

About Wisconsin Grants

The twenty-three private, nonprofit colleges and universities of Wisconsin operate without direct taxpayer support, but provide an invaluable public service to the state, educating more than 52,000 students a year. Many of Wisconsin's best and brightest need financial help to attend the college of their choice.

The Wisconsin Grant 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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Concordia Senior Enters Nursing, Thanks To The Wisconsin Grant

One could say that nursing is in Emily Voigt's DNA.

The Brookfield native is the third in her family, after her mom and sister Stephanie, to pursue a career in the field of nursing. Her decision to do so at Concordia University Wisconsin (CUW) also rounds out the trifecta. Initially, however, she resisted the idea of following so closely in her family's shoes.

"At first, I thought, my parents went to Concordia, my sister went there, I don't want to go there. That's just so predictable," Emily says with a laugh. But then she toured other schools, and she decided that it wasn't just the familial pull that had her leaning toward CUW.

"Concordia was the school where I felt I could best succeed," Emily says. "I think the professors are just awesome. They all have been super supportive with everything that happens, whether it's during school or life in general. I just feel really blessed to have professors who genuinely care about me as a person."



Emily Voigt

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MIAD Junior Makes Her Creative Mark on Milwaukee

Milwaukee is home to hundreds of eye-catching murals. One Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design (MIAD) junior is leveraging her experience at the college to add her perspective to Milwaukee's creative landscape. Judith Perez, who will graduate in 2024, worked with MIAD's faculty and the Lubar Innovation Center to complete two murals in summer 2022.

"In my early years at MIAD, I would often worry that I hadn't accomplished as much as some of my peers. But looking back, it's clear that I've done so much more than I could have ever imagined," says Judith, of Delavan, Wisconsin. As part of the curriculum for Fine Arts, Judith, along with her classmates, completed a mural at the Milwaukee Public Museum. This experience, which educates students in the real-world intricacies of planning and creating a mural, reignited Judith's love of realism painting.

With the support of MIAD's Lubar Innovation Center, Judith worked on her second mural, a quilt-themed collaborative project spanning 200 feet at the Taxco Apartments in Milwaukee's Walker Point neighborhood. "The Lubar Innovation Center gave me the opportunity to engage with the community and practice mural painting at a more professional level," she says.



Judith Perez

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Voigt also considers it a blessing that she has financial support from areas outside of her family's budget. Her father, a pastor, made it clear to her and her siblings growing up that his church worker salary wouldn't go very far in helping them foot the bill for their college tuition. In addition to Stephanie, Emily has two older brothers who both earned college degrees.

"I'm so thankful for financial support like the Wisconsin Grant that has allowed me to pursue my passion and will make a difference in other people's lives once I am a nurse," explains Emily. Family is important to Emily. As such, she hopes to land a job in Wisconsin following her graduation from Concordia this upcoming May. And the need for qualified nurses is great. By 2035, Wisconsin is projected to have a 20,000-person nursing shortage based on current nursing school graduation trends.

Emily wants to specialize in infant care. She's had rotations on the neonatal floor recently and fell in love with the work. Regardless of where she ends up, ultimately, she wants to serve others.

"I've always been a helper," Emily says. "It brings me so much joy and satisfaction to know that I've made another person's day a little bit better. Nursing gives me the opportunity to do that regularly, and potentially at someone's lowest moments. If I can make even a small difference in their lives, that will make my life all the more fulfilling."

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The MIAD Lubar Innovation Center connects Milwaukee's corporate and nonprofit businesses to the creative talent of MIAD's students and alumni. The partnerships contribute to Milwaukee's creative community while enriching students' lives and education. "A project like [the Taxco mural] is great because our students get to put the work they make in their own portfolios and get experience working with real-world paying clients. Their work also gets to be seen on a highly visible building out in the community," says Kyle James, assistant director of the Center.

Staying local while attending a high-quality college was important to Judith. "I wanted to be close to home while also being in a place where I could take advantage of opportunities while I was attending MIAD and after graduation," she explains. Judith also was drawn to the college, in part, for its robust First-Year Experience program, which allowed her to experiment with many art-making techniques before deciding to specialize in Fine Arts.

"Without financial aid, I would not be able to pursue my dream job or get to where I am today at MIAD," Judith explains. Judith worked hard during her high school years and credits excellent financial aid, including the Wisconsin Grant, with allowing her to attend MIAD. "Numerous wonderful possibilities have arisen as a result of me being true to myself and pushing myself in my artistic endeavors," says Judith. Set to graduate in spring 2024, Judith will surely continue to make her mark on Milwaukee's creative community.

FACT OF THE MONTH

An estimated 92 percent of 2021 graduates from private, nonprofit colleges are employed or in graduate school within six months of graduation.

Source: NACE's First Destination Survey, 2022.

*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