

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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Concordia University Student is Driven to Succeed

Graduating with a four year degree in just three years is not a feat that just any college student can accomplish. However, Kevin Catron is not your typical student. The Muskego native is looking forward to a December 2016 graduation from Concordia University Wisconsin after only three years of taking courses with a double major in economics and finance. It has not been easy for the Wisconsin Grant recipient; at 14 years old he was



Kevin Catron is a double major in economics and finance.

diagnosed with a genetic joint disorder known as Ehlers-Danlos syndrome.

"It affects the collagen in my joints and makes me very prone to dislocations," Kevin explained. "There is no cure."

Despite his condition, Kevin was determined to prevent injuries and stabilize his joints—by lifting weights. Over the years, Kevin built supportive muscle around the joints and his progress encouraged him to join the Infantry Division of the Army National Guard at age 17. Basic training proved too challenging, and Kevin was discharged, suffering an injured back and having no plans for the future. "I missed enrolling at Concordia in the fall of 2013 and had to wait until spring," he recalls. The adjustment from his dream job in the Army to starting college

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Nursing Student Found the Perfect Home at Viterbo University

Kalene Weber was unsure of where she wanted to go to college until she paid a visit to Viterbo University in La Crosse. There was never any doubt for her after that.

"Everyone at Viterbo was so friendly and hospitable," said Kalene, a nursing major from Park Falls. "I loved the campus...I knew I had to go here."

Three years later, Viterbo has been the perfect fit for Kalene. With support from the Wisconsin Grant, Kalene

has realized her college dream. She has excelled academically, thanks in part,



Kalene Weber is a nursing major at Viterbo.

she said, to the university's small class sizes, the personal attention she receives from faculty members, and

the quality of the nursing program. She is thrilled with her choice to attend Viterbo and is well on her way to accomplishing her goal of becoming a nurse. Given Viterbo's excellent reputation and 100 percent placement rate for nursing graduates, the goal is more than reasonable.

"I can't even find the words to describe my experience at Viterbo," Kalene said. "I've grown and learned so much, and I love the people here."

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was initially difficult. Kevin took comfort in the Concordia campus and community, reflecting on his new environment and finding spiritual support in nightly walks along the campus's Lake Michigan shoreline. "Through prayer, I managed to pull myself back together and passed all my classes. The following semester I was so driven that I raised my GPA and started taking on more credits so I could graduate early," he said.

His goal upon graduation is to use his degree to help companies and individuals reorganize and become more profitable through more creative approaches with finance and investments. He is excited about his future.

"The Wisconsin Grant helps my family and me because without it I wouldn't have been able to attend a supportive school with a strong business program, like Concordia, and I wouldn't have

had the drive on my own to succeed in whatever endeavor I pursue."

Kevin's drive to succeed includes a focus on competitive bodybuilding, despite earlier setbacks and injury. He has competed in two shows so far, taking first place in the teen division of his first competition at 19. Then, in his second competition, he took second place in the men's lightweight division. "I am currently taking the year to grow and move up to the light-heavyweight division. I plan on competing again in 2016," he said.

Of course, Kevin's first commitment is to his studies, but he enjoys Concordia's student clubs and spends free time in Concordia's weight room. Kevin admits his experience thus far hasn't been the typical college story, but then again, he wouldn't have it any other way.

FACT OF THE MONTH

The average undergraduate class size at WAICU members is 17 students. The median student-to-faculty ratio at WAICU is 11 compared to 22 at the UW System.

Source: IPEDS 2014 fall enrollment and 2013-14 WAICU Survey

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When she isn't studying, Weber is very involved on campus, especially with campus ministry. She works in the admission office as a tour guide, and she is a member of the Viterbo St. Francis Choir. Weber has participated in several service trips. This past summer, she traveled to Haiti for 10 days as part of a mission trip with the Sisters of Charity where she worked to help school age children. Her trip was financed through the support of friends and community members. Weber has learned to be a servant-leader at Viterbo University.

Weber has fun while learning and serving but also manages to fit some more

traditional fun into her busy schedule. She enjoys reading, hiking, going for walks, watching sunsets on the local bluff, and taking advantage of all La Crosse has to offer.

"Kalene is an incredibly talented student who cares more for others than she does for herself," said Viterbo admission counselor Caitlin Locy. "As a Viterbo tour guide, she is a wonderful ambassador for Viterbo. In addition, Kalene keeps academics in focus, and she has a very bright future as a nurse. There is no doubt that she'll make an excellent, caring, and compassionate nurse."

Kalene reflected on how she is achieving her goals of becoming a nurse through the Wisconsin Grant and other financial aid.

"The Wisconsin Grant was extremely helpful," said an appreciative Kalene, one of four siblings in her family. "In fact, there was no way I would have been able to afford college without support from the Wisconsin Grant and from private aid from Viterbo. It made my education possible."

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*

