

The Wisconsin Independent

Newsletter of the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU)

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SPRING 2023

Wisconsin Grants Address the State's Workforce Challenges

In December of 2020, Congress passed, and President Donald Trump signed changes to federal law to streamline the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), known as the FAFSA Simplification Act.

Among many changes, this legislation reduced the number of questions on the FAFSA, created a mechanism for connecting the FAFSA to the Internal Revenue Service financial information, and changed the federal financial aid eligibility methodology from the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) to a new methodology known as Student Aid Index (SAI).

The changes were championed by former U.S. Tennessee Senator Lamar Alexander, the then Chair of the Senate, Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, who negotiated the change before retiring in 2020. Filling out the FAFSA is a critical requirement for economically disadvantaged students to qualify for federal student financial aid and loan programs.

In addition, FAFSA is used by many states, including Wisconsin, to determine eligibility for state student aid programs.

The change from EFC to SAI in the new federal law will require amending Wisconsin State Statutes to ensure statutes align with federal law. Federal changes also will increase students' aid awards. WAICU, the University of Wisconsin System, the Wisconsin Technical College System, and the tribal colleges have been meeting since the changes were enacted, which are slated to be implemented in the 2024-2025 school year.

The sectors also are working

with Wisconsin legislators to update Wisconsin statutes, to ensure student aid formulas better align with the needs of today's students, and to provide the added flexibility students require. The formula for the private, nonprofit sector for example, has been in state statutes since the 1970s.

WAICU is seeking changes that would modernize the formula and create an award process that is more understandable and transparent for students and families, regardless of the private, nonprofit institution the student attends.

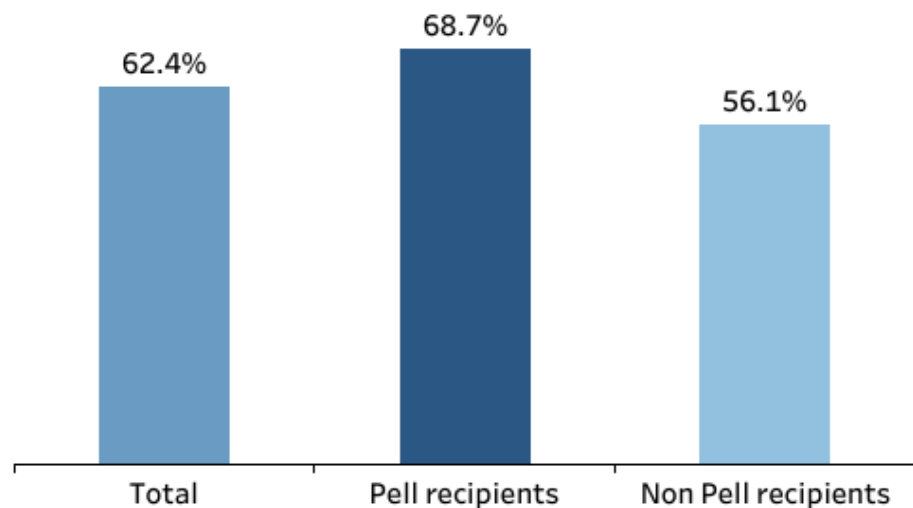
The other higher education sectors are seeking similar modernizations. More than 30 percent of undergraduate

students at WAICU institutions enter as transfer students and/or participate in evening and weekend programs, many at less than full-time. Additionally, 28 percent of WAICU students are low-income as measured by federal Pell Grant eligibility. Flexible and adaptable financial aid policies will support students throughout their higher education journey.

These important changes help ensure that students will not run out of critical financial aid resources prior to completing their degrees.

Wisconsin faces workforce shortages in nearly every occupation. Wisconsin's economic vitality is strengthened when students desiring higher education have the opportunity and financial resources to succeed throughout their college journey.

Percentage of 2015-16 bachelor's degree holders who worked in the same state as their institution within four years after graduation.



