

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 nearly 60,000 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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Ripon College sophomore aims for sports management major

Eric Fels had early exposure to what Ripon College's small campus could offer him. During the summer between his junior and senior years of high school, he was able to explore the Ripon campus while a "citizen" at the annual Badger Boys State, held each year for the past 75 years on the Ripon College campus. He was able to live in a residence hall and get a feel for the campus.

Also, his older sister, Amy, who will be a senior at Ripon in the fall, gave him a personal connection to the advantages of attending Ripon College. Amy, too, has been a recipient of the Wisconsin Grant. Eric

decided to attend Ripon College after he toured the campus and met with Professor Mary Avery, now a retired professor of business management. Even before making his college choice, Eric experienced first-hand the personal attention from top faculty.

"I love the feel of the campus, its location in the heart of a small, close-knit community, and the personal relationships the small class sizes offer," Eric says.

Eric will be a sophomore at Ripon this fall. He is extremely appreciative of the Wisconsin Grant that he



Eric Fels participates in extracurricular activities while pursuing his degree.

received, which has made it easier for him and his family to pay for his education. "With there being less of a financial burden," he says, "I am able to focus on my studies and extracurricular

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Carroll University senior making a difference across the globe

When 8-year-old Emina Halilovic arrived in snowy Wisconsin with her parents and sister in 2002, she was unsure of where life was about to take her. As refugees from Bosnia, which was in the midst of a horrific war, the Halilovic family was part of the last group to flee the country and to receive official asylum in the United States. Unable to speak or understand English, they were placed in Waukesha, just five minutes from Carroll University.



Emina Halilovic, a biology pre-medicine student, raises money for children in Bosnia.

Over the next decade, Emina learned English, became a U.S. citizen, and excelled in her studies with plans to attend college always at the top of her mind. When it came time to choose a college, she

knew Carroll University was the place for her. "I am a very family-oriented person," said Emina. "After all we had been through over the years, I knew that I wanted an exceptional college experience, but it was important for me to stay close to home." Because of the Wisconsin Grant and other financial aid from Carroll, Emina was able to seize the opportunity to attend Carroll.

Long before Emina came to the United States, she knew she wanted to become a doctor, specifically a

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activities without having to worry about working a million jobs to help pay for my tuition.”

Extracurricular activities have been an important aspect of the college experience for Eric. He is a member of several organizations, including Ducks Unlimited, a group that aims to restore and conserve wetlands and other waterfowl habitats; and the campus chapter of Love Your Melon, a group that supports children affected by cancer. He also helps out at events sponsored by EGOR, the Environmental Group of Ripon.

“These groups have forced me to become better at time management as I have to balance homework and jobs around meetings and events,” Eric says. “They also have allowed me to make connections with other students, as well as faculty and staff, making Ripon feel even friendlier than it already did.” His time management skills clearly paid off

as he was named to the Ripon College Dean’s List for both the fall and spring semesters during the 2015-2016 academic year.

Eric, who is a native of Hubertus, Wisconsin, plans to declare a sports management major and economics minor this fall. “My ultimate goal after college is to wind up in the front office of the Green Bay Packers organization, but plans are still in the works,” he says. His most immediate aim is to start off working at a smaller sports organization to gain knowledge and experience, and then work his way up from there.

That goal may not be so far out of reach. Two Ripon College alumni/ae are working in the Packers front office now. Amanda Breitenfeldt Wery ’06 is client services coordinator for the Packers, and Craig Benzel ’86 is the Packers’ vice president of sales and business development.



Students at WAICU institutions are 68% likelier to graduate in four years than students at four-year public institutions in Wisconsin.

Source: IPEDS Graduation Rates Survey, August 2015

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pediatrician. “I was around many sick children growing up in Bosnia and always tried to help them feel better,” she said. “When my father injured his back a few years ago, I took care of him, and that experience confirmed to me I was heading in the right direction.” In order to gain valuable experience, Emina began to volunteer for Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin in high school and has racked up over 4,000 service hours working in different areas including the burn program and respiratory and cardiac clinic. For the past year she has worked as an intern there, providing care and comfort to families when they need it most.

When she’s not at the hospital, Emina can be found working at her second job

as a receptionist in the student affairs office on campus or serving as a Student Alumni Ambassador (sponsored by the Carroll University Alumni Council). “The relationships I’ve formed with staff members and other students here at Carroll have helped me succeed in and out of the classroom,” said Emina.

As if that’s not enough to keep her busy, two years ago Emina started ‘Walking in Their Shoes,’ a fundraising walk at Carroll to support children in Bosnia and spread awareness of education inequality around the world. This year, over 85 students, staff, faculty, and community members participated and raised \$2,300 which helps provide monthly meals and transportation to school for eight children

in Kamenica, Bosnia. “I want to give back because I am grateful for the opportunities that I’ve been given,” she explains. “I have seen first-hand what it’s like to deal with hardships as a child. I know there are still children struggling in Bosnia, and I hate to see that.”

The future is bright for Emina, who will graduate with a degree in biology pre-medicine in 2017. The experiences she’s gained through attending college at Carroll University have positively impacted her in many ways. She shares, “I want to be the change and initiate something that will make all children’s lives better.”

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*

