

The Wisconsin Independent

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

Financial Aid Modernization Legislation Crosses Finish Line

On Tuesday, November 14, 2023, the Wisconsin Legislature finalized its work to improve state student financial aid in Wisconsin. The bipartisan bill known as the Financial Aid Modernization Act passed unanimously in both Senate and Assembly Committees and in both houses of the Legislature. Governor Tony Evers signed the bill into law on December 6, 2023.

The legislation was championed by Wisconsin State Senator Joan Ballweg and State Representative Dave Murphy, both long-time supporters of higher education policy. The new legislation makes several improvements to Wisconsin's financial aid programs to benefit students. These changes will make Wisconsin's financial aid programs more user-friendly and align with recent changes in federal law.

This legislation is more than three years in the making. WAICU has been working collaboratively with our partners from Universities of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Technical College System, and the Tribal College to prepare for the implementation of the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) Simplification Act that will take effect in the 2024-2025 academic year.

The FAFSA Simplification Act was a bipartisan initiative included as part of a pandemic relief package enacted in 2021. The provisions within the FAFSA Simplification Act modified the needs formula that will allow more students to qualify for federal financial aid programs and simplified the application process for students. Another federal law, known as the Future's Act, will also streamline the application process by tying the



Legislation to improve state student financial aid in Wisconsin was signed into law on December 6, 2023, by Governor Tony Evers. The legislation was championed by Wisconsin State Senator Joan Ballweg and State Representative Dave Murphy, both longtime supporters of higher education.

FAFSA application to data within the Internal Revenue Service.

The federal changes will impact state student financial aid programs, known as the Wisconsin Grant programs, and necessitated changes to align Wisconsin statutes with the new federal law. In addition to alignment with federal law, the legislature modernized student financial aid programs for Wisconsin students.

WAICU is now working with various stakeholder groups to help

students and families navigate the changes to the state and federal student aid application process to support their career aspirations. We thank our legislative champions for their work on this legislation and Governor Tony Evers for his support in signing this important legislation. This proposal will support students in accessing and pursuing a degree, enabling them to contribute to Wisconsin's future workforce and economic prosperity for many years to come.

"For students attending private, nonprofit colleges and universities in particular, the legislation eliminates the outdated formula that has been in Wisconsin statutes since the early 1970s. These important changes provide for a more transparent formula, better recognizing the needs of today's students."

- Taken from a joint statement of Patty Taylor, senior director of Financial Aid and Educational Funding of Lakeland University, and Susan Teerink, associate vice provost for Financial Aid and Enrollment Services of Marquette University, both instrumental to the passage of this new legislation.



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- Beloit College
- Carroll University
- Carthage College
- Concordia University Wisconsin
- 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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INDEPENDENT INSIGHTS

College IS Still Worth It!

In the ever-evolving landscape of education and the workforce, the importance of higher education cannot be overstated. College degrees empower individuals and play a pivotal role in shaping the economic vitality of Wisconsin and the entire nation.

Wisconsin, like many other states, faces a stark reality: a significant disparity between the demand for college-educated workers and the available talent pool. To address this gap, Wisconsin has set a goal known as “60 Forward” which aims to increase the proportion of residents with a post-secondary credential to 60 percent. This goal reflects the state’s commitment to fostering a highly skilled and competitive workforce.

By 2029, Wisconsin is projected to face a shortage of 192,000 workers with bachelor’s degrees or higher, resulting in a staggering \$19.4 billion loss in economic output. This deficit hampers economic growth and hinders the state’s ability to compete on a national scale.

The consequences of not meeting this goal are substantial. Fortunately, Wisconsin’s private schools are actively contributing to bridging this gap by producing graduates in high-demand fields such as education, business, nursing, engineering, and various healthcare professions. These graduates are essential to the state’s workforce.

The benefits of higher education extend beyond the state’s economy. Individuals with a bachelor’s degree earn, on average, twice as much over the course of their careers compared to those with only a high school diploma. This higher earning potential translates into a substantial contribution to local, state, and federal tax revenue, enabling governments to invest in critical infrastructure and services.

