

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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Bellin College student's dream realized through hard work and dedication

Melissa Curiel Nunez is attending Bellin College as a first generation college student. This has been the biggest step in her life. She has always had a dream of working in healthcare, and a visit to Bellin College during her senior year in high school turned that dream into a passion. "I fell in love with their simulation and skills labs as well as the positive vibes from the students," commented Melissa.



Melissa Curiel Nunez is involved on campus and in the community while pursuing a nursing degree.

Although she wanted nothing more than to attend Bellin College, she knew that it would be a challenge. She faced many hurdles including

admissions requirements and cost of attending college. This did not discourage her but instead fueled her determination to succeed. After many sleepless nights of

studying grammar and sciences followed by restless days of filling out college and scholarship applications, Melissa was accepted into

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Carthage College student pursues creative profession

For Sonia Vazquez, a junior from Racine who attends Carthage College, art is a passion that college allows her to pursue. Sonia transferred to Carthage from another institution and is now working toward a bachelor's degree in studio art. There, she is able to work in a hands-on environment and is doing independent studies with polymer clay.



Sonia Vazquez is preparing to become an entrepreneur in the fashion industry.

In her time at Carthage, Sonia has fully immersed

herself in her studies and is taking advantage of the incredible experiences available to her. She has been inspired, both as a student and as an artist, by her professors, fellow

students, and the campus over-looking Lake Michigan — and she credits her enthusiasm for her artwork to the inspiration she has found in her college environment.

Upon arriving at Carthage, Sonia was excited to see how her ideas and artwork could extend across her different classes and disciplines. She believes that her professors truly make an effort to learn about their students

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the pre-nursing program at St. Norbert College. She then continued on to Bellin College this past summer through the sophomore transfer option. Despite the obstacles, she persistently worked very hard to achieve her vision of wearing scrubs and is now thriving in her nursing degree program.

Melissa made the decision to get involved quickly after stepping foot on campus as a new student. She is active in student organizations such as the Bellin Student Nurses Association (BSNA) and the Bellin College Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) Open School. In addition, she gained practical career experience while helping others through her volunteer work in the flu clinic this past fall. She also participated in college photo shoots for the development office. She regularly promotes and exemplifies the Bellin College values of excellence,

integrity, community, and caring through her involvement at the college and in serving the community.

Melissa is grateful for the Wisconsin Grant as well as the financial aid and scholarships that she receives each year. This financial assistance has enabled her not only to gain access to higher education, but also to focus on her studies and campus involvement while preparing for her future career. "None of these achievements would have been possible without the financial generosity of people I do not even know," said Melissa. "If I knew them, I would give them the most sincere thank you. Since that is not possible, I will continue to be a good student to make them aware of how proud I am to be a recipient. Thank you for making this dream even more attainable!"



Approximately 35% of students enrolled in Wisconsin's private, nonprofit colleges are age 25 or over.

Source: IPEDS 2013 Fall Enrollment Data

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and enable them to flourish in whatever ways they can. For Sonia, that meant incorporating art into projects for her classes, and she has found that it allows for a much more seamless flow in her learning. She says that certain things she has learned in her cross-discipline classes have inspired her artwork.

Despite changing her major from fashion design to studio art, Sonia has continued to maintain her interest in fashion design. She still actively seeks out opportunities on campus to combine her love for the two fields. She works with professors and costume designers in the theatre department to keep her sewing and pattern-making skills fresh and up-to-date

and to build on her knowledge of surface design techniques for fabric. She has even done work on several 3-D projects that showcase her work.

Sonia's latest work includes her "standout moment at Carthage," an independent study on polymer clay that she conducted during a senior seminar and January Term. Capable of mimicking any surface or material, polymer has gained traction in recent years as a new fine art medium and is also used commercially. Sonia made beads, practiced creating faux stones, added new materials to change the texture and pattern of the polymer, and was taught how to make the polymer as light as possible. The independent study

has now brought her focus to working on wearable art.

After graduating from Carthage College, Sonia plans to be a working artist. She hopes to one day own her own custom fashion company. All of her work would not have been possible without the help of financial aid such as the Wisconsin Grant. "I come from a single-parent home, and I'm the oldest of three siblings," says Sonia. "If I did not have financial aid of any kind, especially scholarships and grants, I wouldn't be able to continue my education. I am so thankful that I can pursue my passion."

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*

