

Wisconsin Achievers

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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 56,000 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 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

Viterbo biology student looks forward to career in injury prevention

Elizabeth Henriksen enrolled at Viterbo because of the university's excellent nutrition and dietetics program. While taking a course on anatomy however, she discovered her true academic interest.

"I enjoyed that anatomy class so much I decided to change my major to biology," said Elizabeth, a sophomore from Nekoosa.

Elizabeth is a first-generation college student and one of three children in her family, so financial aid such as the Wisconsin Grant was crucial in making a college education affordable.

"Many people think private schools are expensive, but that's not the case when you factor in financial aid," Elizabeth said. "Attending Viterbo was a very good choice financially with all the aid the university offers."

Elizabeth is enjoying her experience at Viterbo, a place where she said she is part of a community. She enjoys Viterbo's small class sizes and the relationships she has with faculty members.

"No matter where you are on campus, you know someone, and it makes you feel welcome and important," said Elizabeth.



Elizabeth Henriksen

continued on page 2

Bilingual Herzing nursing student committed to patient care

While attending Herzing University-Madison to earn her Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree, Elvira "Vivi" Ruiz Garate is juggling four part-time jobs along with her nursing studies.

All to keep her dream alive of becoming a nurse practitioner.

"Finding a career I'm very passionate about is very important to me," Vivi said. "That's why I decided to finish my studies, to make a better life for myself."

Her dreams are made possible because of the Wisconsin Grant.

"The Wisconsin Grant means a lot," she said. "If not for it, I would not be able to go to college."

Vivi was born in Peru, moved with her family to the U.S. when she was 14, became a U.S. citizen, and graduated from Beloit Memorial High School. A year after high school she started working at a community health center, starting as a receptionist and moving into health care roles such as medical assistant and medical interpreter.

She became an LPN after attending a technical college in Janesville. When she wanted to advance her nursing studies, she found that all of the programs in the area had waiting lists. She decided to attend Herzing after hearing about positive experiences a few



Elvira Ruiz Garate

continued on page 2

Elizabeth Henriksen continued from page 1

Like many students, Elizabeth is very busy, on campus and off. She works as a Viterbo resident assistant, helping other students transition to college and campus life. She is also a member of the Viterbo Honors Program and Tri Beta biological honors society. She participated in a service trip to Minneapolis, which she praised as a “very different kind of learning experience.” She works as a Voyager campus tour guide.

“I like connecting with people and showing them what Viterbo is like,” she said. “I’m definitely an extrovert.”

Elizabeth also serves as a tutor for anatomy and physiology classes.

“Being a tutor allows me to get to know more people on campus and help them be successful in their classes,” she said. “I couldn’t have taken those classes without a tutor, so it was good to give back in the same way.”

Dr. Charlie Lawrence, a faculty member in the biology department, appreciates Elizabeth’s work. “Liz is a great student and has been an excellent tutor,” he said. “She is hardworking, very bright, and really connects with the students. Liz will be exceptionally successful as she continues to pursue her goals.”

Off campus, Elizabeth teaches dance—her first love—at a local studio. It’s something she has been doing since she was four years old, and she has a minor in dance at Viterbo. She would like to combine a degree in biology and with her love of dance into a career.

“I would love to develop a new injury prevention program for dancers,” she said.

Elvira Ruiz Garate continued from page 1

friends had at the non-profit university and learning that its new BSN program didn’t have a waiting list.

She takes classes on campus and online, and also works at the campus library. She appreciates that Herzing understands and supports non-traditional students like her who have to juggle jobs and family. Herzing makes it easy with online classes and the way they schedule on-campus classes, she said.

“The staff is really amazing and professional,” she said. “They’re always encouraging you to do your best. When you’re in an environment where they tell you ‘You’re smart, you can do it,’ it inspires you and makes you feel like you can do those things.” Also, professors are “really approachable,” she said. Unlike other educational experiences she’s had, “Here, I feel like I can ask any question and not be made to feel like I don’t ‘get it.’”

Her primary job is working as an LPN at Rock Haven nursing home on weekends. In addition to the Herzing campus position, she holds part-time jobs at UW Health as a student nurse assistant and at the Beloit School District as a fill-in health room assistant. She’s also an officer in the Student Nurses Association at Herzing.

FACT OF THE MONTH

The average starting salary of Class of 2017 graduates from private, nonprofit colleges and universities in the U.S. is over \$4,400 more per year than that of their counterparts from public institutions (\$53,025 compared with \$48,621).

Source:
National Association of Colleges and Employers, *First Destinations for the College Class of 2017*, December 2018

*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*
Concordia University Wisconsin *Mequon*
Edgewood College *Madison*

Herzing University *Milwaukee*
Lakeland University *Plymouth*
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 of the Holy Family *Manitowoc*
Viterbo University *La Crosse*
Wisconsin Lutheran College *Milwaukee*