

Wisconsin Achievers

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About Wisconsin Grants

The twenty-three 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 54,000 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.

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Carthage first-generation student serves as campus leader

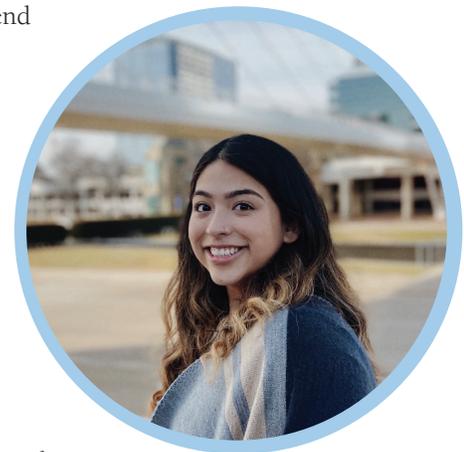
As the first in her family to graduate from high school and attend college, Lizeth Brito is building a lasting legacy at Carthage College.

Lizeth has put in extra work to excel in school while navigating many barriers. Through the college's equity and inclusion efforts, she's helping to eliminate similar obstacles for future students.

In her third year at Carthage, Lizeth is working toward a bachelor's degree in political science and Spanish. She has a minor in women's and gender studies, as well as a second minor in business administration.

Thanks to the work ethic her parents instilled, Lizeth knew the value of a college education from a young age while growing up in Racine, Wisconsin. However, realizing that goal was never guaranteed. "As a first-generation student, being able to afford college can seem impossible," Lizeth said.

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Lizeth Brito

First-generation WLC student pursues physical therapy career

For Matayah Pethke of Manawa, Wisconsin, being able to attend college as a first-generation college student was a huge milestone.

"Receiving a college degree opens a multitude of opportunities that were never at my fingertips before. With a degree in sport and exercise science, I will be able to pursue a career where I can help people," said Matayah, who will graduate from Wisconsin Lutheran College (WLC) in May 2022.

Receiving the Wisconsin Grant helped Matayah continue her education in a faith-based environment, which was important to her. "Receiving the Wisconsin Grant and other scholarships has allowed me to continue my education at a school I love. College can be expensive, but with great opportunities such as the Wisconsin Grant, I have been able to focus on gaining knowledge in my classes during my four years as a Warrior," said Matayah. "I would like to thank everyone who helps make it possible for me and other students to receive the Wisconsin Grant because it is truly appreciated and does not go unnoticed."

In choosing a college to attend, finding a family-like atmosphere with a culture of caring was important. "While touring colleges as a junior at Little Wolf High School, I knew right when I walked in that WLC was the right choice for me. Seeing how faculty interacted with students is one of the reasons it felt like home," said Matayah. "What I like most about WLC is that Warriors take care of Warriors; the college is like one big family. Professors care about the students they are teaching, students care for other students around them, and the alumni contribute in a multitude of ways."

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Matayah Pethke

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Throughout high school, Lizeth worked two jobs simultaneously. While that helped her learn the value of hard work and managing money, she admits it was hard to balance with a full school load.

Her effort and determination paid off — literally. After applying to Carthage, Lizeth received a financial aid package that included the Wisconsin Grant and various other scholarships.

“With hard work and the glory of God, I am thankful to say I will graduate debt-free in 2023,” she said. “This is a weight off my shoulders because I can focus on getting the most out of my classes and campus life.”

Through a popular program that Carthage offers to ease first-generation college students’ transition from high school, Lizeth made connections with others from similar backgrounds.

“I met some of my closest friends through the first-generation program,” she says. “Being involved with other first-generation students helped me gain skills that set me apart from my peers.”

The Carthage junior credits those experiences for her elected positions as president of 1G (a club for first-generation students) and vice president of Student Government. She is a student liaison for the Office of Equity and Inclusion, as well as an active member of Mi Gente (a Hispanic culture organization), United Women of Color, and Youth Empowered in the Struggle (YES).

Off campus, she serves on the Transit Commission in her hometown of Racine. And, she still finds time for her campus job in the Office of Residential Life.

Considering Lizeth’s career goals include working in politics or law, she is off to a strong head start. Wherever that road specifically leads, she wants to work toward something larger than herself. With financial and family support, Lizeth is confident she can achieve whatever she puts her mind to.

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This type of environment helped Matayah become involved outside of the classroom as well. She is the vice president of New Friends, a club that invites teens and young adults with special needs around the Milwaukee area to campus. The club offers a variety of events, including pumpkin painting, a welcome-back party in fall, and singing karaoke. Matayah also works in the college’s Student Programming Office, publicizing campus events for WLC students through on-campus promotion and social media.

Through all these experiences at WLC, Matayah is prepared for and excited to continue her education after graduation by pursuing a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree. She wants to be a physical therapist because it is a profession where she can pursue her passion for learning about the structure of the human body while helping clients reach or maintain their goals. “Being a physical therapist is so much more than just giving someone exercises; you are a motivator and supporter of your clients. As a rehab aide, I have seen first-hand that people love being recognized for achieving small victories,” Matayah concluded.



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
 Concordia University Wisconsin - Mequon
 Edgewood College - Madison

Herzing University - Milwaukee
 Lakeland University - Plymouth
 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
 Viterbo University - La Crosse
 Wisconsin Lutheran College - Milwaukee

FACT OF THE MONTH

An estimated 90 percent of 2020 graduates from private, nonprofit colleges are employed or in graduate school within six months of graduation.

Source: NACE First Destination Survey, 2021