

## About Wisconsin Grants

*The twenty-three private, or independent, nonprofit colleges and universities of Wisconsin operate without taxpayer support, but provide an invaluable public service to the state, educating more than 60,000 students a year. Many of Wisconsin's best and brightest need financial help to attend the college of their choice.*

*The State of Wisconsin created the Wisconsin Tuition Grant, now known as Wisconsin Grants, in 1965 to help qualified Wisconsin citizens to succeed. Fully one-third of the low-income students who apply for the Wisconsin Grants are turned away every year for lack of funds. 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  
Wendy Wink  
Executive Vice President  
Laura Gerum  
Editor  
Kathy Dutter  
Assistant Editor

## Wisconsin Grant helps open doors for Ripon chemistry major

Although he traveled fewer than 50 miles from his hometown of Appleton, Wisconsin, to attend Ripon College, Nicholas Luedtke '16 now has the world opening its doors. Last summer, Nicholas, a chemistry major, was accepted into a two-year National Science Foundation summer research program. The program is focused on the upcoming field of molecular biophysics. He spent the summer at Princeton University, working with post-doctoral

and graduate students in the chemical and biological engineering department.



*Appleton native and Ripon student  
Nicholas Luedtke.*

“The research group gave me the opportunity to know

first-hand what it's like to be a graduate student. It let me explore whether I wanted to focus on research or take a different route. I really enjoyed the research experience, and I want to do research now,” says Nicholas.

“One of the biggest things I got out of the experience was the appreciation for biology and how closely chemistry and biology work together and interact in the

continued on page 2

## Alverno experience makes a world of difference for Global Studies major

Menomonee Falls native Marita Peterson did not plan to attend Alverno. “My sister went to Alverno, and she insisted it would be the perfect place for me,” Marita explains. “But I'm the rebellious type, so I would not listen.” However, Marita ended up following her sister's advice after all. She is now double majoring in Global Studies and Religious Studies with a minor in Asian Studies. Thanks in part to



*While studying abroad in China,  
Marita Peterson of Menomonee Falls  
meets one of Hong Kong's wild cows.*

the Wisconsin Grant; Marita has made remarkable strides toward her personal and professional dreams.

When she's not working on class projects, Marita is busy soaking up every opportunity she can find on Alverno's campus – and there's no shortage of them. As she puts it: “You put in the work at Alverno, and you get twofold opportunities back.” For example, she acts as student representative for the Global Studies and Humanities departments at Open House events where she gets to connect with prospective students. She also works as a tutor and a study group leader for Chinese language courses, and serves as a member of

continued on page 2

**Nicholas Luedtke** continued from page 1

science field. The program also showed me a different aspect of the science field.” Nicholas has been invited to join the same group of research students for a 10-week program on structural biology next summer in the Czech Republic.

Nicholas pursued multiple summer research opportunities with the help of his professors at Ripon. The experience has been life-changing. “I originally had thought about going into chemical engineering, but this experience has pulled me into the chemical and biological engineering field and especially research,” Nicholas says.

“This opportunity has opened the door for me to get my name out there and build up my experience as a student. It did wonders for my confidence as a student that I can pretty much attempt anything that I desire.” He enjoys research because it puts him on the front lines with questions yet to be answered. “The best response you can give is that, ‘we’re not sure, that hasn’t been explored yet.’” he says. “If

you’re doing an experiment, you honestly have no idea what it’s going to give you.”

Nicholas is a first-generation college student. The financial aid he has received, including the Wisconsin Grant, has been instrumental in letting him choose the supportive learning environment at Ripon. “Having financial aid mattered,” he says. “I knew I would have to pay for college myself, and financial aid helps to take a load off your back...”

Not content with these achievements alone, Nicholas will be getting his name further afield with publications and pursuing a graduate degree in chemical engineering, focusing on biochemistry.

“I’m just really excited for the future, and I really appreciate the fact that the professors here really try to give you everything they can,” Nicholas says.



*Increased attention to students is available at private nonprofit colleges. WAICU-member colleges and universities have a lower student to faculty ratio of less than 12:1, compared with the UW System’s ratio of over 20:1.*

*Source: IPEDS Data Center, Fall 2013 data*

**Marita Peterson** continued from page 1

the highly selective Security Council for Model United Nations (UN).

Being an Alverno student has set Marita on the path to success. “Since your professors know you, they know what you’re capable of, and they push you,” Marita explains. Expectations are high, but it means the resulting achievements are also high.

“There’s absolutely no way I could have done any of this without the help of Wisconsin Grant,” she says. “I would have been paying for college all by myself.

With the financial aid package I receive, I’m doing things I never imagined myself doing.” When she reflects on how far she’s come, it’s clear that an Alverno College education makes a world of difference. “When I came to Alverno, I was terrified to give a short presentation in class. Now, I can effectively give a speech in front of 200 people in the Model UN.”

Marita cites studying abroad in Hong Kong as one of her favorite experiences during her time at Alverno. Because of partnerships with institutions overseas, Marita was able to pay Alverno’s tuition

rate and could apply her financial aid. “I fulfilled my lifetime dream by living and learning abroad ... so now I can pursue other dreams.” And she’s well on her way to doing just that. Right now, she’s thinking ahead to graduate school. Whether she ends up as a professor of religion or the leader of an international organization, she will tackle challenges with the confidence of a woman who knows herself and goals—all thanks to the Wisconsin Grant allowing her to pursue her dreams at Alverno College.

**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 *Mequon*

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

