

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.

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.

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Wisconsin Grant helps Carthage College student embrace it all

When Matt Thome, a student from Neenah, sends out his resume, potential employers often ask him, "are you really also in college?" That's because the Carthage College sophomore fills every possible moment pursuing a wide range of career and extracurricular interests in addition to his full-time academic commitments. Thanks to the support from a Wisconsin Grant, Matt can balance all of these responsibilities.

In his two years at Carthage College, Matt has embraced



Sophomore Matt Thome pursues many opportunities offered at Carthage College.

every opportunity offered by Carthage to connect his interests with real world experiences, applying the knowledge and skills from his majors in public relations and athletic communication.

As a member of Carthage's newspaper editorial team, Matt attended conferences in Philadelphia and New Orleans on college media, learning about marketing and team management. As a singer in the Carthage Choir, the college provided Matt the once in a lifetime chance to perform at Carnegie Hall in New York City. Matt devoted his January term to a concentrated study and performance program that traveled throughout Spain. This Wisconsin student was filled with awe when he

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Bellin College senior turns a crisis into a lifelong commitment

Not everyone's path to their future profession is predictable. For Whitney Leisgang, a senior from Seymour who attends Bellin College, a life-changing crisis at age 14 forged her life's path. A traumatic injury in the family, followed by months of recovery and care from dedicated healthcare professionals, inspired Whitney to join their ranks. With the Wisconsin Grant, Whitney found a way to realize her goal.

Eight years ago, Whitney and her mother were returning home from a visit with her grandfather when they confronted a maze of fire

trucks, police cars and ambulances blockading their street. Their quiet farming community was suddenly transformed into a trauma scene, with backed-up traffic, emergency vehicles, and the ThedaCare Medflight helicopter in a neighboring field.

Earlier that afternoon, Nick, aged 17, was helping his uncle on the farm when a bonfire suddenly roared out of control, engulfing the teenager in flames. Nick's screams caught his uncle's



Whitney Leisgang is preparing for a career as an x-ray technologist at Bellin College.

attention, and he fought the flames until emergency crews arrived soon afterwards. Nick was taken by helicopter to the Burn Center in Madison.

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realized that he was performing in the same halls as the world's greatest musicians.

Matt applies his academic knowledge from his athletic communication major to helping out the men's basketball team, where he manages their statistics and social media. Staying involved in these and many other different activities helps Matt develop a well-rounded range of skills and talents; he is ready for whatever comes next.

Matt has spent his past few summers interning with the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers, a minor league baseball team affiliated with the Milwaukee Brewers. This has helped spark an interest in some day working as a director of game-day marketing for a Major League Baseball team. He wants to create memorable experiences for others by creating an exciting sports atmosphere.

According to Matt, these opportunities would not have been available to him anywhere but Carthage. He cites the flexibility of professors and their hands-on approach to education as reasons he has been able to get involved in so much. "I never feel like I'm just here to go to class and hopefully get a job," he said. "I'm here gaining valuable experience, and I know I'll be able to get a job."

Matt notes without hesitation that it is because of the Wisconsin Grant and Carthage's financial aid awards that he is able to attend Carthage at all. "The grant makes a private education affordable for me," he said. "It allows me to stay in Wisconsin, take advantage of all opportunities in front of me, and develop myself professionally. To me, that's what is most valuable, and I wouldn't be where I am without the grant."



WAICU members graduate 49% of nurses at the bachelor's degree level and 70% of nurses with advanced degrees.

Source: IPEDS: Completions Survey 2014

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Third degree burns covered over 60 percent of his body. He went through ten skin graft surgeries in an attempt to replace the damaged skin. During a three-month hospital stay, Nick struggled to regain strength and range of motion with countless physical and occupational therapies.

Whitney agonized watching her older brother suffer, but was deeply impressed by the physical recovery made possible by a team of dedicated healthcare professionals. "This incident made me realize how badly I wanted a career in the medical field. I wanted to give back because of the excellent care that was

provided to my brother during his time of need."

When the time came for Whitney to think about college, the costs from Nick's accident drew down the family's savings and resources. Whitney's family knew they wouldn't be able to support Whitney's college goals as much as they intended. With the Wisconsin Grant, Whitney realized that she could still focus on, "helping others by receiving the best education."

Whitney turned towards a degree in x-ray technology because, "When someone gets hurt or sick, I am the one aiding in an accurate diagnosis, and an accurate

diagnosis helps lead them to recovery. I love the feeling I get when I know I have done something positive to help someone."

Looking back on her undergraduate education, Whitney reflected that, "My four years at Bellin College couldn't have gone any better than they did. Everyone at the college was very personable, and they were always searching for ways to enhance our learning in order to improve our education. Each experience has molded me into the best healthcare professional that I can be. It has been a great four years. I can honestly say I'm going to miss it."

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 Theological Seminary *Nashotah*
- Northland College *Ashland*
- Ripon College *Ripon*
- St. Norbert College *De Pere*
- Silver Lake College *Manitowoc*
- Viterbo University *La Crosse*
- Wisconsin Lutheran College *Milwaukee*

