

Wisconsin Achievers

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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.

Wisconsin Achievers is published by the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU):

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Herzing University student inspired to complete nursing degree

In a year when a global pandemic turned everything upside down, Lisa Cherry of Silver Lake, Wisconsin got back on track with her education.

She had always worked in healthcare, becoming a CNA and medical assistant at age 16 while completing a technical program as a high school student. After graduation from high school in 2001, Lisa started college with the intention of becoming a nurse, but she had to cut her studies short for personal reasons. She continued working as a medical assistant and started a family with her husband.

In 2008, Lisa was hired at a Kenosha hospital – where she is still employed – and the doctors, physicians' assistants, and nurses she worked with encouraged her to become a nurse. One person in particular, Dr. Alfred John Capelli, became a mentor to Lisa. He always reminded her: "You are capable of more than what your scope as a medical assistant allows you to do."

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Lisa Cherry

St. Norbert College student beats to his own drum

Marquise Weatherall knew when he was six years old that he wanted to be a percussionist, but the St. Norbert College junior started taking it seriously when he was 13. He was introduced to a drum team while attending a charter school, and from that point on he was hooked.

When it came time to select a college, Marquise knew exactly what he was looking for. "I knew I wanted to go to college in Wisconsin, and I didn't want to be at a big school," said Marquise.

He saw St. Norbert College's website and was impressed with the music program. So he applied, took a tour, and has never looked back. Marquise moved to Madison, Wisconsin before he started at St. Norbert, and he is thankful for the scholarships and grants he earned – including the Wisconsin Grant, which are helping make his dreams come true.

"The Wisconsin Grant has allowed me to develop the skills needed to be a music performance major at St. Norbert. It's been very impactful," said Marquise.

Marquise specializes in keyboard, unpitched percussion instruments, and pitched percussion instruments. In the class of 2022, he currently is the only music student majoring in music performance. He said his classmates are all music education students who want to teach. Marquise wants to perform. After graduating, he plans to join a well-known symphony or band that travels across the country and the world. "That is my dream, to do that with other great musicians."

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Marquise Weatherall

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In 2020, the coronavirus pandemic hit. Lisa was working in urgent care, seeing many patients – including some with coronavirus – and using her 13 years of experience at the hospital to help coach new nurses. With Dr. Capelli and her family as her inspiration and motivation, she realized it was time to go back to school.

“I’ve never been one to run away,” Lisa said. “The pandemic made me want to finish school because I knew I could give more to the community.”

While meeting with admissions advisors from Herzing University, she learned many of her previously earned college credits would transfer and that she was eligible for financial aid. She enrolled in an evening Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program so she could continue working full-time.

“Being a full-time mom of three, wife, and employee, all of my financial aid – including the Wisconsin Grant – has helped tremendously,” Lisa said. “This financial aid has helped me, my family, and our living dynamics while going through a pandemic. I feel very fortunate.”

Lisa is slated to graduate in 2022, which means she would reach her goal of becoming a registered nurse (RN) by age 40. She plans to work as an RN for a year before returning to school for her master’s degree. “I was scared to go back to school, but I also wanted to show my kids you’re never too old to accomplish your goals,” she said.

To others thinking about going back to school and becoming a nurse, Lisa says: “Go for it. Don’t get discouraged and apply for financial aid because you never know what you might qualify for.”

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Marquise has been impressed with the music faculty at St. Norbert. “They’re amazing! They are so helpful and have so many resources,” shared Marquise. “With music, you jump right in along with your general education courses. You go through a sequence of music theory, music history, and – depending on what track you take (education or performance) – you go through the classes pertaining to your major respectively. It’s been quite a ride. I have enjoyed learning at St. Norbert very much,” he added.

Besides his classes, Marquise is very involved on campus. He is a student ambassador who leads tours, a program assistant with the Cassandra Voss Center on campus, and social chair of the Black Student Union.

“I am busy going outside the norm of a typical college student,” he said. “But I want to have a unique story that I can share with my family, friends, and future St. Norbert College students one day.”

FACT OF THE MONTH

64,594 students from around the state attending institutions in all sectors receive a Wisconsin Grant.

Source:
Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB),
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