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, A First Look at the 2020 Employment and Education Experiences of 2015-16 College Graduates



INDEPENDENT INSIGHTS

We're Asking For \$25.5 Million of Additional Aid for Wisconsin's Neediest Students

- Alverno College
- Bellin College
- Beloit College
- Cardinal Stritch University
- Carroll University
- Carthage College
- Concordia University
- Edgewood College
- Herzing University
- Lakeland University
- Lawrence University
- Marian University
- Marquette University
- Medical College of Wisconsin
- Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design
- Milwaukee School of Engineering
- Mount Mary University
- Nashotah House
- Northland College
- Ripon College
- St. Norbert College
- Viterbo University
- Wisconsin Lutheran College

THE WISCONSIN INDEPENDENT
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It is budget season in Wisconsin. As the state legislature and executive branch begin the biennial budget process, many proposals are floating around. Governor Tony Evers has laid out his priorities and leadership in the legislature has shared theirs as well. All of this is during the largest budget surplus in state history, more than \$7 billion. It certainly is an interesting time to begin my role as WAICU President and engage with lawmakers.

As we make our way around the Capitol talking to the Governor and legislators, we are sharing WAICU's top budget priority — an increase to the Wisconsin Grant Program. We are asking that an additional \$25.5 million be included in the biennial state budget to support students with need. This increase accounts for inflation and recent changes passed by Congress in the Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) Simplification Act. Increased funds would also be used to modernize the Wisconsin Grant formula, which has been in the state statutes for half a century.

The Wisconsin Grant is a proven, cost-effective vehicle for expanding opportunity. By expanding state grant aid and targeting students, who, without help, might not attend a college or university at all, Wisconsin will expand its qualified workforce. State appropriations for need-based aid also help ensure that low-income students who do enroll in college emerge with an on-time degree with less debt.

Our graduates are helping to move Wisconsin forward. WAICU members produce more than 13,400 graduates annually, making up 24 percent of all bachelor's degrees and 34 percent of all advanced degrees in the state. And the impact in high-demand occupations is even greater. We produce more than a quarter of bachelor's degrees in business and engineering, 56 percent of bachelor's degrees in nursing, and 55 percent of the physician assistant degrees. Our institutions are making a significant impact on the Wisconsin workforce, all with no direct operating support from taxpayers.

Our institutions are making a substantial investment in their students. A full two-thirds of grant aid distributed to students enrolled in WAICU-member schools are private funds provided by the institutions themselves. The Wisconsin Grant and funds from the federal government, targeted to students with demonstrated financial need, can make a real difference in helping students enroll in and graduate from college.

By working together, we will produce the graduates our state needs to fill current and future job openings. Wisconsin needs a strong and robust workforce, and we are the state's partner in working to help fill critical workforce needs.

Eric W. Fulcomer, PhD
President



Private College Week is July 10 to 15



Private College Week is scheduled for July 10-15, 2023. This statewide open house for prospective students and their families provides an organized and accessible introduction to Wisconsin's private colleges and universities. Attendees enjoy campus tours, panel discussions with both alumni and current faculty, major-specific programs, and admission and financial aid informational sessions.

Many WAICU-member institutions organize special events such as interactive hands-on workshops in various academic areas. Prospective students receive information about athletics, campus activities, and more, and get a valuable firsthand introduction to their private college options.

More than 1,500 prospective students and family members participated in the 26th annual Wisconsin Private College Week July 11-16, 2022, and shared that the experience was "extremely helpful," "informative," and "opened [their] eyes" to the diverse offerings and financial aid packages at the colleges they visited.

Prospective students, parents, and counselors can always learn more about Wisconsin's private colleges at www.WisconsinsPrivateColleges.org.

WAICU BULLETIN BOARD

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

Alverno College has been awarded a five-year, \$2.89 million grant by the U.S. Department of Education to increase the number of highly trained, bilingual, and racially and ethnically diverse school-based mental health professionals. The Bilingual and Multicultural School Mental Health Professionals Program (BiM-SMHP) will have a direct impact on K-12 public schools in southeastern Wisconsin serving youth from culturally diverse backgrounds who are at risk for, or who have developed, a mental health disorder.

Lawrence University joined two other universities in receiving a three-year National Science Foundation (NSF) grant to study ways to improve problem-solving skills in introductory physics courses. Lawrence, in conjunction with Purdue University and Jackson State University, received the \$600,000 NSF grant as part of ongoing efforts to elevate undergraduate STEM education.

[More Bulletin Board items on the back cover](#)

Spring 2023 School Counselor Virtual Workshops Answer Questions

This spring, WAICU will host a virtual workshop for school counselors from Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Indiana, and other neighboring areas. The virtual workshop will be held on Tuesday, April 4 and is patterned after in-person workshops that WAICU offered this past fall.

