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WISCONSIN ACHIEVERS

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Wisconsin Grant Program is an Asset to Private Colleges

A junior at Edgewood College, EreK Gilbertson has never known a world that didn't include the advanced technology of computers. Fascinated by this rapidly evolving science, the Madison native knew his future career plans would center around information technology.



EreK Gilbertson

"The Wisconsin Grant Program has enabled me the freedom to experience everything college life has to offer me."

At Edgewood High School, EreK became familiar with the neighboring college that shared its name and history with his high school. He took several advanced placement (AP) classes at Edgewood College and felt like the environment had a positive impact on his learning experiences. Though EreK's academic journey has been somewhat linear, his path has been defined by his ability to overcome.

As an infant, EreK's life story would begin with adversity. He was born with cerebral palsy, and quite prematurely. And he also suffered a stroke that still affects one half of his adult body. EreK's greatest struggles are with his memory and handwriting. He's found that his typed notes are much easier to read than those he has handwritten. His determination for success in the classroom overcomes any of the side effects of this adversity, and EreK expresses gratitude for the accommodating professors and small class sizes at Edgewood College.

EreK lives on campus—an experience that is very important to him. Logistically, he had the ability to commute back and forth to school and live at home. But like many college students, EreK wanted to experience the

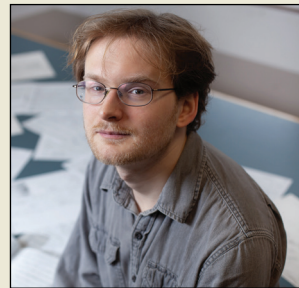
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Lawrence Grad Makes Connections Through Music Composition

Music can connect cultures and disciplines seemingly at odds with each other to foster new and interesting ideas. Lawrence University's Brock Daumler has been using music composition to do just that.

A music composition major from Green Bay, Daumler won first prize last year in the Wisconsin Alliance for Composers (WAC) contest for his composition, *Via Negativa*. A Wisconsin Grant Program recipient, Brock said, "Receiving a Wisconsin Grant helped with the cost of school, as well as ensuring my attendance. Cost was a significant factor in choosing where I attended, so generous grants for Lawrence helped seal the deal."

Brock, who recently graduated, studied composition with Lawrence professors Joanne Metcalf and Asha Srinivasan. *Via Negativa* came from his work with Srinivasan in her Electroacoustic Music Composition class. Electro-



Brock Daumler

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acoustic refers to music that combines aspects of acoustic and electronic music. Daumler said the course deepened his understanding of how we experience and contextualize sound.

The course is focused on creating and then continually improving a single composition. "He spent much of the last term focused on fine-level detail work, honing the pacing and the timbre of each

sound and each section," Srinivasan says. "His focused and dedicated work yielded a well-constructed, beautiful composition that clearly made a strong impression on the judging panel" for the WAC competition.

Brock's *Via Negativa* brings together Eastern and

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122 W. Washington Avenue
Suite 700
Madison, WI 53703-2723
608.256.7761
editor@waicu.org

Eric W. Fulcomer, PhD
President & CEO

Rebecca Larson
Executive Vice President for External
Relations

Pamela Seelman
Director of Marketing
and Communications

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The Wisconsin Grant Program

The twenty-two private, nonprofit colleges and universities of Wisconsin operate without direct taxpayer support, but provide an invaluable public service to the state, educating more than 51,000 students a year. Many of Wisconsin's best and brightest need financial help to attend the college of their choice.

The Wisconsin Grant was enacted in 1965 to help qualified Wisconsin citizens to succeed. Each month, Wisconsin Achievers brings you success stories of Wisconsinites at WAICU-member campuses for whom the Wisconsin Grant Program has made a significant difference.

Erek Gilbertson

rite of passage known as "living in a college dorm."

Appreciative to be the recipient of the Wisconsin Grant, Erek shares, "The Wisconsin Grant Program has enabled me the freedom to experience everything college life has to offer me. While I diligently work two part-time jobs to gain experience and meet my financial obligations, I am not forced to work 24/7. This grant makes it possible for me to live on campus and that experience has been priceless."

Erek's undergraduate work includes a concentration in cybersecurity which has led him to an upcoming summer internship at Johnsonville in Sheboygan. With hopes of one day working for one of the most influential technology companies in the world, Google, or a large government agency like the Central Intelligence Agency, Erek's plans following graduation are to pursue an advanced degree.

He hopes to inspire high school students to consider the benefits of continuing their education. Erek believes, "You might get the same education if you go to college years down the road. But you won't have the same experiences. Edgewood College's financial aid team has been a crucial support, advocating on my behalf and facilitating access to the scholarships and grants necessary to make a private education feasible. This assistance has allowed me to embrace the experience of college life while maintaining affordability."

Brock Daumler

Western music traditions. He explored both at Lawrence. He continued to play and learn violin while also joining Lawrence's Balinese gamelan ensemble.

Balinese gamelan is an East Asian music form that doesn't follow many common Western practices. Though many of the instruments have similar counterparts in Western orchestra, gamelan and orchestra follow different and sometimes opposed theories of composition and performance. Gamelan's special emphasis on collaboration and community makes it a space Daumler appreciates.

"I love the music," Brock says. "I went to Bali over the summer to study gamelan, and I met amazing musicians."

Brock, who is now working at Heid Music in Green Bay, said the Wisconsin Grant allowed him to pursue all those interests at Lawrence.

While Brock prefers to compose more minimalistic and experimental music, he appreciates how the intimate Lawrence Conservatory community allowed him to meet other musicians and share ideas.

"You get to meet people from different disciplines," Brock said. "I hung out with jazzers and all these different majors. I feel like that isn't typical for most music schools."

FACT OF THE MONTH

An estimated 93 percent of 2022 graduates from private, nonprofit colleges are employed or in graduate school within six months of graduation.

Source: NACE's First Destination Survey, 2023.