

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 56,000 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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Herzing University student prepares to start career as ICU nurse

Ayesha Ransom enrolled in Herzing University-Kenosha's Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program in 2018 and is nearing the homestretch with graduation quickly approaching. Ayesha, who serves as president of the Kenosha Student Nursing Association, is the mother of two boys and is planning a wedding with her fiancé, Robert. Despite her busy schedule, she stays focused on her dream of becoming a nurse.

"Nursing has been my dream since I was a little girl," she said. "When my father was diagnosed with cancer, I watched the nurses who took care of him, and they made a huge impact on me. I knew from that moment on, that's what I wanted to do."

Her father was her cheerleader, always assuring her she would be a great nurse. His words serve as motivation to this day.

Ayesha briefly attended another institution where she took some nursing prerequisites, but then left to enter the workforce. It was Robert who encouraged her to go back to college, and Ayesha has not looked back.



Ayesha Ransom

continued on page 2

Entrepreneurial spirit drives Concordia University Wisconsin student

As the daughter of two parents who are small business owners, Gia Fazal knows what it takes to accomplish ambitious goals.

In her early years of life, Gia's parents both held down successful management jobs in the restaurant industry. But when her father was diagnosed with a brain tumor, it forced the couple to make some career changes.

At age 9, Gia watched as her parents started over and built their own company, CMG Detailing, from the ground up. Based in Cedarburg, Wisconsin, the company specializes in personalized automotive detailing. Her parents' grit and determination lit a fire in Gia.

"You feel like a boss when you see all these things that you've set out to accomplish come together," Gia said. "The reward becomes sweeter when you put in the hard work to get there."

And she has carried that philosophy with her into Concordia University Wisconsin. Gia will graduate in 2022 (just four years after she began) with both a bachelor's and a master's degree.



Gia Fazal

continued on page 2

Ayesha Ransom continued from page 1

In addition to the support of her family, the Wisconsin Grant has helped make her dream possible.

“Receiving the Wisconsin Grant meant the world to me because paying for college out of pocket simply wasn’t an option,” she said. “Instead of worrying about finances, I’m able to put all of my energy into my education, so I can graduate in May and step toward a bright future.”

Herzing has also played a key role in moving Ayesha closer to her career aspirations.

“Herzing accepted all of my credits and gave me the most efficient path to achieving my goal,” she said. “I didn’t have to start over again with my classes or get put on a wait list like I would with other colleges.”

She gives credit to the supportive Herzing staff members who have been preparing her for the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) from day one and are there to encourage her in and out of the classroom.

Clinical experience has also been extremely valuable in helping her grow as a nurse.

“I have my own patients and a nurse I work underneath,” she said. “I’m able to pass meds, assess patients, and assist with hip, spine, and knee procedures.”

After graduation, Ayesha plans to work for two years as an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) nurse. Once complete, her goal is to become a certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA).

When asked what advice she has for other BSN students, she said: “Never give up. It’s going to be tough – you’ll have to put in a lot of hours – but what makes it all worth it is knowing that when you’re finished, you’ll be making a difference in people’s lives.”

FACT OF THE MONTH

Thirty-two percent of WAICU undergraduates are eligible for federal Pell Grants, compared to 25 percent at four-year public institutions in Wisconsin.

Source: IPEDS, 2017-18

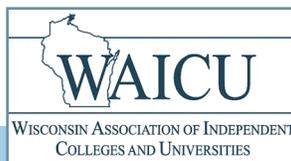
Gia Fazal continued from page 1

Despite the amount of work ethic she possesses, Gia would not be at Concordia if it were not for financial aid support like the Wisconsin Grant. Wisconsin Grants are the state’s need-based financial aid program for Wisconsin students who attend a college or university in Wisconsin.

“It makes all the difference for me,” Gia said of her financial aid package. “I hold down a job while I’m in school, and I do my part to contribute financially to my education, but it still wouldn’t have been enough. It takes a huge load off my shoulders to have scholarships and financial aid.”

Gia hasn’t fully made up her mind about where she wants to end up after graduation. She is entertaining the idea of owning her own café art studio and plans to stay involved with her parents’ business. Either way, she plans to stay busy.

“I had a friend in high school tell me, ‘In your future, I see you in pants suits,’” Gia said with a grin. “I thought that was a really fun compliment to get. I definitely think I have that persona, and I’m at my best when I’m busy.”



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
 Holy Family College - Manitowoc
 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