During the fall workshops, more than 100 counselors learned about opportunities for their students at WAICU-member colleges and universities. In addition to hearing an overview about Wisconsin's private, nonprofit higher education sector, participants also enjoyed brief presentations by admissions staff from individual WAICU members and took advantage of opportunities to visit the colleges' information tables to ask questions.

Counselors can register for this free workshop on WisconsinsPrivateColleges.org or by contacting Leah Steuer, WAICU Director of Outreach, at leah.steuer@waicu.org.



Students connected with potential employers at the 31st annual WorkForce Fair held recently at the Wisconsin State Fair Park.

Fair Connects Students, Grads with Jobs

The 31st annual WorkForce Fair: Jobs, Internships, and Graduate Schools, was held February 21, 2023, at the Wisconsin State Fair Park.

The WorkForce Fair provides an efficient and effective way to interact with several potential employers and learn about exciting internship and full- and part-time employment opportunities.

From accounting and engineering to healthcare and education, WAICU students and alums offer a wide diversity of majors and experiences to potential employers. The WorkForce Fair is the premier place for students, graduates, and alums to make these valuable connections.

WAICU Supports Wisconsin's Private Colleges at WEFS

Wisconsin Education Fairs (WEFs) will be held in-person this spring in Madison, Fond du Lac, and Waukesha. WAICU will be on hand, providing information for thousands of students, parents, teachers, and counselors about Wisconsin's 23 private, nonprofit colleges and universities. More information about these events is available at www.wefs.org.

BELLIN COLLEGE

Bellin College Expands its Footprint Via Exciting Campus Expansion

As a nationwide trend of declining enrollment plagues many colleges and universities, Bellin College is experiencing exciting growth and expansion. In fall 2021, Bellin College purchased an existing property in Green Bay. This

secondary location alleviates some of the space issues at the main Green Bay campus and allows for new programming. The new location, named the Michael Van Asten Campus, officially opened in fall of 2022. It is home to the new Doctor

of Physical Therapy (DPT) program, graduate nursing, diagnostic medical sonography programs, and science labs.

The DPT program is an eight-semester post-baccalaureate program. The condensed program allows students to enter the workforce faster than many traditional DPT

programs, without sacrificing clinical experience. The physical therapy space features multiple classrooms, including a physical therapy skills lab and a movement lab, which helps students develop psychomotor skills.

“My favorite part of the DPT program is the curriculum itself,” said Todd Beadle, current DPT student. “The classes we took during first semester are things I wanted to learn and apply to my future career. The faculty make a huge difference for the class because they want us to succeed and be the best physical therapist we can be. Also, I love my cohort and how we all come together to achieve the same goal.”

In addition to the entry-level DPT program, Bellin College also offers an Orthopedic and Manual Physical Therapy Fellowship, and a Doctor of Science in Physical Therapy program. Both programs are designed for practicing physical therapists.



Students learn about shoulder palpation techniques at the new Michael Van Asten Campus in Green Bay.

CARROLL UNIVERSITY

Carroll University Opens New Veterans House With More Resources

Carroll University proudly opened the doors to its new Veterans House, located at 125 Wright St., Waukesha, Wisconsin. The building is now available for all military and veteran students, who can use it for studying, student organization meetings, or gathering with outside constituencies.

A group of students were interested in bringing back the student veteran organization on campus and needed a larger space to gather. Now that students have this larger, dedicated space, hopefully more veteran and military students will find their way to the house.

“Our military and veteran students have made a commitment to our nation to support and defend our Constitution, and we are proud that they have found their way to Carroll,” said Paul Zinck, vice president of Finance and Administration. “We want to support them and honor their sacrifice and service—and having the Veterans House as a resource for them to use individually or gather as a group is just

one way to do that.”

Veterans at Carroll now have access to more educational services and resources than ever before. The university works with full- and part-time students who are active service members and veterans, in addition to their spouses, dependents, and survivors, to help them secure federal and state education benefits granted through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and other VA-related resources.

