

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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Wisconsin Grant helps aspiring college student become college graduate

One of Marian University's newest alumni/ae, Alicia Edwards, started as a first-generation student who struggled to find affordable college. The Beloit native wanted to move far enough away from home so that she would be immersed in campus life. Marian was just the right distance from home and the perfect size for her first adventure into adulthood.

Even in the midst of a pandemic, Alicia experienced college life. She embraced every opportunity to participate in life on the small campus. But Alicia did not just participate—she led. Initiated into the Alpha Xi Delta sorority as a freshman, Alicia found a sisterhood and was inspired to hone her new leadership skills. Through personal growth and development sparked by her sorority experience, Alicia held a variety of leadership roles including vice president and president of the sorority. The class of 2022 graduate discovered she had a passion for philanthropy and undoubtedly, leaves her mark on the sorority and beyond. Living Marian's community and service core values, Alicia is proud of the sorority's nonprofit fundraising efforts. Marian Assistant Professor of Psychology, Gina Possin,



Alicia Edwards

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MIAD student pursues her dreams of being a designer in an uncertain time

After graduating with an associate degree in Graphic Design from Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, Kristin Quintanilla entered the workforce just as the COVID-19 pandemic began. While the pandemic brought normal life to a standstill, Kristin made the decision to continue her education and obtain a bachelor's degree.

"I knew this would be the best next step in my design career to gain more experience and skills before attempting to enter the workforce again," she says. Kristin immediately fell in love with MIAD—from the quality of the student work adorning the walls to the kindness of the faculty, staff, and fellow students.

While pursuing her bachelor's degree in Communication Design, Kristin participated in internships for both Olson House and the Milwaukee Bucks. During her time at Olson House, a home furnishings store and interior design studio, Kristin honed her skills in product photography and creating digital and event graphics.

Her internship with the Milwaukee Bucks occurred at an amazing time—when the team won the NBA championship. Kristin described her time with the Bucks as, "quite surreal." She adds, "I've had the opportunity to work on some really cool projects, like t-shirts, signage, and even bobblehead boxes. I also created a lot of digital graphics, including social graphics during game days."



Kristin Quintanilla

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anticipates an amazing future ahead for Alicia and shares, “I had the privilege of meeting Alicia as a bright, engaged freshmen student in my class. As an advisor of her sorority, I’ve witnessed her grow into a strong leader who lifts up those around her and embodies the meaning of philanthropy and inclusiveness.”

Alicia was also involved with TRIO-SSS, Love Your Melon, and Outdoor Adventure Club. She has fond recollections of friendships built, memories made, and adventures shared.

After participating in her freshmen year externship, Alicia narrowed her focus on the areas she wanted to study. Settling on psychology as a major, she added two minors in communications and expressive and therapeutic arts. During her junior year, Alicia completed an expressive arts therapy internship at The Barry House, a place visited as part of her first-year externship. She enjoyed using art to foster and build relationships with residents. These methods and techniques learned through her internship shaped her outlook for how she would like to use her education in the future.

Earlier this year, she was offered a teaching position with the Boys & Girls Club in Beloit. Reaffirming her desire to work with children, Alicia is excited to be applying knowledge acquired at Marian. She was promoted to the position of Mental Health Specialist and will begin her new role at the start of the new school year. Alicia thrived through the unanticipated changes of the past two years, pivoted when necessary, and walked across the stage to accept her college diploma, graduating with academic honors. The Wisconsin Grant enabled Alicia to choose a private college and helped make an excellent education affordable. Not only did it make her school choice possible, but according to Alicia, “Without the Wisconsin Grant, I wouldn’t have been able to afford my dream of obtaining a college education.”

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When the time came for Kristin to design her Senior Thesis, she chose to pursue a project to fight climate change, designing an app named Planet Zero. Kristin wanted to develop an app to alleviate confusion over carbon footprints. “Planet Zero can track your footprint and, in turn, be able to track cities across the U.S. by linking with your buying habits. You can scan receipts, add cash purchases, and include data on weekly waste to see your impact.”

In addition to the app, Kristin designed posters and a digital billboard that could be placed in cities to update the public on their city’s carbon footprint and environmental impact. Kristin explains, “By doing all of this, people can become more aware of their impact in a simpler and positive way and encourage them to create more sustainable habits in their lives.”

As a May graduate, Kristin is hopeful for the future and grateful for the Wisconsin Grant and financial aid that made her education possible. “Honestly, if it wasn’t for financial aid, I don’t think it would have been possible for me to attend MIAD. I am so thankful for my scholarship and other types of financial aid,” Kristin says.

As for the future, Kristin plans to stay in Milwaukee—a city she has grown to love—and find a design position. When asked about her life after graduation, Kristin said, “I am very hopeful for the future and excited to see where my career will take me.”



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