

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.

Wisconsin Achievers is published by the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU):
122 W. Washington Avenue
Madison, WI 53703-2723;
608.256.7761;
mail@waicu.org.

Rolf Wegenke, Ph.D.
President & CEO

Rebecca Larson
Senior VP for Advocacy

Cassandra Krause
Director of Communications
and Marketing, Editor

Lawrence's Willa Dworschack thrives as she pursues her passion for physics

Willa Dworschack came to Lawrence University with a deep desire to study physics.

She wanted to learn. She wanted to be challenged. She wanted to do meaningful research. And she wanted to share her knowledge with others.

The senior from Soldiers Grove, Wisconsin, is well on her way. In the spring, she was named a Goldwater Scholar, one of 496 undergraduates across the country honored for their studies in math and science fields.

The program honoring the late Senator Barry Goldwater was designed to encourage students to pursue careers in the fields of math, natural sciences, and engineering. The Goldwater Scholarship, the preeminent undergraduate award of its type in these fields, is administered by the Goldwater Foundation, a federally endowed agency established in 1986.

Willa, who has been doing research in atomic and molecular optics, said that honor, combined with being a Wisconsin Grant recipient, has her on a path that will eventually put her in position to teach at the university level.

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Willa Dworschack

Stritch nursing student inspires fellow students, family

When Aliyah Love enrolled at Cardinal Stritch University in 2016, she was committed to immersing herself in a total college experience. Now, in her senior year, Aliyah has grown into a living definition of a student leader.

A nursing major, Aliyah was elected president of the Student Government Association after representing the Ruth S. Coleman College of Nursing and Health Sciences as a senator during her junior year. She also holds leadership roles with the Multicultural Student Nurses Association, Black Student Union, and Student Nurses Association. She delivered the Student Response at the Opening Day Convocation for the 2019-2020 academic year.

"Clubs and organizations are important because students need a place where they feel comfortable and welcome," explained Aliyah.

It would be natural for her fellow students to look up to her because of her leadership characteristics. But her achievements are especially impressive because Aliyah, who is 39, and her husband, Burhan, have seven children between the ages of six and 23.

"It does get hard to juggle everything at times," conceded Aliyah. "But I really want the whole experience and want to make a difference. I try not to mother my classmates, but relate to them as a peer."

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Aliyah Love

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“After graduating in June, I plan to pursue a Ph.D. in Atomic, Molecular and Optical (AMO) Physics,” she said.

There was a time coming out of high school when such pursuits seemed unlikely, Willa said. It was financial aid, including the Wisconsin Grant, that helped her make her way to Appleton to become part of Lawrence’s Class of 2020.

“Before choosing my college, I knew that I wanted to attend an institution where I could get an education with both breadth and depth of knowledge in my chosen field,” she said. “I am receiving that at Lawrence, a terrific liberal arts and physics education, and the financial support from the Wisconsin Grant was a major factor in my ability to enroll here.”

The experience, she said, has been everything she hoped for and has put her in a position to follow her dreams.

“I have been able to pursue my passion for physics through rigorous coursework and research opportunities,” Willa said. “Lawrence and the Wisconsin Grant have given me the freedom to engage in a diverse set of extracurricular options and student organizations, where I’m developing lifelong skills that complement my interests.”

That path has taken her into some high-level physics research, with much more to come.

“Ultimately, I hope to become an impactful leader in AMO physics, conducting experiments that focus on the interface between this field and quantum physics,” Willa said. “I will use my strong foundation of knowledge in physics to contribute to meaningful research and to share my love of physics through teaching at the university level.”

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Her activities extend beyond the Stritch campus. She is a Girl Scout troop leader, a county and national Girl Scout delegate, and has volunteered for the African American Breastfeeding Network for a decade.

Aliyah put her education on the back burner after moving from Alabama to Milwaukee to join her family when she was 19. She provided in-home day care for 12 years, but always wanted to pursue a nursing degree. When she visited Stritch, she saw the diverse student population and felt it was the place she needed to be.

Aliyah’s interest in nursing and commitment to education have influenced two of her children. Her oldest son, Jameel, earned his Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) credentials and is studying to become a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN). Her oldest daughter, Khalesah, is studying nursing at Kansas City University. Jameel and Khalesah are the first in their family to earn high school diplomas.

Aliyah hopes to return to Stritch to pursue a master’s degree in nursing after graduating next May. Her career goal is to serve as a nurse-midwife and provide compassionate care to expectant mothers.

The May commencement ceremony is sure to be memorable for Aliyah, who earned a High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) when she was 19. She will be the first member of her family to earn a college degree.

“The last time I had a graduation ceremony was for 5th grade,” shared Aliyah. “This will not only complete a 20-year journey toward my nursing degree, but it’s been 30 years since I walked across a stage.”

FACT OF THE MONTH

The average class size at WAICU-member colleges and universities is 16 students.

Source: IPEDS 2016



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