In the Registrar’s Office, Carroll’s School Certifying Officials (SCOs) work in conjunction with Admission, Financial Aid, Student Success, the Business Office, and other areas to help students in Carroll’s military family navigate benefits that are available to them. The SCOs also assist with connecting new students with the Carroll student veteran organization; securing



An official ribbon cutting for the new Veterans House took place on Wednesday, Nov. 9, 2022.

benefits, including access to the Veterans House; and priority registration. They also help students access other campus resources to ensure their personal and academic success at Carroll.

“As Carroll continues to grow our veteran/military program on campus, we hope that the VA will come to campus and work with our students,” said Theresa Barry, vice president for Student Life.

Lawrence Launches Unique Business and Entrepreneurship Major

Lawrence University has introduced a new business and entrepreneurship major, built through the lens of liberal arts, with a focus on preparing future innovators who will bring social, global, and environmental context to business leadership.

The program, beginning with the 2023-2024 academic year, takes an interdisciplinary approach as it centers on global entrepreneurship and the broader impact of business on communities. Constructed within the existing Innovation & Entrepreneurship (I&E) program, the major opens doors for students attending one of the nation's leading liberal arts institutions, with focused study across the business spectrum.

"We have taken a liberal arts mindset to build this major, emphasizing the importance of multiple perspectives and big-picture thinking," said Adam Galambos, associate professor of economics. "Students will have an opportunity to learn the foundational skills in accounting, marketing, financial management, and

entrepreneurship, and connect these to the broader roles of business in society."

The objective was to build a robust major that allows students to understand the role of business within society and develop depth within one of four focus areas—entrepreneurship and arts entrepreneurship, business analytics, natural resources, and energy management.

The academic path through the major will introduce students to foundational business skills through core courses. This major distinguishes itself by emphasizing multiple perspectives, connections across disciplines, and the exploration of critical thinking, said Claudena Skran, chair of the I&E program.

"The major requires students to combine critical thinking and problem analysis, and also how to put this knowl-



Lawrence junior Chrision Wynaar makes a presentation during an Innovation & Entrepreneurship class at Lawrence University. Photo by Danny Damiani

edge into practice through internships and practicums," she said. "The major appeals to students who want to think about problems and the world, but who also want to take positive action in the world."

MILWAUKEE SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

Demand for MSOE's 'Real-World Ready' Graduates Continues to Grow

When students and their families invest in higher education, some considerations might include whether they'll get a strong return on their time and financial commitment.

At Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE), graduates enjoy extremely high employment success and starting salaries. In fact, recent graduates were hired by 240 unique companies. The graduate outcomes rate for MSOE's class of 2021-2022 was 99 percent, with an average starting salary of \$71,497. The university already boasts the highest average early and mid-career salaries in Wisconsin, according to the PayScale Inc. College Salary Report, 2021-2022 edition.

"MSOE students are ready to solve complex problems on their first day of work because they've been solving them since their first day at MSOE," said Dr. John Walz, president. "This is one of many reasons our graduates are in demand and command strong starting salaries. As students, they spend hundreds of hours in laborato-

ries working on real-world projects, and they are learning from our expert faculty who have years of industry experience."

Headquartered in Neenah, Wisconsin, the Plexus Campus Focus Team said, "At Plexus, interns and new engineers join one of our dynamic, cross-discipline project teams and begin contributing as early as possible. We believe engineers learn substantially through real-world, on-the-job experience, and we appreciate how MSOE integrates a similar philosophy in their curriculum."

"The class of 2023 is enjoying strong on-campus recruitment," said Julie Way, director of the MSOE Career Connections Center. "We are seeing record numbers of employers visiting campus—364 employers attended the fall career fair (with 40 on the waitlist) and 182 companies attended the winter career fair."

To determine the graduate outcomes rate and average starting salary, MSOE's Career Connections Center surveys students.

The knowledge rate for this survey was 87 percent. Final numbers were compiled six months after the May 2022 graduation, in accordance with National Association of College and Employers guidelines.



MSOE's 2021-22 graduates were hired by 240 unique companies, earning a graduate outcomes rate of 99 percent, with an average starting salary of \$71,497.

NASHOTAH HOUSE

Increased Giving Boosts Nashotah House Fundraising in 2022

Donations to Nashotah House Theological Seminary's general fund increased 60 percent in 2022, continuing an upward trend in giving over the past five years.

