

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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First Generation Beloit College Student Relies on the Wisconsin Grant

Beloit College first-year student Neue Axayaca Xilitla Arroyo is intent on making an impact on the world through language, fashion, and music. Neue is exploring language and dance, majoring in Japanese language and culture, and minoring in journalism or music, and plans to graduate in 2026. During his free time, Neue discovers and creates music, aspiring to be a DJ at the radio college station WBCR. Ballet classes are also a favorite way for Neue to spend time.

Neue is finding that a liberal arts education at Beloit College is a springboard to a creative career path. "I'd ideally like to work for a magazine covering fashion and music subculture in Japan and the United States," Neue says. "The work of localizing a piece of media from one language and culture to another is incredible. I've been translating and interpreting for family members since I was young, and I still find it fun."

Neue first discovered Beloit College through its Upward Bound program, which gives teens the resources to plan for and succeed in higher education. The program includes tutoring, academic advising, leadership training, cultural events, and community service projects.

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**Neue Axayaca
Xilitla Arroyo**

Mount Mary University Senior Embraces Tech Opportunities

Giselle Martin Gomez of Milwaukee came to Mount Mary University determined to make the most of her time in college.

A senior in her final semester, Giselle is majoring in English/Writing for New Media and Spanish and has also earned a pre-baccalaureate peacebuilding certificate. As a student ambassador, she meets prospective students and leads campus tours. She studied abroad and had an internship in Costa Rica. She is the editor-in-chief of *Arches* magazine.

Last semester, she was intrigued by a new offering at Mount Mary, an introduction to User Experience Design (UX). Despite her busy schedule, she decided to take the class. It turned out to be exactly what brought together her interests and skills, and so she is dedicating her final semester to earning a minor in the new and exciting field of UX design. "All the pieces came in place at the right time," she said.

For Giselle, UX design brings together her interpersonal skills as a communicator and her interest in research and cutting-edge technology. Through her coursework she has discovered she enjoys the process of UX research, creating usability tests, and conducting user interviews. She also enjoys building the interface and conducting competitive analysis. As she moves into her career, she knows her perspective will be invaluable in creating technology that is built for the diverse perspectives of all users. "We need more diversity in tech," Giselle said. "This degree means everything."

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Giselle Martin Gomez

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A highlight for students is a six-week residential summer program on the Beloit College campus.

Growing up in a family that encouraged learning and new experiences, Neue wanted to be the first of his family to go to college after he graduated from Beloit Memorial High School. “Upward Bound gave me a support system I needed and helped me navigate the dark waters of being a first-generation student applying to colleges,” Neue says. “I’m sure the kids after me will benefit from the opportunities and knowledge made available through the program.”

When it came to paying for tuition, the Wisconsin Grant program provided a financial boost for Neue to pursue a college degree at Beloit. “It gave me the peace of mind that I needed going into college,” Neue says. “Had it not been for the extra help, I may not have considered going to college at all.” Beloit College staff helped develop the financial aid package he needed.

“Neue is an incredibly bright and determined individual and while his story is unique, there is a common thread among all our Wisconsin Grant recipients. Without the proper financial support, their goal of earning a college degree is simply unattainable,” says Betsy Henkel, Beloit College Director of Financial Aid. Annually, 100 Beloit College students benefit from the Wisconsin Grant program. “The program plays a crucial role in the enrollment and retention of our Wisconsin students,” adds Henkel.

FACT OF THE MONTH

Twenty-eight percent of all WAICU undergraduate students are first-generation students.

Source: WAICU Institutional Survey, 2021-2022.

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For all her experiences and zest for learning, she said she came to college with few expectations, only an open mind and commitment to try new things. As a first-generation student, Gomez took her decision to pursue a college career very seriously. As a high schooler, Giselle met with a Mount Mary financial aid counselor who spoke in depth about the loans she would need to attend college. “It was important for me to not graduate with a lot of debt,” Giselle says. Her admissions counselor also shared information about aid eligibility and support measures, such as Mount Mary’s Promise Program, internal scholarships, and the Wisconsin Grant.

“The Wisconsin Grant is one of the largest portions of gift aid I have received throughout my college education. It has played a major role in reducing the financial burden I have had to take on in pursuing college. Receiving the Wisconsin Grant has allowed me to pursue a college education and accomplish many different learning opportunities and experiences during my college career.” Giselle also works on campus to make ends meet. In her student job, Giselle passes along her knowledge to others. As a student ambassador in the campus Welcome Center, Giselle leads tours and meets prospective students. “I’m able to speak about what I’ve done and help students make decisions about what is best for them,” she adds.

She’s keenly aware of her position as a role model on campus, in her community, and within her family. She is the second of three sisters who have attended Mount Mary, and she has a seventh-grade brother and many young cousins. “Having a degree helps advance your life and obtain better job satisfaction, because you can work in a job that is aligned with your interests.”



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