

About Wisconsin Grants

The twenty-four private, or independent, nonprofit colleges and universities of Wisconsin operate without direct taxpayer support, but provide an invaluable public service to the state, educating nearly 56,000 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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Ripon College student dedicated to public service

As a first-generation college student from Waupaca, Ripon College sophomore Dakota Marlega has big dreams of where she wants her life to go. However, she always knew she would need assistance to get there. The Wisconsin Grant is part of her financial aid package, which is helping her along her way.

"I've always loved education and learning, and I knew I wanted to be able to give back to other people and help other people," she says. Dakota plans to become a social worker, and getting an undergraduate degree as well as a post-graduate degree is key to that ambition.

Neither of her parents graduated from college, and only one is working. "So I knew right out of the gate that I would have to pay for college by myself," she says. "College is expensive, no matter where you go. It's daunting and sometimes a deterrent when you see those numbers."

The Wisconsin Grant is a financial source that doesn't have to be repaid, "and it's lessening the financial burden that so many college students experience," she says.

The social mobility aspect of getting higher education "is huge" for Dakota, she says, and she is embracing all the different opportunities that come her way.



Dakota Marlega

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Stritch student focuses on communication and community

Emily Czaplowski, a sophomore communication arts major at Cardinal Stritch University, believes in the transformative power of a supportive community – especially for college students.

As one of the university's community development residence life assistants (CDAs), Emily's duties include planning residence hall events, overseeing resident assistant programming and serving on the professional staff duty rotation.

"My job is all about developing community," said Emily, who is from West Allis, Wisconsin. "I also have office hours each week during which resident students can drop by and chat, express their concerns, and provide input on what they would like to see in our Residence Life programming."

In addition to her CDA and academic responsibilities, she also participates in Franciscan Servant Scholars (an integrated education and formation program), Concert Choir, and University Ministry.

"I am continually learning about myself throughout my college journey," said Emily. "There are opportunities to learn all around me at Stritch. I want to take advantage of as many as I can!"

A staunch advocate for a liberal arts education, Emily believes it will best prepare her for a career in non-profit leadership. In addition to her communications focus, she is pursuing minors in religious studies and political science. While her academic



Emily Czaplowski

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She is majoring in communication and theatre and is also studying Spanish at Ripon College. She works as an intern for the Office of Marketing and Communications and as an assistant in the Department of Communication. She recently interned for Living Room Conversations, an organization promoting civil discourse via structured conversations.

This semester, Dakota is participating in her third Ripon College theatre department show, engaging in the Presidential Leadership Program, serving as the vice president of a civic engagement student organization, and contributing as a member of the Center for Politics and the People Student Advisory Board.

She also is a recipient of the 2018 Wisconsin Women in Government scholarship, awarded to undergraduate women who wish to pursue careers in public service, public administration, or governmental affairs.

“All of my areas of study can be boiled down to my desire to foster more conversation in society, whether it be through communication, performing, or speaking across language barriers,” she says.

“At Ripon College, I’m able to participate in things I care deeply about that don’t necessarily pertain to my areas of study. Some of these may be unconventional for what I’d like to go into, but it all boils down to connecting with other people. It is giving me a different perspective in the field of social work and the opportunity to branch out beyond the traditional confines of social work as a field.”

Her success, she says, stems from “the encouragement from great educators and supportive family members. My future lies in helping others, just as my past was dependent upon others helping me.”

Emily Czaplewski continued from page 1

coursework has been rigorous, Emily knows the challenges are essential for growth and success.

“Earning a college degree will enable me to show the world that I have expertise in a specific area, but also the ability to examine life through a variety of lenses,” she said. “It gives me an added measure of confidence in my own abilities.”

With an unwavering commitment to strengthen the Stritch community she loves, Emily appreciates the support she and her classmates receive.

“I am grateful that educating future generations is a priority for those who provide and support the Wisconsin Grant,” she said. “Without financial aid, I - along with many of my peers - would not be able to attend college, much less experience the opportunities it provides. Investing in our education is an investment in the future, and I hope that this grant will continue to enable students to realize their dreams of attending college.”

The investment, however, is not one-sided. Emily says it motivates her, not only to succeed but to contribute to her community.

“By receiving the Wisconsin Grant, I have a responsibility to work hard, make a difference in our world in whatever ways I can, and pay it forward by helping the emerging generations of leaders to realize their own dreams.”



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*
 Silver Lake College of the Holy Family *Manitowoc*
 Viterbo University *La Crosse*
 Wisconsin Lutheran College *Milwaukee*

FACT OF THE MONTH

Nationally, estimated bachelor's degree attainment rates by age 24 were 5 times higher for those in the highest income quartile than for those in the lowest income quartile (58 percent vs. 11 percent) in 2016.

Source: Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy of the University of Pennsylvania (PennAHEAD) and the Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity and Higher Education, Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the United States, 2018