Unrestricted giving to the seminary totaled \$851,871 in the 2022 calendar year, up from \$533,616 in 2021. A

significant boost came from the 176 donors who made first-time gifts to the seminary in 2022, an increase from the 59 new donors who were added the previous year.

New donors last year gave a total of \$171,914, for an average gift of \$1,011.

In all, the seminary's donor base grew from 515 to 691 in a single year. Meanwhile, Nashotah House retained 71 percent of its donors, and 60 of those returning donors increased their giving. Nashotah

House's fundraising progress is the result of a concerted effort to deepen donor engagement in 2022.

"Time and again last year, we turned to our donors to partner with us, and time and again they stepped forward," said Dr. Garwood Anderson, Dean of Nashotah House.

"We visited more than 20 cities across the country and were welcomed into people's homes and parishes to share our mission with new audiences," he said.

"We asked friends, alumni, and parishes to become regular donors, and they partnered with us in unprecedented ways.

"We are overwhelmed by the generosity of both our returning and new donors. It makes all the difference in our ability to sustain our mission for years to come," added Anderson.

Nashotah House is on track to meet its goal of exceeding \$1 million in annual fund donations by fiscal year 2025-2026 and is now laying the groundwork for a capital campaign that will address its facilities needs and grow its endowment.



Nashotah House hosted an on-campus fundraiser in September 2022 for supporters in the Milwaukee area.

NORTHLAND COLLEGE

Northland College Receives Grant for New Outdoor Gas Kiln

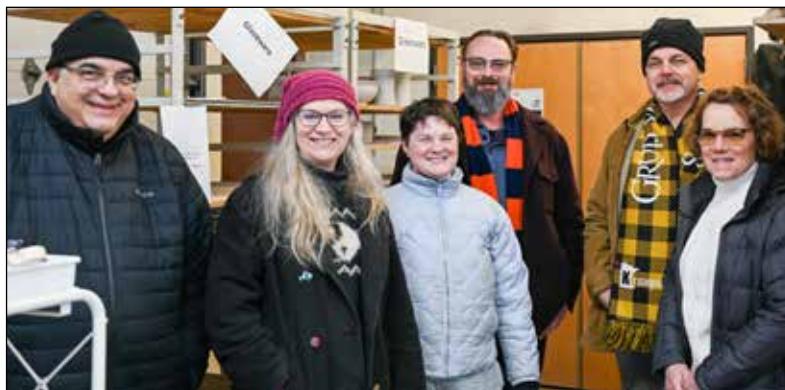
Northland College has a new outdoor DownDraft reduction gas kiln, thanks in part to a grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board, with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts. The kiln was built as part of a workshop organized by Assistant Professor of Art Lauren Duffy.

The kiln is a welcome addition to the college's art program. "It creates an incredible opportunity to fire a kiln differently," said Duffy. "Doing a reduction firing gives you a different glaze effect than just an electric kiln. It creates opportunities to make different clay and glaze effects, use paper or organic materials like flowers and having it burn out, and be able to fire larger ceramic works."

The kiln is constructed with a double layer of highly insulating "soft brick" that reflects almost all heat back into the kiln. Additionally, the down draft action is a convection process, with heat rising and then being forced back down to exit. This leads to a more

efficient use of fuel and better heat retention. The regional community also is benefiting from the new kiln. Community members participated in a week-long workshop with master kiln builder Ted Neal, an art professor at Ball State University, who led the building of the kiln and gave a public lecture on the process as well as his ceramics work.

Looking ahead, area residents will have more opportunities to use the kiln, including during the college's community ceramics class. "I'm very



Wisconsin Arts Board representatives visited Northland College on January 30, 2023, to see the progress on the College's new DownDraft kiln.

much about the community having a part in what we do," said Duffy. Students from several local schools will continue to be invited to create works fired in the kiln and learn more about the process during the next school year. The art program also will work with the college's Indigenous Cultures Center to involve artists from area tribal nations.

RIPON COLLEGE

Ripon Infrastructure Plan Brings Energy, Enhanced Opportunities

The face of Ripon College is changing with the implementation of a \$35 million strategic infrastructure plan. Included will be the renovation and expansion of Farr Hall of Science, a new on-campus stadium, and upgrades to residence halls.

The first phase will prioritize a \$24.5 million investment in the science center and an \$8.5 million investment in the campus stadium, both of which are projected to break ground this spring. Plans for upgrades to the residence halls are projected to be finalized within the next year.

