

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.

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Silver Lake College freshman following passion for music

Silver Lake College sophomore Noah Liermann of Newton had his plans for summer break lined up well in advance. The music student was selected as a principal singer/dancer for Kids from Wisconsin, a highly selective summer troupe comprised of talented young performers from across the state. The ensemble is made up of 20 singers/dancers and a live band, performing everything from Broadway tunes to swing music to current hits as they tour Wisconsin.

"I am very excited for this summer because of the vast opportunities that it provides me. I look forward to making music as a professional singer, being able to travel across the state, and being able to make many new friends who have the same passion and drive for music as myself," Noah said.

"I could not be more thrilled for Noah to be a part of this group," said Emily Davis, adjunct professor of voice at Silver Lake College.

"I know he will be challenged as a singer and performer because of the quick learning pace and grueling summer performance schedule. Performing the same show multiple times a day will force him to keep his stage presence fresh and exciting for every audience member who attends. Being in Kids from Wisconsin also opens up lots of professional connections for Noah because of the group's long history and popularity."

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Noah Liermann

Lakeland student prepares for a career in the nonprofit sector

As Lakeland University student Hailey Jester prepares for her final semester, she understands she is the sum of many parts of the Lakeland community.

"Lakeland has provided me the access to the people and experiences I needed to understand who I was in every aspect of my life," said the senior from Salem, Wisconsin. "Finding yourself sounds easy, but it's difficult to do. I thought I knew who I was coming into Lakeland. I'm happy in who I have become."

Hailey will be the first in her family to graduate from college. She is able to attend Lakeland thanks to her financial aid package, which includes a Wisconsin Grant and help from Lakeland itself.

A variety of experiences have played roles in shaping Hailey, who is majoring in business administration with emphasis areas in nonprofit and management and minoring in psychology. A member of Lakeland's softball team, Hailey said her coaches and teammates and the bond they have formed have also played a large role in her development. In addition, she worked on Lakeland's admissions team as a campus ambassador, giving tours and working with prospective students and their families, which further expanded her skill set.

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Hailey Jester

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Hardworking, outgoing and talented, Noah is a 2016 graduate of Kiel High School, where he participated in show choir and where teachers fed his drive and passion for music. Silver Lake College, where he is a performance and pedagogy major, appealed to him because he was familiar with the quality of its music department. He also liked the college's small class sizes, where he wouldn't be just another face in the crowd, Noah said.

He credits the Wisconsin Grant for his decision to attend Silver Lake College. Financial aid, and the fact that the college is close to home, helped make it affordable for him. Noah believes so strongly in the Wisconsin Grant that he joined other students in the capitol for WAICU Students' Day, advocating for Wisconsin Grants.

"Thanks to the financial aid I received, I do not have to worry about major expenses and student loans after college. This, in turn, allows me to focus my time and effort into making the most of my education," Noah said.

"Silver Lake College music faculty members have encouraged me to pursue my dreams and work hard for them," he said. "They have given me tools that I will need to be successful later in my life and have helped me improve musically."

After graduation, Noah plans to teach in a high school and would eventually like to pursue his master's degree in vocal performance.

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Lakeland has strong relationships with area employers, and Hailey completed two internships that have further molded her. Her first internship was in summer hospitality at a bed and breakfast. Her junior year, she worked as a marketing and events intern at American Orthodontics. It was designed to last a semester, but was such a success that the employer extended it to a year and gave her higher-level projects and experiences.

Even with her work and wide array of activities, Hailey will graduate a semester early, and she hopes to leverage what she has learned at Lakeland and her passion for people. She plans to join the Peace Corps and hopes to serve in the Eastern Caribbean, tutoring school children, helping teachers, and organizing community programming.

"I will get a lot out of it because children will get a lot out of it," Hailey said. "I am most concerned with how I am going to help them and how they are going to benefit from it. I am doing it for the children."

Hailey's career goal is to create a nonprofit organization that provides mental health services to homeless and low-income veterans and service men and women. A relative who served in the Vietnam War developed posttraumatic stress disorder and eventually committed suicide, and Hailey has since learned more about PTSD.

"That set the tone for me," Hailey said. "These are important services; they're needed."



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

FACT OF THE MONTH

The average student loan debt per borrower for the Class of 2016 is \$27,975, down by 1.5 percent from \$28,400 in the Class of 2015.

Source: LendEdu, 2017