

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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Carroll University student combines scientific and creative talents

At age 19, Yerusha Perez is excitedly making decisions about her personal and professional goals.

“I want to work somewhere where I can grow in different departments and not do one thing and one thing only,” she said.

Originally, she was considering a pathology career as a biochemistry major, but Yerusha also has a creative side. She is exploring her creative talents in photography and photo editing outside of her academics, which may lead her in a different direction and a marketing career. One thing is certain, she wants to be engaged in her life and work.



Yerusha Perez

“Pathology is nothing but mysteries, so you could never get bored. That’s what I want for my life, personally and professionally. I like taking charge and having the space to run things,” she said.

The Wisconsin Grant is helping to afford Yerusha the opportunity to explore her gifts while at Carroll University. “I chose Carroll because the science programs really interest me,

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Communication major works through challenges on the path to a bachelor’s degree at Carthage College

With high stakes on the line, Casey Aicher works hard for his success.

Born and raised in Kenosha, Casey has endured some hard knocks in his life: losing his father in 2014, having his family home foreclosed in 2018, and getting diagnosed with a circulatory condition known as POTS in 2020.

“Since losing my dad, money has been so tight in our family,” says Casey. “We’ve had to work check to check and a little bit in between, and sometimes that isn’t even enough.”

Casey knew what a college education would mean to him and his family, so he enrolled at Carthage College as a communication major with a minor in sociology.



Casey Aicher

In 2019, he founded Let’s Just Talk, a group that provides students a safe space and outlet for discussion. Similar to group therapy, he saw an opportunity to find others who had been through challenging life experiences.

“A year and a half later, our club is doing so well, and I’d like to think that we’ve given a good platform for people to find new friends or to open up about what’s on their

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but it also offers other well-rounded programs. How much financial aid I received made it possible to go to a private university like Carroll,” she said. “Without grants, I would have had to take out loans or make the sacrifice and go to another institution.”

This year, Yerusha’s mother helped her buy a car, so she could commute to campus and work at a Milwaukee Arby’s, where she is being considered for a role as a part-time manager. During her first year at Carroll, she lived on campus and walked to work at a senior living center downtown.

“I’m very independent. Although I’m getting grants to go to college, I still have to work for living expenses. I work as much as possible. In my family, once you’re 18, you’re responsible for paying for your own things. Carroll has given me that steppingstone as I become financially independent.”

Yerusha’s hometown is Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Because COVID caused a financial burden, Yerusha decided to commute this year. “It’s a smarter investment to work and commute to campus,” she said, as having a car made it feasible to do so.

She’s also taking a more relaxed view of competition. “Last year, I did a lot of prepping for classes. I sort of felt like I was falling behind, but don’t think I actually was. It was stressful, and I have to focus on learning the content instead.”

Now a sophomore, Yerusha also has trimmed back on extracurricular activities to focus on her top priorities. “With the manager position at Arby’s and taking photography more seriously, I realized that to just keep adding things on was too much.”

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minds,” says Casey, president of Let’s Just Talk. “It’s cool to have started something that will be a part of campus even after I graduate.”

Casey holds a part-time job on campus as a department assistant in the Dean of Students Office. He also works as a Milwaukee Bucks brand ambassador and does freelance photography work.

Post-graduation (anticipated in December), Casey has his eye on several potential career opportunities, such as political communication, public relations, or even starting a media business.

“I look forward to the day when I have my degree, a steady job, and can help my family put food on the table or pay bills on time,” Casey says. “Financial aid is life-changing for me and, I’m sure, for many other students just like me.”

Between a generous aid package from Carthage and outside support such as the Wisconsin Grant, he says “it has made the dream of college a reality.”

FACT OF THE MONTH

Thirty-one percent of all students at WAICU-member institutions are first-generation students.

Source:
WAICU Institutional Survey, 2019-20

*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