Since February 2022, when the Ripon College Board of Trustees authorized the preliminary exploration of both projects, the college documented \$15 million in cash and pledges specifically designated for the infrastructure enhancements, 80 percent of which is designated for renovation of Farr Hall.

“The primary reason we have been able to move so efficiently on these projects is in large part thanks to the profound generosity of Ripon College alumni and friends,” said President

Victoria N. Folsie. She inherited the initial and conceptual infrastructure plan from the previous administration but has led the campus through the critical planning phases since her tenure began July 1, 2022.

“The energy from the internal and external campus community has been palpable, and my colleagues and I will rely on that energy to continue pursuing our fundraising goals for these critical initiatives,” said President Folsie. The strategic infrastructure plan will serve

as one element of a formal strategic planning process that has just commenced at Ripon College under President Folsie’s leadership. Innovative academic programming, growing the endowment, and student enrollment and retention all will play a crucial role in the new strategic plan that will be communicated and implemented in April 2023.



Pictured is an artist's rendering of the new \$24.5 million science center. Construction begins this spring.

VITERBO UNIVERSITY

Viterbo Forms Educational Partnerships with Aquinas Catholic Schools

Viterbo University and Aquinas Catholic Schools formed an exciting educational partnership in the Catholic tradition allowing Aquinas High School students to take tuition-free classes at Viterbo. The agreement also provides Aquinas High School students with a guaranteed opportunity to earn a bachelor's degree at the university in three years after high school graduation.

The formal agreement was finalized by Viterbo President Rick Trietley and Aquinas Catholic Schools President Ted Knutson at a signing event held September 14, 2021. The program began modestly in the spring of 2022 and grew this past fall.

Viterbo and Aquinas High School are located just blocks from each other in La Crosse. The agreement allows Aquinas High School students to take Viterbo University courses during their normal high school day as part of their official class schedule. Aquinas students may complete a full year of college credits prior to high school graduation.



Aquinas Catholic Schools President Ted Knutson, left, and Viterbo University President Rick Trietley made the partnership agreement official with their signatures.

Students also can benefit from Viterbo's college and career preparation workshops, leadership development, service, and faith formation experiences. Staff development opportunities also

are available.

“This partnership represents both institutions' commitment to academic excellence, Catholic identity, and community engagement,” said President Trietley. “We are proud of our relationship with Aquinas and look forward to additional partnership opportunities in the future.”

That future is underway. This past fall, President Trietley and Regis Catholic Schools of Eau Claire President Paul Pedersen signed a memorandum of understanding to develop their own agreement. Discussions with other Diocese of La Crosse High Schools also are taking place.

“These partnerships are great for all the schools involved, and it's the students who benefit the most,” said Brian Weber, Viterbo assistant vice president of enrollment management and director of admissions. “The students are provided with a cost-effective and seamless transition to a quality, Catholic education.”



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*“Education is not the learning
of facts, but the training of the
mind to think.”*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

WAICU BULLETIN BOARD, *continued*

PROGRAMS

Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design (MIAD) launches its new Fashion and Apparel Design major beginning in fall 2023. Students will develop as designers with a focus on craft, sustainability, diversity and collaboration.

Edgewood College and University of Wisconsin-Whitewater at Rock County partnered to start a new nursing program to educate and retain nurses for Southern Wisconsin communities. The new collaboration begins in the fall 2023 semester.

APPOINTMENTS

In July 2023, Laurie Joyner will take on the position as **St. Norbert College’s** ninth president overall and as the first-ever female president in the school’s history. Once she takes office, Joyner said her first order of business will be to get to know the campus and the community to inform her leadership.

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

Milwaukee School of Engineering recently announced that it will begin work to convert the 1905 duplex at 308 E. Juneau Ave., into a new home for the school’s music programs. The building will be named in honor of Dr. Patricia Kern, who was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from MSOE in 2000.

Dr. Debbie Perouli, assistant professor of computer science in **Marquette University’s** Klingler College of Arts and Sciences, has received a \$2.6 million grant from the National Science Foundation to train the next generation of information technology professionals, industry control system security professionals and security managers to meet government cybersecurity needs.

WAICU:
Wisconsin’s private,
nonprofit colleges
and universities
working together
for educational
opportunity