

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 more than 57,000 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.

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
Rebecca Larson
Senior VP for Advocacy
Cassandra Krause
Director of Communications & Marketing, Editor

Beloit College sophomore called to public service

Alexander Villegas just started his sophomore year at Beloit College, and he is already becoming a master at managing his time. "It's been very busy, but enjoyably so," he says of his campus life experience.

In addition to double majoring in international relations and history, he is very active on campus. He is a member of the cross-country and track teams, a student representative for Beloit Student Congress, and the executive director of the student government's Clubs and Organization Oversight committee. He holds the

presidency of the Model United Nations club on campus and is a member of the Phi Kappa Psi fraternity.

The Lake Geneva native, who is a first-generation college student, said attending college was always among his goals, though he went through several phases of wanting to take a gap year or enlist in military service before deciding to apply to colleges.



Alexander Villegas is double majoring at Beloit College.

"I'm not like my brothers," he says. "I can't work with my hands or technology on a professional level, so the only way for me to get better at my skills was to go to

continued on page 2

Concordia University senior's perseverance leads to early graduation

When Concordia University Wisconsin student Andrea Adams walks across the stage in December to receive her diploma in graphic design, it will cap three and a half years filled with 18-credit semesters, a number of on- and off-campus jobs, and volunteering.



Andrea Adams participated in a partnership program of Concordia University and MIAD.

The 2013 valedictorian from Jackson, Wisconsin has continued her academic prowess with a near perfect 3.98 GPA entering her final semester. She credits Concordia's unique partnership program with the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design, in addition to high

school AP classes, with enabling her to graduate in only seven semesters. "Having this college experience of two very different schools with distinct

atmospheres at the same time definitely helped me grow as an individual," noted Andrea.

"I chose Concordia because I liked the idea that a university could strengthen my faith as well as help me earn a solid degree," said Andrea. "Coming out of high school I wasn't sure if I wanted to pursue graphic design or environmental science; luckily Concordia offered both," she continued. Andrea, who had visited her older brother, Tyler, at Concordia many times while he was a student, never felt she needed to make an official campus visit to any other university.

continued on page 2

Alexander Villegas continued from page 1

college,” he says. He is preparing himself – both academically and personally – to fulfill his lifelong commitment to serving his community.

“I’ve always known I wanted to serve,” he says. Alexander says his aspirations upon graduation range from working for the state of Wisconsin to going to law school, but either way, he wants to continue to have a positive impact on his community. Later this semester, he will begin an internship with the Peace Corps.

Alexander, who first discovered Beloit College through the book *The Gatekeepers*, was initially concerned about the small size of the school, however, as a result of his actual experience on the Beloit campus, he has long since changed his mind.

“I really enjoy it, because I know people more than I thought I would, if not by name then by

face,” he says. “With my professors, I’ve had wonderful opportunities already because they know me and it’s a class of 20 students, not 100.”

A smaller environment also allowed Alexander to become more introspective and, at the same time, light-hearted. Alexander said that his confidence has improved, which he says has had a “domino effect” on everything else in his life. The once very serious personality softened to reveal a more fun and outgoing person.

“It’s taught me that you can balance work and play,” he says.

Through the help of the Wisconsin Grant funding, Alexander has been relieved of the stress that a large financial burden can cause and is empowered to serve his community in fulfilling ways.

FACT OF THE MONTH

On a four-point grade point average scale, students who get need-based financial aid have a GPA about 0.08 to 0.15 points higher than students who received no financial aid.

Source: National Bureau of Economic Research

Andrea Adams continued from page 1

It was midway through her freshman year when Andrea was designing posters for the on-campus Christian band and the theater club that her attention began to focus on graphic design. Andrea continued that passion by designing booklets and posters for Campus Ministry and working the past two years in the university’s marketing department. “I’ve really enjoyed planning our annual Social Media Bash,” said Andrea, an event attended by hundreds of students during the first week of classes. After assisting the past two years, she is taking the lead on all of the design for this year’s Social Media Bash.

Andrea is a recipient of the Wisconsin Grant, and earning the four-year, renewable grant made it easier for her family to pay for her college education. As president of the National Honor Society at her high school and a two-time forensics state gold medalist, Andrea earned additional institutional aid from Concordia, in part because of her academic achievements.

“I’ve lived in the residence halls my entire time as a student and developed some very special friendships I never would have had I commuted,” said Andrea. Interestingly,

her hometown is located only 20 minutes from Concordia’s 200-acre, Lake Michigan campus. Despite her full class load every semester, Andrea found time to design children’s coloring books, work in the university’s marketing department, and intern as a graphic designer for Smart Choice MRI.

Andrea called last semester’s Senior Art show the highlight of her collegiate education. “It allowed me to exhibit my best work in a gallery setting, and it was overwhelming to see so many people show up to support us Opening Night.”

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*



WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES