

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 53,000 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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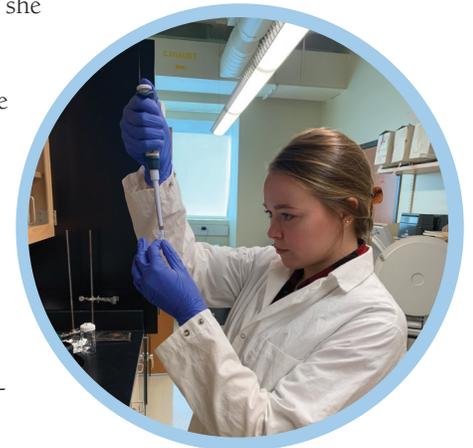
St. Norbert College graduate on to Veterinary Medicine Program

Since she was in first grade, Alicia Gehlhoff knew exactly what she wanted to do with her life: care for animals.

"I never questioned it," says Alicia, a 2018 graduate of Florence High School. "There was never a doubt in my mind. I always wanted to be a veterinarian. Most students are trying to find what they're interested in, but I always knew. I would put little PowerPoints together to sell my parents on getting chickens or rabbits. I wanted experiences with various animals at a young age."

When she was around 16 years old, Alicia says she began job shadowing veterinarians at clinics in her local area, seeing first-hand what their day-to-day lives looked like. That's when she really became serious about her calling.

Alicia was set to attend either University of Wisconsin-River Falls, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, or the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, but her mother suggested she give St. Norbert College in De Pere, Wisconsin, a look before making a final decision.



Alicia Gehlhoff

continued on page 2

Social work student plans career in child welfare

Avery Cornford always knew she wanted a career in a "helping profession," but she wasn't quite sure which one. After visiting Viterbo University and meeting with faculty, she came to realize that the university's social work program was perfect for her.

As part of her academics, Avery was able to meet and shadow a La Crosse County social worker, who happened to be a Viterbo alumna, and another professional working at the Salvation Army. These experiences confirmed that Avery's choice of majors was correct.

"I'm very happy at Viterbo," says Avery, a junior from Prairie du Chien. "I chose the university because it was only an hour away from home and it has a small-town feel. There is also a low student to faculty ratio, which was important to me. The faculty know your first name and want you to succeed."

Avery is very involved on campus, serving as an RA, president of the social work club and the Viterbo chapter of the National Society of Leadership and Success, and as a member of the university's social justice and equity committee. She also has worked as a biology tutor and a mentor in the Academic Resource Center.

"I've had tutors myself and I wanted to give back," she says. "I have really enjoyed mentoring because it's helped me connect with other first-generation students and build rapport and community, which is an

continued on page 2



Avery Cornford

Alicia Gehlhoff continued from page 1

“So, I toured St. Norbert, and halfway through the tour, I knew I wanted to go here,” says Alicia. “Everyone was so helpful, including my admission counselor, Eric Wagner. And the campus itself is so beautiful. I felt there was a real community here and believed I was going to get a lot of personal attention from the professors because of the small class sizes.”

The Wisconsin Grant made it possible for Alicia to experience the St. Norbert College community which was so important to her. Alicia graduated in May from St. Norbert College with a biology degree, with an emphasis in bio medical science.

In February, Alicia was accepted to both the UW-Madison and U-MN Twin Cities, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine programs, her top two choices. She will begin her studies at UW-Madison in the fall.

“Alicia is a highly motivated, hard-working and focused student with a generous, optimistic personality,” says Deborah Anderson, professor of biology and Gehlhoff’s academic advisor at St. Norbert College. “She will use her academic talent to succeed in vet school.”

Alicia conducted research with Anderson. “The ability to do research at St. Norbert is crazy,” says Alicia. “Students don’t have those opportunities at bigger schools. The biology program at St. Norbert College is rigorous, and there are many options for upper-level biology courses,” she adds.

In addition to being a part of the honors program, Alicia made the dean’s list every semester and participated in several extra-curricular activities. She also tutored K-8 students in math and served as an aid for students with learning disabilities at Aldo Leopold Community School in Green Bay.

Avery Cornford continued from page 1

excellent skill to have in social work. As a mentor, I help students adjust to college life, whether it be making them aware of campus resources or just getting together to talk.”

Off campus, Avery enjoys listening to podcasts. She is a self-described true crime junkie. She also enjoys fishing, hiking, and spending time with family and friends. After graduation next year, she would like to attend graduate school at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and eventually work in the area of child welfare for a county or at a government facility.

“The Wisconsin Grant has helped me pay for my college education,” Avery said. “I would not be able to go to college without financial aid, and I am very grateful that I receive it. I also receive work study through my financial aid package. I work on campus at the Varsity Athletics Center, which I absolutely love. I get to see many of my residents participate and support others in sports.”

Viterbo faculty member Janet Holter, the director of the university’s social work program, says Avery will be an outstanding social worker. “Avery is a compassionate, empathetic individual. Her passion for service and for social justice is evident in the classroom and in her work on and off campus,” Holter says. “She is an advocate for all, working at all times for a truly diverse and inclusive campus community.”



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

WAICU members produce 23 percent of all bachelor's degrees and 35 percent of all advanced degrees in Wisconsin.

Source: IPEDS, Completions Survey, 2019-20