Moreover, college graduates tend to be more engaged citizens, voting at higher percentages and actively participating in their communities. They often give back through volunteering and supporting nonprofit organizations, further enriching the social fabric of Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU) is playing a crucial role in advancing higher education initiatives. We are collaborating with other sectors of higher education in the state to work toward achieving the 60 percent postsecondary attainment goal. Additionally, efforts are being made to facilitate student transfers and ensure degree completion, promoting accessibility and success within the higher education system.

College degrees remain a worthy investment. The concerted, collective efforts of educational institutions, government, and society are vital to realizing the full potential of higher education in our rapidly changing world.



Eric W. Fulcomer

Eric W. Fulcomer, PhD
President

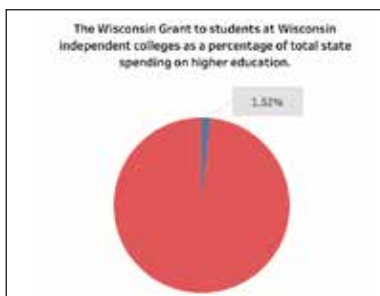
WAICU's Value to Wisconsin Higher Education Now Available Via WAICU Facts Online

WAICU's annual factsheet now has a new look!

From a static one-pager, we have built an interactive dashboard with eye-catching graphics to promote WAICU institutions more effectively. Through this dashboard, WAICU aims to demystify the cost of pursuing postsecondary education at Wisconsin private colleges while highlighting what makes our institutions places of hope and opportunity.

In addition, this dashboard emphasizes the important contributions of private, nonprofit colleges and universities to Wisconsin's economy and workforce. Explore the WAICU Facts Dashboard at waicu.org/research/waicu-facts.

We also have other publications that make the case for the private, nonprofit sector of higher education such as the WAICUPEDIA that also can be found on the waicu.org website.



WAICU-Member Data Offered in New Dashboard

Important WAICU-member data, as illustrated in the graphic at left, is now available via a new dashboard at www.waicu.org, divided into WAICU At a Glance, Place of Opportunity, Bargain for Taxpayers, and Affordable Education. Be sure to give this dashboard a look.



College Goal Wisconsin Promotes FAFSA Completion Events

Students attending Wisconsin's private colleges need a plan to pay for college. That plan should include College Goal Wisconsin.

College Goal Wisconsin is affiliated with a national event that provides free information and assistance to families who need to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®), the federally required form for students seeking financial aid, such as grants and loans. Completing the FAFSA is the first and most important step in qualifying for aid.

In Wisconsin, College Goal Wisconsin FAFSA completion events will take place in early 2024 on the following dates. In-person event are at 6 p.m. Event locations are available on the College Goal website below.

In-person event dates are at 6 p.m.:

- Monday evenings: January 8, 22, 29
- Tuesday evenings: January 9, 16, 23, 30
- Wednesday evenings: January 10, 17, 24, 31
- Thursday evenings: January 11, 18, 25, February 1

Virtual event dates at 6 p.m.:

Wednesday evenings, January 10, 17, 24, 31

As dates may change, please visit collegegoalwi.org for the most up-to-date information.

High School Counselors! Having a College/Career Night? Call Us!

High school counselors: Remember to invite WAICU to your winter and spring College and Career Night. WAICU staff are available to provide comprehensive information about our 22-member campuses, clubs and activities, major areas of study, application information and timelines, housing, scholarships and much more.

Please send us an invite studentaccess@waicu.org

Check out our Online Resources for Students, Counselors

Our website at www.WisconsinsPrivateColleges.org is full of helpful information for the college search process.

Here you can find:

- Overviews of each of the 22 Wisconsin private colleges and universities
- Scholarship information with links to the opportunities available at each institution
- Major Areas of Study search tool
- Cost of college information
- College Snapshots with introductory slides and presentations
- Transfer information

DID YOU KNOW?

