

# Wisconsin Achievers

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## About Wisconsin Grants

The twenty-three private, or independent, nonprofit colleges and universities of Wisconsin operate without taxpayer support, but provide an invaluable public service to the state, educating more than 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.

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## Non-traditional student finds focus in Industrial Design at MIAD

Christian Crandal graduated from a technical high school without a clear career path. Christian took his time in exploring his options for the future, taking general courses at UW-Washington County. Conversations with fellow students alerted Christian to an art and design school in Milwaukee. He looked into the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design and immediately became intrigued with the Industrial Design major MIAD offered. Christian states that he had an "a-ha moment" and quickly started preparing for life at MIAD. "As soon as I



*Christian Crandal, an industrial design major, is a senior at MIAD.*

decided MIAD was where I wanted to be," he adds, "I took all the art classes I could in order to bolster my portfolio."

The Wisconsin Grant, as well as support from MIAD, has been crucial to his dream of becoming an Industrial Designer. "I would not be attending MIAD if it were not for the Wisconsin Grant.

Without the benefit of that grant, I simply would not

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## Adult student finds academic success amid multiple roles

Erin Mihor's educational path resembled that of many others. Coming from a family without higher education experience, Erin was 22 by the time she started on her college path. Erin first chose a university in Minnesota, but the financial burden shattered Erin's college goal, and she left within her first year. She married, became a parent and spent years putting the needs of her family before her own. Now, a decade later, Erin's dreams of getting a college

degree are on the path to reality, with help from the Wisconsin Grant.

The demands of balancing multiple roles as parent and wife did not deter Erin from



*Mount Mary student Erin Mihor is majoring in English and sociology/behavioral science.*

returning to her goal of a college degree. Erin wanted more for herself and began to research the possibilities. On the list was Mount Mary University—but seemingly out of reach. This time, the outcome was different. "Mount Mary felt like a family," Erin commented. Mount Mary's financial aid staff helped her find a way to make college affordable. The Wisconsin Grant, which provides need-based assistance to qualified undergraduate Wisconsin residents, is

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## Christian Crandal continued from page 1

be able to afford to go to school full time," Christian explained; he has taken full advantage of this opportunity, devoting much time to making connections with industry leaders and innovators.

Christian has also immersed himself in the art and design culture. "I have had work shown in a couple of installation shows at the college, as well as a few running display galleries and throughout the school," he said. He is an enthusiastic participant in the MIAD Creativity Series events, which bring in leading fine art and design experts to work directly with students. Through the Creativity Series, Christian has had a chance to interact and work with Mark Rios, principal at Rios Clementi Hale Studios in Los Angeles; James Ludwig, vice president of global design at Steelcase, Inc. in Grand Rapids, Michigan; and Dana Arnett, founding principal

and CEO of VSA Partners in Chicago.

Now in his senior year, Christian is especially looking forward to the Senior Exhibition in April and volunteer opportunities with a local high school, where he will work with students with disabilities. Christian reports, "the intensity of research and project development is when I am most creative, and research and development are both necessary for the Senior Exhibition. I am also really looking forward to a number of sponsored projects – one in particular is working with special needs children from a local high school. We will be designing and building products that empower the children, and allow them a sense of independence. It is a very special project."

Following a May graduation, Christian hopes to continue his industrial design education in a Master's degree program.

### FACT OF THE MONTH

*At WAICU colleges & universities, 22% of all undergraduates and 37% of all students are over the age of 25, compared to 13% and 22%, respectively, of students in the UW System.*

*Source: IPEDS Fall Enrollment Survey, Fall 2013 data*

## Erin Mihor continued from page 1

an important part of college affordability for Erin. "The amazing grants and scholarships from Mount Mary, plus the Wisconsin Grant, have allowed me to be successful in all of my roles," says Erin "I can maintain my home, my family, and my grades."

At 31, Erin is making the most of her opportunities. While juggling the demands of a family, her job, and a full class schedule, she still maintains a 4.0 GPA. In addition, she demonstrates her appreciation for the assistance she has received by giving back to the community. Erin is an active volunteer with the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND),

Mount Mary's sponsoring organization, which has a mission of social justice and leadership in women's education. Looking ahead, Erin is planning for an internship with the SSND justice department before becoming an Associate SSND. During her internship, Erin will link SSND programming with Mount Mary students. "The hope is to make connections and foster relationships for our students to have volunteer opportunities and future internships," she says.

The opportunity to attain higher education has transformed Erin. "I went from the girl who sat quietly in the far back corner, afraid to raise her hand, to

an active learner who is immersed in the whole educational experience," she says. For example, Erin serves Mount Mary's Women's Leadership Institute as a student advocate and helps with the Institute's social media marketing.

Erin plans to finish her undergraduate degree in 2015 with majors in English and sociology/behavioral science. She'll complement that with a peacebuilding certificate. Her future? Erin says it includes a master's degree in English and promoting sustainable urban living, a cause that ignited her passion while at Mount Mary. Clearly, there's no stopping Erin now.

### 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 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
- Northland College Ashland
- Ripon College Ripon
- St. Norbert College De Pere
- Silver Lake College Manitowoc
- Viterbo University La Crosse
- Wisconsin Lutheran College Milwaukee