

About Wisconsin Grants

The twenty-four private, or independent, nonprofit colleges and universities of Wisconsin operate without 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. 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.

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Nursing student eager to graduate and to advocate

Samantha Scaffidi knew in high school that she wanted a career that would challenge her, one where she would learn new things every day. The Hustisford native was also drawn by her passion to help children. Nursing offered the perfect path for pursuing Samantha's passions. She seized the opportunity to be an advocate for youth, improve their well-being, and make a difference in their lives.

Once Samantha settled on a career of nursing, she researched the program that best suited her interests. Samantha liked the liberal arts curriculum offered at

Mount Mary University, where she enrolled for her



Samantha Scaffidi is a recent grad of CCON's nursing program.

pre-nursing coursework. Mount Mary and Columbia College of Nursing (CCON) have partnered to provide a seamless 2+2 program

for students like Samantha, who transferred to CCON in spring 2014 in order to finish the specialized nursing curriculum and clinicals. When asked why she chose CCON for nursing, she explained, "I liked the idea of a 2+2 program and after researching the college I really felt that my values aligned with their values". The CCON mission—to prepare "exemplary, compassionate, professional nurses, distinguished by liberal arts education, evidence-based practice, clinical reasoning, safe patient care, and commitment to social

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Silver Lake College senior develops leadership by helping others

A tragedy in his life motivated Silver Lake College senior Austin Allen-Walker to dedicate himself to helping others through a career in social work.

"One of my buddies committed suicide, and I didn't understand it," said the Milwaukee native. "I don't want anyone else to get to that point. I don't want to see anyone in a situation where they feel like they can't talk to anybody. I'm driven by wanting to help people."

Austin's own life seemed to be going nowhere a few years ago when a friend and Silver



Austin Allen-Walker of Silver Lake College is preparing for a career in social work.

Lake alumnus urged him to take a look at Silver Lake College. Austin followed his friend's advice and liked what he saw. The Manitowoc liberal arts college is small enough to offer students like Austin the chance to

connect on a deeper level with faculty, staff and fellow students, but with a broad range of programs and extracurricular offerings. Austin jumped at the opportunity to be part of Silver Lake's basketball and cross country

teams.

With generous support from the Wisconsin Grant and Silver Lake College, Austin is successfully completing his major in psychology

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Samantha Scaffidi

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justice”—resonated with Samantha. Reflecting on her decision to enroll, Samantha noted that it's been a good fit for her because, “the faculty are so inviting and always there to help.”

Samantha acknowledged that the Wisconsin Grant has helped her enormously. “The generous grant has allowed me to work fewer hours so I can focus more on my school work.” With less debt after graduation, she will be able to focus on her career and give more of herself to others to help them reach their dreams as well.

During her time on campus, Samantha has been very involved with the CCON Student Nurses Association (SNA). The rigor and the time commitment of CCON's nursing program initially discouraged Samantha from becoming involved. But after attending a meeting with

faculty advisors and other SNA members, Samantha was persuaded that she could balance both priorities. Since that time, she volunteers monthly to provide blood pressure screenings on campus and is currently serving as the association's vice president. Through SNA, Samantha has been able to share her story about autism, becoming the voice on campus to spread awareness of the condition and advocate for improved understanding and treatment.

Samantha recently completed her final semester at Columbia College of Nursing (CCON) and graduated last December. She hopes to get a job as a nurse on the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, where she currently works as a Patient Safety Companion. “I am excited about my graduation and feel ready to be a practicing RN.”

FACT OF THE MONTH

Financial aid from all sources to WAICU undergraduate students totaled \$261 Million for the 2013-14 school year. WAICU colleges and universities themselves provided 35% of that total, triple the percent of support provided from the State of Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Higher Educational Aids Board

Austin Allen-Walker

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and minor in family services. “I'm really interested in people and what causes them to do what they do,” he said.

Austin has taken full advantage of his college experience and the opportunities to participate in “activities I never thought I could do,” he said. As someone drawn to helping others, Austin thrives in his role as a Resident Assistant, where he has gained experience in character building and leadership. Austin attended a student activity conference in Madison to further develop his resident assistant skills. The senior is also a member of the Silver Lake student government. The Silver Lake community has recognized Austin's leadership, where he was selected to speak at a campus Leadership Summit

and at the college's annual scholarship fundraising gala.

There are numerous examples of Austin's leadership skills in practice. This year, Austin is working on a diversity initiative, which will provide participants the opportunity to discuss such topics as racial, gender, religious and cultural diversity. “Instead of separating ourselves from each other, I hope we learn from each other and educate the people around us, including the community,” reflected Austin.

As Austin closes in on graduation, he has combined study with work experiences through internships. This past summer, Austin earned college credit

while interning with the Manitowoc-Two Rivers YMCA children's summer program, Y B.R.E.A.K., which offers needed enrichment and educational experiences to area youth. “I chose this summer internship because it helped me understand kids,” Austin said. “There is a high demand for male role models. The children responded well to me. It was a program where I could make a difference—and it was fun!”

This academic year, Austin will participate in a social work internship. “An internship will give me the experience I need beyond the knowledge from my classes,” Austin said. He's looking forward to the contributions he can make in the field.

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 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*
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*