Wisconsin's 22 private colleges expand educational opportunity in our state. Here's how:

• **31 percent** of students are over the age of 25, compared to 19 percent at Wisconsin's public four-year universities.

• **31 percent** of WAICU students are students of color, compared to 19 percent at four-year public institutions in the state.

• **29 percent** of WAICU undergraduates qualify for federal Pell grants, compared to 22 percent at four-year public institutions in Wisconsin.

• **28 percent** of all WAICU undergraduates are first-generation students.

Source: Enrollment Survey, 2021-2022 and WAICU Institutional Survey, 2022-2023

BELLIN COLLEGE

Bellin College Expands Graduate Nursing Program Offerings

Bellin College is a leader in healthcare education and strives to prepare their students for the needs of society. One way they put this into action is through their variety of programs.

Bellin College has added a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) track to their graduate nursing program offerings. This new program continues the college's goal to prepare nurses who excel in professional practice and builds on their already successful undergraduate and graduate degrees in the nursing field.

"The PMHNP program is a perfect fit with our mission and values of excellence, integrity, community, and caring," said Mary Rolloff, dean of Nursing at Bellin College. "Every day we see the pain and trauma of those with mental health challenges. We feel a moral imperative to make a difference."

Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse

Practitioners are advanced practice nurses who are licensed and credentialed as specialists in psychiatric-mental health nursing. Post graduation, PMHNPs may specialize in treating a particular population such as adolescents, geriatrics, substance use disorders, trauma, and LGBTQIA+ populations. In addition, advanced practice psychiatric nurses work in all areas of health care such as primary care, hospitals, community mental health centers, and many more.

"There is an enormous need for mental health care professionals," says Lori Kulju, Graduate Nursing Program director and associate professor. "And access to care is severely limited. Approximately 25 percent of adults with a mental illness report not getting treatment. The numbers are worse for youth. This program strives to prepare healthcare professionals to support the



Patient care is at the heart of Bellin College's healthcare education.

needs of our communities and improve access to care for those in need."

Students enrolled in the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner program can choose to complete a master's, doctorate, or post-graduate certificate in the field. Bellin College is now enrolling students for fall of 2024.

BELOIT COLLEGE

Beloit College to Launch Two New Schools

Beloit College will launch two schools in January 2024—the School of Health Sciences and the School of Business, Economics, and Entrepreneurship—to bring career preparation and pathways to the center of Beloit students' experience.

"With these two schools, we are aligning our academic programs, nationally recognized teaching, and vibrant residential community with the way the world operates," said Eric Boynton, Beloit College's new president.

The schools will combine specialized knowledge and technical skills with broad-based knowledge and problem-solving, communication and collaboration skills—the hallmarks of a liberal arts education—and will leverage Beloit's 17,000 alumni and partners to help students make internship and job connections.

The School of Health Sciences will prepare students for healthcare careers



A Beloit student gains hands-on experience in the lab.

by combining rigorous STEM training with comprehensive humanities and social sciences education, offering critical social, moral, and cultural context, along with the skills needed to succeed in health professions.

The School of Business, Economics, and Entrepreneurship will help students discover their passion and

translate it into a business or fulfilling career that finds unique solutions to problems and makes their community a better place.

The school will feature new majors in business management and organizational leadership, in addition to quantitative economics, and minors in finance, marketing, market research, and entrepreneurship. Professional certificates in marketing, marketing analytics, and project management also will be offered.

"Students today want clear value for their education and want to know where their time and effort can take them," Boynton said. "These schools will allow students to quickly choose their path while preparing for jobs, professions, and ultimately rewarding careers."

Additional schools are being planned for launch later next year, including the School of Media Production and Art, and the School of Environment, Climate, and Sustainability.

Concordia University Wisconsin Celebrates new President, Erik Ankerberg, PhD

Concordia University Wisconsin (CUW) and its community of supporters recently marked the inauguration of Erik P. Ankerberg, Ph.D., with eight days of celebrations on its two residential campuses in Mequon, Wisconsin, and Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Students, employees, alumni, donors, and friends of the university ushered in their new president with a speaker series, special guest preachers, a student poetry contest, a gala, and plenty of light-hearted fun and games.

