmoski-Goepfert, R.N., associate dean and associate clinical professor in the College of Nursing. "She is intelligent, determined, and compassionate in all that she does and therefore is respected by the faculty, colleagues, and the nursing staff and patients with whom she works. Natalie is truly deserving of the Wisconsin Grant award."

Natalie says that her sights were always set on attending Marquette. "When I first looked at Marquette, I felt the sense of community and passion from Marquette staff" continued on page 2



Natalie Busalacchi

Lexi Dittrich continued from page 1

Lexi's family members face life with several health issues. Her brother has severe hemophilia, and her sister has several health issues, including Asperger syndrome and a sensory processing disorder. Lexi, herself, has a heart condition called mitral valve prolapse, which isn't life-threatening, but it has inspired her to focus on good nutrition and exercise.

Her mom, Barb Dittrich, founded a faith-based nonprofit organization called Snappin' Ministries, which provides support and encouragement to parents of children with special needs. "She has been through so much hardship but continues to focus on helping others and our family. She has strength, courage, and resilience," Lexi said. "She inspires me to be my best."

That focus on others might even be combined one day with her love of Japan. Her childhood fascination with Japanese anime has evolved into a love of the Japanese language and culture.

She spends much of her free time with Alverno's international students from Japan, absorbing as much knowledge of the country as she can. And she plans to study abroad there, starting in the fall of 2017.

When she is not studying and practicing her Japanese, Lexi is an avid sewer and enjoys learning hip hop dances. She works in the Alverno Library and is involved with Alverno's Team Green, a student group that educates fellow students about how to be eco-friendly. She also is civically engaged and is an election worker.

No matter where she ends up in five or 10 years from now, Lexi is always open to new adventures and the possibilities they may hold.

"I want to leave as many doors open right now as possible," she said.

Natalie Busalacchi continued from page 1

and students campus wide," Natalie says. "I was also lucky to have been accepted at a university that offered direct admission into a specific college such as nursing." This meant that she could begin working toward her nursing degree without delay and without the uncertainty that arises when there is no decision until your Sophomore year.

Natalie has gone above and beyond to get involved in her campus and her community. She has been a member of the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing since her junior year. She is also a member of the Marquette University Student Nurses Association and enjoys participating in nursing activities on and off campus.

She is a member of the Veteran Affairs Nursing Academic Partnership (VANAP) and was chosen this past summer to work as a Veteran Affairs Learning Opportunity Residency (VALOR) student at the VA Medical Center in Milwaukee. Natalie has enjoyed many hours volunteering at Penfield Children's Center and Epic Community Center Organization.

With the help of the Wisconsin Grant and other sources of financial aid, Natalie was not only able to afford the college education she wanted, but she can now continue on the path of being a life-long learner and make a difference for others in the community.

FACT OF THE MONTH

By 2020, 62 percent of all jobs will require education beyond high school. Currently, 42 percent of Wisconsinites hold an associates degree or higher.

Source: Georgetown Public Policy Institute and Lumina Foundation, *A Stronger Nation Report, 2016*

*Wisconsin's Private, Nonprofit Colleges and Universities*

Alverno College Milwaukee
 Bellin College Green Bay
 Beloit College Beloit
 Cardinal Stritch University Milwaukee
 Carroll University Waukesha
 Carthage College Kenosha
 Columbia College of Nursing Milwaukee
 Concordia University Wisconsin Mequon

Edgewood College Madison
 Lakeland University Sheboygan
 Lawrence University Appleton
 Marian University Fond du Lac
 Marquette University Milwaukee
 Medical College of Wisconsin Milwaukee
 Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design Milwaukee
 Milwaukee School of Engineering Milwaukee

Mount Mary University Milwaukee
 Nashotah House Nashotah
 Northland College Ashland
 Ripon College Ripon
 St. Norbert College De Pere
 Silver Lake College Manitowoc
 Viterbo University La Crosse
 Wisconsin Lutheran College Milwaukee