

About the WTG

The twenty private, or independent, colleges and universities of Wisconsin operate without taxpayer support, but provide an invaluable public service to the state, educating more than 59,000 students a year. Many of Wisconsin's best and brightest need financial help to attend the college of their choice.

The State of Wisconsin created the Wisconsin Tuition Grant (WTG) in 1965 to help qualified Wisconsin citizens to succeed. Fully one-third of the low-income students who apply for the WTG are turned away every year for lack of funds. Each month WTG Achievers brings you success stories of Wisconsinites for whom the WTG has made a significant difference.

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Religion, politics, WTG mix well for Lawrence senior

Conventional wisdom says it is unwise to mix politics and religion, but Lawrence University's Jim Breen has managed to commingle the two quite nicely. The senior from Cottage Grove will graduate with a degree in religious studies and a minor in government.



Jim Breen, from Cottage Grove, has found both his politics and religion courses equally rewarding.

He recently completed a year-long term as president of the Lawrence chapter of the College Demo-

crats. Serving in that role in a year that featured a national election proved to be an

especially rewarding experience. From organizing debate parties to canvassing Appleton neighborhoods encouraging voters to get to the polls,

to introducing visiting dignitaries at campus events, Breen embraced each opportunity.

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WTG helps foster sense of community in Stritch student

Describing herself as someone "who came from the other side of tracks," Lindsay Rivera took some convincing that college was an option for her.

"High school was rough for me," said Lindsay, who grew up on Milwaukee's south side. "I was just trying to get out." A determined high school guidance counselor intervened and insisted that higher education was a legitimate option. Then, late in her junior year of high school, she learned about Cardinal Stritch University



Lindsay Rivera, of Milwaukee, hopes to help others achieve as much as she has gained.

and, Rivera said, "I fell in love with the school."

Choosing Stritch was the first step; then the financial chal-

lenges loomed—but not for long. Soon after submitting her application for financial aid, Lindsay got the call that changed her life. On the other end of the phone, a Stritch counselor informed her that a very generous financial aid package, which included the Wisconsin Tuition Grant, would open the door to Lindsay's college dreams.

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"I wanted to educate students and let them make their own decisions," Breen said. "An informed voter is a more effective voter. My approach was to try and inform voters in a nonpartisan way."

On election night, Breen coordinated a viewing party that drew nearly 300 students. "There was a sense of accomplishment and pride to have that kind of response," said Breen.

While he enjoyed dabbling in politics, his career passion lies in academics. After graduation, he plans to pursue a Ph.D. in early religious history with a focus on teaching at the college level.

Breen began his college career at UW-Madison, but transferred to Lawrence in 2007, halfway through his sophomore year. He had become familiar with the college through visits with friends who were enrolled at Lawrence. "The idea of

small classes and more individual attention really appealed to me," Breen said. "In a year and a half at UW-Madison, I didn't have a single professor who knew my name. At Lawrence, I have three professors' cell numbers in my phone."

Breen also serves as treasurer of the campus chapter of Circle K International, is a three-year letter-winner on the golf team, and has been a residence life advisor in Lawrence's largest residence hall the past two years. All of those experiences have helped "tremendously in my growth and development as a person," he said.

"I'm certainly grateful for programs like the Wisconsin Tuition Grant that have allowed me to take full advantage of all of the opportunities Lawrence provides," he added.



WAICU members are advancing educational opportunities for all students. Last year, nearly one-third of the people of color who earned a bachelor's degree in Wisconsin did so at a private college.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics

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"I think I screamed after I hung up the phone," she recalled. "In high school, I was screaming in the halls, 'I got accepted! I got accepted!'"

Incredulity was the common response from her friends when she said she was going on to postsecondary education. "People said, 'You're going to college? You can actually do that?'" she recalled. "We don't have to live in this bubble that we've always been put in. We don't have to go out and gang bang or become minimum wage workers. We've always grown up with responsibility in our heads, and that

usually means we need to get a job right away to support our families."

Now a junior at Cardinal Stritch University with a major in psychology and a minor in sociology, Lindsay hopes to pursue her certification in social work after graduation and eventually earn a master's degree and doctorate in psychology.

Her history of helping others and her knack for being the neighborhood peace-maker led to her interest in the field of psychology. "When kids would have issues, my house was safe," she said.

Ultimately, she hopes to start her own practice and create a nonprofit organization in her old neighborhood to emphasize that college is not something reserved only for those more fortunate, as she once thought.

Lindsay's excited for the day she can return to her neighborhood armed with a commitment to serve. "I knew that I needed to get more knowledge to help the people who helped me get where I am," she said. "To actually help that community realize their potential would be amazing."

Wisconsin's Private Colleges and Universities

- Alverno College *Milwaukee*
- Beloit College *Beloit*
- Cardinal Stritch University *Milwaukee*
- Carroll University *Waukesha*
- Carthage College *Kenosha*
- Concordia University Wisconsin *Mequon*
- Edgewood College *Madison*

- Lakeland College *Sheboygan*
- Lawrence University *Appleton*
- Marian University *Fond du Lac*
- Marquette University *Milwaukee*
- Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design *Milwaukee*
- Milwaukee School of Engineering *Milwaukee*

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

