

## About the WTG

The twenty-three 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 61,000 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.

WTG 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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## Supporting local communities, one town at a time

When Elizabeth Gerrits first learned about Northland College, she was not quite sure that a small campus in northern Wisconsin was the right place for her. The majors and minors looked good but, as a senior at a Port Washington High School in the southeastern part of the state, she thought a college campus with only 600 people sounded pretty small. Still, something about Northland caught her



Elizabeth Gerrits, of Port Washington, fell in love with Northland College on her first visit.

attention, so she talked to an admissions counselor and went for a visit anyway.

“Seeing the campus and the community here, I fell in love,” says Elizabeth. “The one-to-one attention is great, and the classes are really intertwined. You can do all these great things, and the resources you need are all more accessible. It’s so much better than a huge lecture hall where nobody knows

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## Add math to economics to dance for a global impact

While her major has changed since first enrolling at Alverno College as a freshman, Lena Scheibengraber, now a senior, is relieved to have had the time to fine-tune her life’s passion and ultimate vision.



Lena Scheibengraber, of Milwaukee, has combined her diverse interests into her major at Alverno College.

It was the ability to combine math and dance that initially drew Lena to Alverno. “I was attending Milwaukee High School of the Arts and had an affinity for math, but also a love of dance. It was actually my mom who found out about

the ability to combine the two at Alverno.”

Lena began at Alverno in 2008 and worked with the college’s financial aid office

to receive tuition assistance. In addition to receiving an academic scholarship and qualifying for a work/study program, Lena is fortunate to be a recipient of the Wisconsin Tuition Grant.

“I can say with certainty that receiving the grant was critical to my success, both short-term and long-term,” explains Lena. “It was a relief to know that I qualified and

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**Elizabeth Gerrits** continued from page 1

your name.”

For Elizabeth, the Wisconsin Tuition Grant, along with other financial aid, has been a critical part of paying for a college education.

“I come from a single-parent family,” she says. “Getting grants makes it possible to go to college without taking out thousands and thousands of dollars in loans.” That support opened the door for Elizabeth to study at Northland and to prepare for a career that will shape her future. An excellent, student-centered kind of education has always been important to Elizabeth.

“The better educated you are, the more you can help to educate others and spread that knowledge,” she says.

Elizabeth is now a sophomore at Northland

majoring in sustainable community development with a minor in geology. She is especially interested in the role that renewable energies can play in building and supporting strong local communities. After graduation she hopes to work with small businesses to help them become more resource efficient. She points to the wide range of course material and the strong connections that faculty make among topic areas as key components of a Northland education. Eventually, she says, she would like to enroll in a graduate program—possibly in geology or another related field.

She also sees an important connection between communities and geology. “You have to know where you are and what’s around you,” says Elizabeth. “You need that background knowledge before you can do anything else. Plus, I’m really a science person.”



Transfer students are welcome at Wisconsin’s private, nonprofit colleges and universities. In fall 2011, 28 percent of new students transferred in to WAICU schools.

Source: WAICU research archives.

**Lena Scheibengraber** continued from page 1

would receive the tuition assistance, but from a long-term perspective, it’s also comforting to know that my college loan debt won’t be a burden I can’t handle.”

While Lena’s path toward math has never wavered, it was joined by a desire to add a worldwide perspective. Lena is now pursuing a double major in math and global studies, and hopes to pursue a doctoral program in economics as her ultimate step.

“My three-fold pursuit will be international, development, and gender

analysis; and while some may question or confuse the three, I think it’s all hugely fascinating.”

Although Lena is busy with work study—she works 20 hours per week during the school year and 40 hours every week in the summer—she also recognizes the importance of networking and volunteering. She’s been actively involved with Circle K, a collegiate division of Kiwanis, since she was a freshman at Alverno.

Perhaps most important to her ultimate

career vision, Lena is involved with American Model United Nations, which is an international effort to help tomorrow’s leaders gain a global perspective.

“Colleges from across the country come together in Chicago, each representing a different country of the U.N. By creating a simulation of the U.N. experience, including the Security Council, we can explore things that affect voting in the country your college represents. It’s an interesting experience that helps me stay focused on my future.”

**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 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*

