

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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Mount Mary student perseveres to graduation

As a transfer student, non-traditional student, and a mother, Christina Lopez-Prado of Milwaukee, Wisconsin was looking for the right fit in a college. She chose Mount Mary University for its fashion design program, but she stayed at the university for its caring community of women.

"I appreciate Mount Mary University for surrounding me with such an empowering and supportive community," Christina said. "I've made a lot of friendships at Mount Mary and have connected with so many women who are trying to better themselves."

Prior to attending Mount Mary, Christina was enrolled in a public arts institution. Financial aid enabled her to transfer to Mount Mary, where she received the resources and support to achieve her academic goals.



Christina Lopez-Prado

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Marketing student thrives at Viterbo

Avery Gerstenberger of Onalaska, Wisconsin, came to Viterbo a few years later than most students.

By the time he arrived on campus, he had already worked in retail and disability services, as well as performed in musicals. But he still had not found quite what he was looking for. By chance, he met a Viterbo faculty member while he was performing in a musical. The professor encouraged him to visit the campus.

"I came and toured and thought this campus is beautiful and so personal," Avery recalls. "It felt welcoming and like somewhere that could feel like home."

Avery started out at Viterbo as a music theatre student but switched to marketing in his freshman year.

"I wanted to actually have the faculty and students know me as opposed to being one in 300 as in some public universities, in a lecture hall knowing maybe one or two people," Avery says, adding that he found what he was looking for at Viterbo.

In the spring semester of his freshman year, Avery landed a paid internship with a national nonprofit headquartered in La Crosse. He's remained with the organization throughout his time at Viterbo. The internship has helped him hone his marketing skills in the field, and given him the opportunity to take business trips to Denver and Washington, D.C.



Avery Gerstenberger

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Christina Lopez-Prado continued from page 1

“If it hadn’t been for the Wisconsin Grant or for my Honors Scholarship here at Mount Mary, I would have never been able to pursue my educational dreams,” Christina noted. “I cannot see myself at any other school, and financial aid is the sole reason for this blessing.”

Christina is working to be an example for her children and the generations after. Her degree will provide opportunities for not only her future, but for her children’s futures as well. “I want to show my children that anything is possible when you put your heart and mind to it.”

Now that Christina is a senior, she is close to making her dream a reality. She says that graduating will prove to herself that, despite years of financial and personal hardships, all her hard work and tears shed were worth it. Christina looks forward to finally meeting her goal of walking across the stage.

After graduation, Christina plans to keep her position at Kohl’s as a Senior Account Representative and focus on growing her portfolio. She aspires to work in the design department at Kohl’s and wants to do freelance work around Milwaukee in the area of sustainable clothing.

“I want to contribute and make my mark on the world,” she said.

FACT OF THE MONTH

The average financial aid package at WAICU members is 77 percent grants and scholarships.

Source: WAICU Institutional Survey, 2019-20

Avery Gerstenberger continued from page 1

Avery values the relationships he’s developed with his professors at the Dahl School of Business at Viterbo. “They know my name, they know what my goals are, and they’re very helpful,” he says of the faculty. “They’ve helped me develop my skills and helped me network, too.”

Viterbo provided Avery with an affordable college experience. He advises anyone considering coming to Viterbo to fully explore their financial aid options, which he noted includes a Wisconsin Grant.

Although Avery places great value in Viterbo’s small class sizes, after his recent graduation in May he has his eyes set on moving somewhere big. He already has a lead on a job in Seattle, although he could also move to the opposite side of the country to live in New York.

“The possibilities for me are endless, and I feel my resume is differentiated at this point from many of my peers because I’ve gained a lot of unique experiences while at Viterbo,” he says.



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