

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 57,000 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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Nursing student strives to join the team that saved her life

Chelsea Wardecke was accustomed to working hard to reach her goals, even before she started nursing school at Columbia College of Nursing. Due to her family's financial constraints, she started working at the age of 13 and continued to work after graduating from high school in 2009. She tried to save as much money as possible with the hope of attending college one day.

Then, tragedy struck on May 7, 2010, when she was in a building accident and subsequently suffered first, second, and third degree burns over 70 percent of her body. After she was rescued from the burning building, she was transported to Columbia St. Mary's Hospital in Milwaukee.

It was a long, hard road to recovery, but the support of her friends, family, doctors, and nurses helped her to succeed. Nurses played a key role supporting her on both good days and bad days. "They never once gave up on me, and most important, they never let me give up on myself," said Chelsea.

A little over a year later, regular everyday activities were becoming easier, and Chelsea started thinking about what she wanted



Chelsea Wardecke

continued on page 2

Community service is a way of life for Edgewood College biology alumna

Jourdyn Mootz, a native of Merrill, graduated from Edgewood College in December 2015 Magna Cum Laude, with a degree in biology. Her remarkable academic success and her commitment to serving her home state remain unchecked, as does her energy. Currently, she is a graduate student at UW-Madison in the physician assistant program. She is also a member of wisPact, which works to integrate medical professionals into the northern part of the state – territory which is underserved.

While she was a student at Edgewood College, Jourdyn received the Wisconsin Grant. She was awarded additional financial aid, including a scholarship from the Bonner Leaders, a national service-learning leadership program for undergraduate students. Community service became a big part of her life, and she reflects on how her experience at Edgewood College has opened doors for her and changed her perspective on life for the better.

"The Bonner Leaders program at Edgewood College has been monumental in getting me to where I am today. Not only have



Jourdyn Mootz

continued on page 2

Chelsea Wardecke continued from page 1

to do with the rest of her life. It didn't take her long to decide that she wanted to become a nurse and work in the burn unit at Columbia St. Mary's Hospital, now part of Ascension Health. "I wanted to earn the privilege of helping others who are going through similar experiences," she explained.

Chelsea enrolled in courses at UW-Manitowoc in the Fall of 2012, where she received an associate degree. She began looking into baccalaureate nursing programs and found the Columbia College of Nursing website. "As soon as I clicked on their home page, I was hooked and thought, 'This is where I'm meant to go!'" she recalled. However, the reality of paying for college quickly set in. Years of ongoing surgeries and recovery were costly, and they also meant she was unable to work to save money for the next step in her college education.

When she was informed she would be getting financial help in the form of the Wisconsin Grant, she felt greatly relieved. She realizes she may have not been able to follow her dream of becoming a nurse without this financial support. Chelsea, who is a senior at Columbia College of Nursing and is on track to graduate in May, recognizes that she is close to coming full circle. She hopes to have an opportunity to work with the nursing team that saved her life.

FACT OF THE MONTH

The number of students applying to WAICU members, the Wisconsin Technical College System, or the UW System, whose families could not contribute toward their higher education expenses was 82,080, or about 37 percent of all applicants.

Source: HEAB,
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Jourdyn Mootz continued from page 1

I been able to keep the Bonner torch burning by continuing to serve under-privileged individuals, but my work helped me get into an extremely competitive graduate program." The community service on her resume showed her dedication, and the memories and lessons she learned while working at the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry gave her inspiration while writing personal essays and while interviewing at colleges and universities. At a scholarship interview, one of the interviewers mentioned how many hours of community service she had put in.

Jourdyn continues to volunteer in her grad program. It was extremely easy for her to feel comfortable in volunteering situations. Volunteers sometimes experience instances in which they are helping someone they feel like they have nothing in common with, or they may find that the other person is not open to their help. These situations can be disheartening, but Jourdyn believes that her previous experience built confidence, teaching her that it's "ok" to be in these situations. She has learned to be more open minded and to see the other person's point of view. Many times she finds that these individuals will open up if they are given the chance.

"All of my service work not only helped me feel fulfilled by helping individuals who were in need, it also instilled in me the desire to dedicate my life and career to serving individuals in need. I believe that it affected my future and my outlook on life more than any other activity I participated in throughout my college career," she concluded. The support of Wisconsin Grants made her career path possible and opened the door to a lifelong commitment to the service of others.

*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 *Sheboygan*
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 *Manitowoc*
Viterbo University *La Crosse*
Wisconsin Lutheran College *Milwaukee*