Although Ankerberg officially began his tenure as president on January 9, 2023, the university chose to host inauguration celebrations this fall to allow time for him to transition into his new role more fully.

Ankerberg previously served as provost of a Lutheran university in Chicago and has spent the past several months, with the help of university leaders and stakeholders, sharpening

his vision for the future of Concordia University Wisconsin as well as the Ann Arbor campus.

During his inauguration ceremony on Friday, September 29, Ankerberg introduced three pillars of excellence to ensure Concordia University is living out its mission. These include authentically living out university values of Christian focus, truth and integrity, excellence, and service; pursuing the status of a rising regional university; and making students, and the world, whole.

Currently, CUW is the second-largest private school in the state of Wisconsin. It is the largest university in the nation to be affiliated with The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. This year's census numbers show growth on multiple fronts. CUW saw a 17 percent growth in graduate student enrollment and welcomed 550 new traditional undergraduates this year, a 7 percent increase from last year. Together with



Concordia University celebrated the inauguration of its new president, Erik Ankerberg, PhD, with a week of celebrations, culminating in a ceremony on September 29, 2023.

its Ann Arbor campus, total student enrollment increased by 231 students, up 4 percent from last year.

LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY

Lawrence's Tapia Takes on Leadership Role with AP Spanish

Rosa Tapia, a professor of Spanish at Lawrence University, has begun a four-year term as the national leader in the evaluation of the College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) Spanish exam.

A member of the Lawrence faculty since 2002, with a focus on Spanish and Latin American film and 20th-century Spanish literature, Tapia has been actively involved in the AP Spanish Language and Culture program since 2007. Her appointment as the national chief academic consultant for AP Spanish—affectionately known as the “chief reader”—began July 1.

“It is an absolute honor for me to guide an exceptional group of approximately 1,500 faculty from more than 1,200 colleges, universities, and secondary schools worldwide, all coming together to shape the future of Spanish language education,” Tapia said.

AP exams, offered by the College Board, are taken by high school students each spring, a culmination of year-

long AP courses. AP exams can lead to college credits and assist colleges and universities with placement decisions.

For 16 years, Tapia has been part of a team of educators working with



Lawrence University Spanish Professor Rosa Tapia will serve as the national leader in the evaluation of the College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) Spanish exam.

the AP Spanish program, evaluating students' Spanish language proficiency, setting standards of evaluation, and establishing exam content. She has been invited to give talks and workshops to university educators and administrators across the country. Now she will lead that team over the next four years.

Tapia called her appointment a “significant milestone that fills me with immense pride and a profound sense of responsibility.”

That responsibility revolves around establishing robust and equitable standards.

“This work holds immense significance for Lawrence and for over 2,600 institutions of higher learning across the nation,” Tapia said. “These include highly selective colleges and flagship public universities that entrust my team's expertise to make decisions that significantly impact the academic futures of countless students.”

Marquette's Center for Real Estate Hosts High School Students for Summer Immersion Experience

More than a dozen high school students spent the last week of July in ways one might not expect—touring commercial real estate projects under construction and listening to panel discussions by bankers and developers as part of the MKE CRE Summer High School Immersion Program at Marquette University.

"One of the big things we want students to realize is that commercial real estate is more than just a job or a course of study," says Andy Hunt, Vieth director for the Center for Real Estate. "It's literally everywhere around them, shaping their neighborhoods and their lives."

The intensive summer program, which is now in its second year on campus and third year overall after launching virtually in the summer of 2020, is a joint venture between Marquette's Center for Real Estate and the Wisconsin chapter of National Association for Industrial and Office

Parks (NAIOP), a professional association that represents commercial real estate developers, owners, and investors.

Both organizations recruit high school students from underrepresented backgrounds who are interested in real estate careers and provide them opportunities to learn from the industry's top talent through lectures, one-on-one mentoring, and site visits.

