

About Wisconsin Grants

The twenty-four private, or independent, nonprofit colleges and universities of Wisconsin operate without taxpayer support, but provide an invaluable public service to the state, educating nearly 60,000 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. Fully one-third of the low-income students who apply for the Wisconsin Grants are turned away every year for lack of funds. 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.

Rolf Wegenke, Ph.D.
President & CEO
Rebecca Larson
Senior VP/Advocacy
Carole Trone, Ph.D.
Senior VP/Educational Services,
Editor
Kathy Dutter
Coordinator/Ed Services
Assistant Editor

Leadership opportunities at Edgewood College make the difference

If you're looking for an example of a young person making the most out of life's opportunities, look no further than Nick Hefty.

The Platteville native, who graduated in May 2015 *Magna Cum Laude* with a degree in Political Science, is one of those students whom everyone knows. His commitment to his college experience, made possible by the Wisconsin Grant and financial support from Edgewood College,

has left a positive mark on campus. And, even bigger opportunities are just around the corner.



Nick Hefty addresses entering freshmen at Edgewood College.

"I was an RA (resident assistant) for three

years, served on Student Government Association for three years, I was president of Student Government

this year, and I was Senior RA this year as well," he says. "There are so many leadership opportunities. Each time I turned around there was an opportunity to do something different."

Nick says that's one of the advantages of Wisconsin's private colleges and universities. He

says with a smaller school

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Leading a life of service with help from the Wisconsin Grant

Service and learning are at the heart of the Marian University experience. For Sonia Barager, it was this service-oriented educational experience that persuaded her to attend Marian University.

"I wanted to return to school to earn a degree that would allow me to give back to others," said Barager, of Fond du Lac. "I always wanted to work with kids in a service profession, and a Marian

education will allow me to achieve my goals. I knew I needed to attend a university



Non-traditional Marian University student Sonia Barager is focused on her service-oriented educational experience.

that would offer quality student support and financial

aid. That's why I chose Marian."

Without financial assistance, many adult students, like Barager, aren't able to make the investment in a college education. "It is because of the Wisconsin Grant that I'm able to attend the university that is the right fit for developing my skills and abilities to the fullest," said Barager, who

is looking forward to a

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“it’s really easy to immerse yourself in what’s happening on campus. At a place like Edgewood College, you can find yourself on a task force or committee with faculty, staff, and other students. I’m not sure there’s a ‘seat at the table’ for students at larger schools in the same way.”

The critical thinking, the problem solving and the ‘people’ skills made Nick especially attractive to a major Dane County employer. This spring during Career Week on campus, he took advantage of the opportunity to participate in ‘mock interviews,’ sessions of practice interviews with HR professionals from employers in Greater Madison. His ‘mock interview’ happened to be with Epic Systems, a medical software company based in Verona.

“I could tell things had changed (during the ‘mock’ interview) when the follow-up questions

started to get pretty specific,” he says. “When we got finished, I was encouraged to apply.”

He started his career with Epic as project manager in June. “Epic was very interested in my leadership opportunities and other activities on campus,” he says. “Those were the questions they were most interested in.”

“When I think about my college experience, I do think about the classroom. But I also think about what I was able to accomplish through leadership, through volunteering, and through advocacy for my fellow students. Those skills are every bit as important as what we did in the classroom. When I think about the activities I did, those are the things that really benefitted me in a big way. They really shaped who I’ve become now. And those were big benefits when it came time to start applying for things.”



At WAICU colleges and universities, 30 percent of undergraduates are first-generation students.

Source: IPEDS: Fall Enrollment Survey, 2014

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2016 graduation. “There aren’t as many financial aid opportunities for non-traditional students, and so the Wisconsin Grant made attending a private university possible for me.”

“Marian was the perfect choice,” Barager added. “When I toured Marian, I was instantly welcomed into the community, and the campus just felt comfortable. I knew I could succeed here.”

For Barager, Marian’s personal, hands-on approach to learning and variety of student support resources were a key component to her decision to attend a private university.

“I supposed that, being a non-traditional student made me believe that earning a degree would be difficult, but Marian offers a variety of resources including tutoring, academic advising, and academic support programs. I’ve even been accepted as a student in the TRiO Student Support Services program,” said Barager. “Marian University truly supports each and every student, and you never feel like just a number in the classroom. You are a person, and you are inspired to do great things here.”

It is because of this support that Barager is able to embrace her passion for service and spend her time volunteering in the

community. Barager currently serves as a volunteer with Relay for Life, the St. Balderick’s Foundation, the Fond du Lac Food Pantry, and as a youth teacher with the Lighthouse Christian Church.

“I look forward to walking across the stage at graduation next year,” said Barager. “Achieving my college degree isn’t just for me, but for my son too. My son is excited about learning and often tells me how he wants to go to college when he is older, mostly because he can see how earning a college degree can make a difference in our lives and give back to the community as well.”

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 College *Sheboygan*
 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*
 Silver Lake College *Manitowoc*
 Viterbo University *La Crosse*
 Wisconsin Lutheran College *Milwaukee*

