

About the WTG

The twenty-two private, or independent, nonprofit colleges and universities of Wisconsin operate without taxpayer support, but provide an invaluable public service to the state, educating more than 60,000 students a year. Many of Wisconsin's best and brightest need financial help to attend the college of their choice.

The State of Wisconsin created the Wisconsin Tuition Grant (WTG) in 1965 to help qualified Wisconsin citizens to succeed. Fully one-third of the low-income students who apply for the WTG are turned away every year for lack of funds. Each month WTG Achievers brings you success stories of Wisconsinites for whom the WTG has made a significant difference.

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Rolf Wegenke, Ph.D.
President & CEO

Wendy Wink
Executive Vice President

Katy Kaiser, editor
Director of Publications and Reports

New U.S. citizen putting down roots in Wisconsin

Originally from Albania, Sofina Ziu and her family moved to Milwaukee in 2005. Her parents wanted both of their daughters to have the best chance at education and the opportunities it affords, and they found it at Alverno College.

"I really want to help others," said Sofina, who plans to graduate in May with a double major in Global Studies and Community Leadership. "I want



Sofina Ziu, of Milwaukee, is dedicated to helping women and children succeed.

to advocate for change, and help women and children especially."

Like so many other students, the Wisconsin Tuition Grant helps make Sofina's life better. "It's really important to me because it takes so much financial stress away. My education comes first. Having the WTG is a relief."

Her experience moving from Albania to Greece, and then

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Father of two looking forward to joining the workforce

Like many of his peers, Wisconsin Lutheran College (WLC) senior Michael Kellen has packed a lot of experiences into his four years of college. He will graduate in May, having earned a degree in Business Administration with a double emphasis in Finance and Management. He has participated in the Wisconsin Lutheran Choir and the college's Ambassador Club, played intramural sports, and served as a manager for the men's basketball team and a student employee



Michael Kellen, originally of Black River Falls, is grateful for the financial aid he has received.

team leader in the Office of Admissions.

But Michael, a native of Black River Falls, deeply appreciates his Wisconsin

Tuition Grant for three special reasons: his wife and their two children, both of whom were born while he was in college.

"Because I am married and have children, every bit of financial aid is extremely helpful and appreciated," said Michael.

"The Wisconsin Tuition Grant, along with other financial aid I received, has allowed me to get a quality education in

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to the United States, has given Sofina a unique perspective, but her path to citizenship and education has not been easy. She learned English after her family moved here, and the language barrier made it hard for her to make friends at first. “Being in high school and trying to adapt was really difficult sometimes.” She made it through, and now Sofina and her family have planted roots in Wisconsin—her parents recently bought their first home. Sofina is deeply proud that she is now a U.S. citizen. “I am so excited, I cannot wait to vote.”

When she was still in high school, a teacher convinced Sofina to give Alverno a try. She quickly fell in love with the small class sizes and one-to-one attention she gets from her professors. The fact that Alverno also focuses on empowering women is very appealing to her. “I know I’m getting a great education, and I can influence other

people to come here and experience the same.”

Besides studying, Sofina works as an Alverno College ambassador, giving tours to prospective students and their families, attending open houses, and promoting the college. She also works on the Student Activities Board planning weekly events for students on campus. Spending time with family is important, as is reading, running, and trying new things.

Sofina knows she has transformed from an unsure teenager just starting college to the confident, capable young woman she is today. She hopes to put her education and skills to work in the nonprofit world, or perhaps a government agency. One thing is for sure, she’s ready to take on any challenges she may face. When thinking about her future, Sofina smiled and said, “OK world, get ready because I’m coming!”



Wisconsin’s private nonprofit colleges and universities serve over 23,000 students ages 25 and over—38 percent of all WAICU students were in this age group.

Source: IPEDS Fall 2011 Enrollment Survey

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four years with little debt.”

Michael selected one of Wisconsin’s private nonprofit colleges because “the educational experiences and different opportunities I’ve had at a private college included things I may not have been able to do at a state university, such as being in the choir without having to be a music major or minor,” he said.

The first 13 years of Michael’s education were in the public school system. “WLC was a refreshing change of pace. Having an education that was based on God’s

Word, while being around a great group of friendly college students, was something I couldn’t pass up,” he explained.

For the past two years, Michael has headed up WLC’s group of 24 Peer Admissions Counselors, who help prospective students with their college search via phone calls, blogs, e-mails, and Facebook. His efforts were recognized in 2012 when he was named one of three WLC Student Employees of the Year.

The prospect of graduating in May has led Michael to reflect on his college experi-

ence. “The college has provided me with a lot of great memories, but my favorite memory of WLC would have to be participating in choir,” said Michael, who toured Europe and the United States as a tenor in the college’s auditioned, 68-voice ensemble. “Singing is a huge part of my life, and having the opportunity to sing God’s praises over the past four years is something I can’t place a price tag on.”

After graduation, Michael will work for a financial planning firm in Waukesha as an assistant to the firm’s Chief Investment Officer.

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*
- Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design *Milwaukee*
- Milwaukee School of Engineering *Milwaukee*

- Mount Mary College *Milwaukee*
- Northland College *Ashland*
- Ripon College *Ripon*
- St. Norbert College *De Pere*
- Silver Lake College of the Holy Family *Manitowoc*
- Viterbo University *La Crosse*
- Wisconsin Lutheran College *Milwaukee*