NAIOP Wisconsin CEO Jim Villa hopes the immersion program will create a pipeline of diverse talent for the industry and a path for people who want to work in commercial real estate, but who face barriers to entry, such as lack of access to an affordable education and a professional network.

"At NAIOP, the diversification of real estate is incredibly important to us.



Class of 2023 students in the MKE CRE Summer High School Immersion Program network with Marquette alumni.

Not just in terms of deals, but in terms of the people doing it," Villa says. "The future of our communities depends on the people coming up in the industry who are going to make real estate development work for everybody. This program is a great chance to introduce the next generation of real estate leaders to different perspectives."

NASHOTAH HOUSE

Nashotah House to Offer Master of Sacred Music

Nashotah House Theological Seminary will launch a Master of Sacred Music program in the 2024-2025 academic year.

A practical and academic master's degree, the Master of Sacred Music (MSM) will train church musicians and clergy as professional musical leaders in the Anglican tradition. The two-year curriculum, offered in the residential format, is designed to deepen students' musical skills and theological understanding through advanced study.

The seminary is now accepting applications for the MSM program. MSM will challenge students to undertake serious study of a kind not generally available to church musicians, including academically rigorous instruction that is rooted in the unique tradition of Anglicanism and grounded in daily worship.

Curriculum will consist of musical theology, biblical studies, systematic theology, pastoral ministry, and church history, including ensemble work, repertoire seminars, and studios. By



Dr. Geoffrey Williams, assistant professor of Church Music and director of St. Mary's Chapel at Nashotah House, leads the seminary's student choir during Evensong.

participating in twice-daily community worship in the historic St. Mary's Chapel, students will be immersed in the Anglican choral tradition throughout their course of study. Specializations will focus on voice, organ, and conducting.

"This degree brings together some of the best gifts Nashotah House has to

offer: the beauty of the Anglican music tradition, the centrality of worship in our life together, the rigor of our theological and biblical studies, and the expertise of our faculty of scholar-practitioners," said Dr. Garwood Anderson, dean of Nashotah House. "Through the MSM, we're glad to offer these gifts more widely for the benefit of the church and her musicians."

"Church musicians coming out of our Master of Sacred Music will be uniquely equipped to pursue their vocation," said Dr. Geoffrey Williams, assistant professor of Church Music and director of St. Mary's Chapel at Nashotah House. "A significant portion of the program will be spent developing their craft through ensemble work and studios, but equal time will be dedicated to deepening their theological understanding through advanced study. This pairing makes the MSM unlike any other program in the Anglican tradition."

RIPON COLLEGE

Ripon College Opens its First On-Campus Stadium

It was a jubilee all around as Ripon College celebrated the official grand opening of its new on-campus stadium, Hopp Stadium, Saturday, October 21.

The women's soccer team played Monmouth College in the morning and the football team pulled off a stunning 12-0 upset victory over previously undefeated Lake Forest College in the afternoon. The Ripon Red Hawks forced six turnovers and shut out the defending Midwest Conference champions.

The gala atmosphere was enhanced with a tailgate party, featuring a pig roast and chicken barbecue buffet, lawn games, a merchandise tent offering new Ripon College sports-themed apparel and collectibles, and the introduction of Ripon's food truck, Ceresco's Provisions.

Special recognitions honored Steve Hopp, Class of 1983, a member of the Ripon College Board of Trustees, and Meg Hopp, who provided a leadership commitment for the stadium project, and Hall of Fame football coach Ron Ernst, who retired from Ripon College after the

2022 football season.

"The palpable excitement of the campus stadium's official grand opening was incredible," said director of Athletics Chris Schumacher. "Hopp Stadium is an outstanding campus stadium and offers an exemplary setting for future athletic competitions and outdoor celebrations of all types."

