

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 more than 58,000 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.

Wisconsin Achievers is published monthly by the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU), 122 W. Washington Avenue, Madison, WI 53703-2723; 608.256.7761; mail@waicu.org.

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The future zoo vet

Gretchen Hamernik-Winters is a pre-vet student at Northland College who has goals. “I would love to work as a zoo vet with the potential of opening my own rehabilitation center in the future for zoos that close and for wildlife that can no longer live in the wild,” she said.

Gretchen was born and raised in Neenah, Wisconsin, where she grew up with dogs – including two Siberian huskies – cats, snakes, turtles, hamsters, and fish. She chose Northland College, located at the top of the state, for the small size of its campus and the surrounding city of Ashland, the one-to-one opportunities with professors, and the potential for traveling abroad to study.

The Wisconsin Grant played a critical role in her decision. “Financially, I never thought I could attend a private college—until I realized that with grants and scholarships, it was possible,” Gretchen said.

Veterinarian programs require a minimum of two-hundred recorded hours of hands-on time with animals. Gretchen has accomplished this and beyond through internships—at a zoo, a sled dog kennel, and a veterinarian office. In addition to these internships, she carries a full course load, makes the dean’s list every semester, works at Kwik Trip, and plays soccer.



Gretchen Hamernik-Winters

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Beloit student works for inclusivity

Devin Anderson has always thought of education as the gateway to change. The Racine native graduated from Beloit in May, majoring in education and political science.

A fan of small liberal arts schools, Devin looked at a few options in Minnesota and Wisconsin before settling on Beloit. “A lot of my family expected me to choose a different university, but Beloit had a really good vibe,” he says of his first visit to campus.

Devin chose Beloit initially to extend his football career, but he quickly jumped right into the mix on campus, becoming involved in Students for an Inclusive Campus (SIC), a student group which seeks to create a more inclusive and equitable campus environment. Balancing football as a starter on the varsity team, Devin says he was inspired to join SIC by seeing other upperclass student leaders do the work on campus.



Devin Anderson

“Trying to create a new world and a just world is really important. Education is really important, and I want to teach the new generation, but activism allowed me to think about that work in a different way, outside of the classroom,” he said.

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“Gretchen works incredibly hard to incorporate internships into every semester, and she does an outstanding job at each opportunity,” said Coordinator of Applied Learning Stacy Craig. “She does this while juggling work, school, and athletics. Her dedication will be an excellent asset to her chosen profession.”

Last summer Gretchen worked as a biology intern at the Menominee Zoo, where she was responsible for the care and enrichment of educational animals. She also assisted the zookeepers with the exotic animals and the barn animals. She led tours around the zoo, helped with special events, and presented at educational programs.

“Gretchen learned that not only was she skilled at caring for various animals, but she was exuberant in overcoming specific challenges of the internship—effectively educating the public about zoo animals,” said Northland College Biology Professor Wendy Gorman.

This past winter, Gretchen took a position at Country Care Pet Hospital in Washburn, Wisconsin, where she continues to work, and she interned as a dog handler for four months, earning credits while working at an 11-dog recreational kennel of Siberian and Alaskan huskies.

On her first day at the kennel, she met the dogs, scooped the kennel, learned the basic commands (gee=right; haw=left; on by=keep going straight), then clipped into cross-country skis for the first time ever and hooked herself to a dog, an activity called skijoring. Gretchen ended her internship by going solo with a four-dog team.

“From my internships, I know that the pursuit of my doctorate in veterinarian medicine is indeed the right path for me,” she said. “Northland has allowed me to achieve my goals, graduating a semester earlier as well, and I am hoping to be accepted into vet school on my first attempt.”

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For two years, Devin was a member of the SIC executive board. One of his proudest accomplishments was starting a host program for Beloit’s Board of Trustees in which students host the trustees on campus as a way to bridge the connection between those two groups. He added that SIC was successful in helping to add a student and faculty member to board committees. “The work isn’t done, but seeing that progress is something I’m really excited about,” he says.

But Devin didn’t just focus on changing Beloit. Throughout his time at Beloit, he has studied abroad in Capetown, South Africa, to work with another Beloit alumnus on a project focused around education. In the summer of 2017, he interned at the National Women’s Law Center in Washington, D.C., writing about child care. And of course, his hometown of Racine benefited from his activism. His op-ed columns on equity issues in the city have been published in the *Journal Times*. “I really believe in the work,” he says. Crediting many Beloit faculty and staff with helping him hone in on his ideas and even pushing him to think bigger.

Since returning to Racine, Devin is looking to continue his activism, seeking out neighborhood programs and volunteering opportunities while he pursues a career in teaching. “Do what really fills your cup. Keep fighting for the world you want to see,” he says.

FACT OF THE MONTH

Since at least the year 2000, the total of institutional grants awarded by WAICU members has increased every year.

Source: IPEDS



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*
 Columbia College of Nursing *Milwaukee*
 Concordia University Wisconsin *Mequon*

Edgewood College *Madison*
 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*
 Neshotah House *Neshotah*
 Northland College *Ashland*
 Ripon College *Ripon*
 St. Norbert College *De Pere*
 Silver Lake College *Manitowoc*
 Viterbo University *La Crosse*
 Wisconsin Lutheran College *Milwaukee*