

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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Lakeland student racks up professional experience

You often hear the advice that you should keep a resume to one page. Please pardon Lakeland University senior Brianna Buzzell for over-achieving. By the time Brianna collects her diploma this May, she'll have seven internships (at least) under her belt, as well as a variety of other work experiences which have her well positioned for post-Lakeland success.

Brianna is currently doing social media strategy and content for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Sheboygan County and Lakeland's Master of Arts in Counseling program while working a job as a front desk agent at Blue Harbor Resort in Sheboygan. Soon, she'll participate in The Commons, a unique initiative in Milwaukee that pairs creative students with companies and entrepreneurs. And, she recently spent a weekend participating in the Milwaukee Bucks Sales Academy.



Brianna Buzzell

The Beaver Dam native is double majoring in business administration and marketing. Attending Lakeland wouldn't be possible without a financial aid package that includes a Wisconsin Grant.

Early in her Lakeland experience, a member of Brianna's family got sick, and she wasn't sure how she would afford college. She landed a job in Lakeland's financial aid office which not only helped her pay for school, but she also found an amazing mentor in

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Stitch student sets the stage for a bright future

Monty Sanford experimented with cooking while growing up and became quite adept in the kitchen. Impressed by his talent, Monty's family envisioned him making a living as a chef. What they didn't know is that Monty harbored a deeper passion for another art and secretly hoped to pursue a career as an actor.

Today, Monty is chasing that no-longer-secret dream, with plans to graduate in 2019 as a theater major at Cardinal Stitch University in Milwaukee.

Stitch wasn't Monty's first destination after graduating from the New School of Community Service, an alternative high school in Milwaukee Public Schools. His journey first took him to culinary school. But as Monty progressed and began envisioning his future in the heat of the kitchen, he realized without a doubt that he preferred the heat of the stage lights far more.



Monty Sanford

"If I don't do what gets me out of bed every single day, I will feel like I've wasted a life," said Monty, who caught the acting bug starting at age 5.

Upon leaving culinary school, Monty's first attempt at breaking into acting came during a two-week vacation in Los Angeles. At the end of his trip, he

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her supervisor, Sue Bialk, who helped her map out her own financial situation. “She’s like a second mom to me,” Brianna said.

Although the bulk of her internship experiences have been in social media, the Bucks experience has made her interested in exploring sales as a career possibility. “I’m a talker,” Brianna said. “I like to get to know people and hear their stories, and that’s what intrigues me about sales. But, I’m also interested in nonprofits and helping people. I’m really into programs centered around mentoring children and students. I do enjoy social media work, but there is so much more out there.”

She’s also learned the power of networking and relationships. The Bucks experience brought two of her contacts together – a Bucks sales leader who spoke to a sports marketing class she had taken and a Lakeland alumna who works for the Bucks and who was paired with Brianna through Lakeland’s alumni/ae mentoring program.

“Lakeland has really set me up for success,” Brianna said. “I compare my experience to friends’ who attend larger universities. They think I’m insane for doing multiple internships at once or having multiple majors. If you want something, whatever it is, you have to invest yourself in it. Having worked in a variety of professional settings has also been beneficial, Brianna said, and Lakeland has helped her prepare to encounter a variety of people in those settings.

“I’ve become more open minded,” Brianna said. “I came from a small town that wasn’t very diverse. That’s one of the things that drew me to Lakeland. I wanted to see things through other points of view and experience other cultures.”

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decided to stay there to pursue his dream. The day after he made that decision, his uncle, who hosted him, died and Monty found himself homeless and penniless in this distant city without any connections. A fast-food job helped him raise just enough money to travel home. Soon after, he discovered Stritch.

Stritch helped him build his understanding of his chosen career and improve his craft. “I didn’t realize how much I didn’t know when I went to L.A.,” Monty said. “That’s why I’m so thankful for Stritch. I have learned a lot.”

So confident is Monty that acting is the one true path for him. He said his education and the connections he is making through faculty are proving invaluable. “Getting that degree in my hand, I feel like I’ll be almost invincible.”

Monty’s résumé now includes lead and supporting roles – Jesus in “Godspell,” a dog in “Toy Camp,” and a ratcatcher in “Kindertransport,” among others – as well as other directions that showcase and sharpen his skills, including online video shorts, small-budget film projects, and acting out ailments for nursing students who need to practice with live patients.

Outside of acting, Monty’s job as a photographer helps fund his schooling. But a generous financial package, including the Wisconsin Grant plus scholarships and loans, is key to helping him focus intently on getting the most out of his education.

“When I found out financial aid was an option for me, that alone made college a possibility for me,” said Monty, who will be the second in his family to graduate college. “I thought college was this brass ring that I’d never catch. Now, to be here, actually doing it, is such a great feeling. It’s a blessing.”



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*

FACT OF THE MONTH

WAICU members produce 27 percent of all business bachelor’s degrees and 41% of all business graduate degrees in Wisconsin.

Source: IPEDS, 2017