The new 157,000 square foot facility is designed to support Ripon's continued athletic excellence and enhance the overall student experience. This mixed-use space on the corner of Thorne and Union Streets houses the football and men's and women's soccer teams. Seating 2,000, the new stadium allows for a better fan experience for students



An aerial view of Ripon College's new, on-campus and mixed-use Hopp Stadium.

and families, and provides a setting for concerts, intramurals, and other student and community activities.

An investment in athletic facilities has already proven prudent. Since the 2017 opening of Willmore Center, the updated health and wellness facility, enrollment by student-athletes has increased by 44 percent.

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN COLLEGE

Wisconsin Lutheran College Expands Graduate Degree Offerings

Wisconsin Lutheran College (WLC) launched a new master's degree in sport and recreation management this fall, inviting students to take their passion for sports to new heights. It is the college's first Master of Science program offering.

Offered through WLC's School of Business, the degree will provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the sports industry, including sports marketing, event planning, and facility management. Students will explore the social and cultural impact of sports, as well as the ethical and legal considerations that are essential to the sports industry. WLC offers two areas of emphasis within this degree: sports management and sports coaching.

Jeremiah Hoffmann serves as program director for the new degree offering. He brings a wealth of coaching, instruction, advising, and professional

experience to the role. Hoffmann most recently served as the women's golf coach at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and as the athletic director on their Fond du Lac campus. Hoffmann earned a Master of Sports Administration degree from Ohio University. He is well-versed in the areas of sports management, budgeting, event management, facility management, sports leadership, and sports governance.

"We are thrilled to offer an extension of our respected and popular undergraduate sports management degree at the master's degree level," said Dr. David Brightsman, dean of WLC's College of Professional Studies. "It is an exciting opportunity for our students and for our community. Milwaukee is a vibrant city for both sports and recreation, allowing this program to leverage some of the city's finest assets. We believe that this program



Jeremiah Hoffmann serves as program director for WLC's new Master of Science degree in Sport and Recreation Management.

will prepare our graduates to make a meaningful impact in the Milwaukee sports industry and beyond."

The program enrolled its first cohort of students in August 2023, with the next enrollment intake in January 2024. It is delivered in an online format with campus residencies.

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

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The Independent
Moving Online
Spring of 2024!**

We're taking the *Wisconsin Independent* digital, starting with our Spring 2024 edition. Make the switch with us by sharing your email address via editor@waicu.org, use the QR code below, or head to our website at www.waicu.org/newsleter to sign up.



WAICU BULLETIN BOARD

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

Garwood Anderson has announced his intention to retire from his role as dean of **Nashotah House Theological Seminary** at the conclusion of the 2023-2024 academic year to return to the classroom and biblical scholarship as the Donald J. Parsons Distinguished Professor of Biblical Interpretation.

Alverno College has been awarded a five-year, \$1.24 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The funds will be used to train personnel from diverse backgrounds at minority-serving institutions to serve children with disabilities.

Ripon College has launched the public phase of the Forever Ripon campaign, a \$75 million comprehensive campaign for access and impact—the most ambitious campaign in Ripon College's history.

Lawrence University announced plans to partner with the Trout Museum of Art in construction of a four-story, 120,000 square foot building in downtown Appleton. The building will house the art museum on the first floor, Lawrence academic spaces on the second floor, and market-rate housing on the upper two floors. Construction is expected to begin in early 2024, with an opening in fall 2025.

Northland College's Mary Griggs Burke Center for Freshwater Innovation has been awarded \$500,000 of new funding to support the third phase of its Sediment Reduction Project on North Fish Creek, the largest source of sediment flowing into Lake Superior's Chequamegon Bay.

St. Norbert College, a leading Catholic institution of higher education known for its rich history, academic excellence, winning athletic tradition, and strong ties to the local community, celebrated its 125th anniversary in October 2023.

Wisconsin Lutheran College has enrolled a record-setting 1,002 traditional undergraduate students for the 2023-2024 academic year. Nearly 40 percent of first-year Warriors are first-generation college students, and nearly 26 percent are students of color. The average unweighted high school GPA for the class of 2026 was 3.48. More than 68 percent of first-year students are from Wisconsin.