

## 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 60,000 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.

WTG 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.

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## Teacher of tomorrow helped by WTG grant

When Viterbo University student Ben DiSera was a student at Hayward High School, he had a teacher who made a big difference in his life. Now that's exactly the kind of teacher he wants to be.

Ben, 20, is a junior music education major at Viterbo. His goal is to teach music and direct a choir at the high school level.

"I love music, and I want to



Ben DiSera, of Hayward, credits his high school and college teachers with fueling his own passion for teaching.

share it with other people," he said. "High school students have the most vocal ability of any age group of

students before college, so that's the place to make the best music."

Being a great teacher involves more than expertise in academics. Ben feels this is something

he learned from having such an inspirational mentor in

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## Path to college success started early for WTG scholar

Jenna Heinrichs started laying the groundwork for a successful college experience while she was still in high school.

The St. Norbert College graduate played on the Waunakee Community High School volleyball team for four years, participated in track and field, served as a member of the Mock Trial Team, and was inducted into her school's chapter of



The sense of community in small classes at St. Norbert convinced Jenna Heinrichs of Waunakee that she had found the perfect learning environment.

the National Honor Society. "High school really prepared

me for my college career at St. Norbert," she said.

Jenna focused on St. Norbert first because of its size, about 2,100 students, and the fact that the college atmosphere had a "community feel" to it. "The college also got me interested

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**Ben DiSera** continued from page 1

high school.

“I want to know my students on a personal level,” he said. “I want to help them with academics, vocals, and anything in their personal lives, if they need advice.”

Ben chose Viterbo because the university has “a prestigious music department.” He was also looking for the sense of community that an independent school offered and a university “that was far enough away from home, but close enough at the same time.”

“My Viterbo experience has been excellent,” he said. “I like the small class sizes and the personal relationship students have with faculty. I’ll be a better teacher because of the faculty here, I’ll be a teacher who really cares about students and their success.”

Ben’s college education was made possible through the Wisconsin Tuition Grant and other financial aid he received. “The Wisconsin Tuition Grant is a need-based grant, and it made college more affordable for me,” said Ben, who also holds a work-study job on campus as a tour guide for the admission office.

In addition, Ben is a member of the Viterbo University music department’s 9th Street Singers, a select choral ensemble dedicated to performing in a variety of musical styles, an experience that will prepare him well for his future career as a teacher and choir director.

Like Ben, many of Viterbo’s first-generation students have significant financial need, and aid such as the Wisconsin Tuition Grant plays an important role in making the transition to college successful.

**FACT OF THE MONTH**

Wisconsin’s private colleges welcome transfer students. Last fall, 26 percent of the entering class at Wisconsin private colleges was composed of transfer-in students, compared to 19 percent at UW four-year schools.

Source: WAICU Research Archives

**Jenna Heinrichs** continued from page 1

and excited about the programs it had to offer, both in and out of the classroom.”

Majoring in both political science and Spanish kept Jenna very busy, but she still found time to be active with Kappa Beta Gamma National Sorority. “It connected me with the campus community,” she said, “and allowed me to pursue campus leadership roles.”

Jenna has widened her horizons by extending her activities beyond the St. Norbert campus. She participated in the United Nations Seminar, which is a class

held in New York City at the UN focusing on international organizations and politics.

Jenna also spent a semester abroad in Valencia, Spain. “That experience made me more fluent in Spanish, and it gave me a much broader global perspective.”

After graduation, the Waunakee native was able to gain valuable public affairs experience by serving as an intern in the office of a U.S. Senator, and she is currently a recruiter and employment specialist with a firm in Madison. In the long term,

Jenna says, she hopes to pursue a master’s degree in public affairs or Spanish.

The Wisconsin Tuition Grant was an integral part of Jenna’s financial aid package at St. Norbert, and she remains grateful for it. “It helped ease the cost of college,” she said.

Assessing her education at St. Norbert, Jenna said, “Higher education is important in today’s world, and programs like the Wisconsin Tuition Grant made it all just a bit more affordable, which helped me so much.”

**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*

