

ALVERNO COLLEGE
BELLIN COLLEGE
BELOIT COLLEGE
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

To: Governor's Task Force on Healthcare Workforce
From: Rebecca Larson, Executive Vice President for External Relations
Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU)
Date: July 29, 2024
Re: Follow-up to the June 6 Governor's Task Force Meeting – Education Panel Presentation

Dear Task Force Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the panel discussion at the June 6 Task Force meeting at Marquette University. I appreciate being invited to share information on Wisconsin private, nonprofit colleges and universities' (WAICU) significant role in educating Wisconsin's healthcare workforce and the challenges faced by our institutions as they aim to meet current and future workforce demands. As shared at the Task Force meeting, WAICU members are nonprofit, accredited institutions and award 44 percent of bachelor's degrees and 60 percent of advanced degrees in health professions in the state.

WAICU members produce the following degrees in critical healthcare programs:

- 57 percent of Medical Doctoral Degrees
- 55 percent of Bachelor's Degrees in Nursing
- 95 percent of Master's Degrees in Nursing
- 32 percent of Doctoral Degrees in Nursing
- 100 percent of Dental Degrees at the Master's and Doctoral levels
- 25 percent of Pharmacy Doctoral Degrees
- 62 percent of Physicians Assistants

As the Task Force is considering additional state investments to increase Wisconsin's healthcare workforce, Wisconsin's accredited private, nonprofit colleges and universities, who play a critical role in producing the health care workforce pipeline, must also have access to state funding. Summarized here and outlined in more detail later in this memo,

programs such as the Wisconsin Nurse Educators Program (NEP) administered by the Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB), grant programs for nursing simulation labs, and additional grant funding for low-income students would provide critical and needed assistance for our students and institutions to support these workforce development programs. Additionally, providing financial support through scholarships for students training and working in rural and underserved communities, increased funding for preceptors, increased funding for residency programs, and grant funding to create new in-demand healthcare programs are highly beneficial state investments. Investing in our colleges' established programs is also a cost-effective way to lift the state's healthcare talent pool and help fill critical workforce shortages in healthcare occupations. Considering the high demand for healthcare workers, this must be a collaborative, statewide effort among all higher education sectors including the accredited private, nonprofit institutions who are significant contributors to Wisconsin's healthcare workforce pipeline.

I have attached a customized report specific to the healthcare industry from WAICU's recent LinkedIn research initiative. Our research has found at least 13,024 alumni from 22 Wisconsin private, nonprofit colleges and universities are employed by the 41 largest healthcare providers in Wisconsin.

Additional WAICU Comments to Draft Task Force Recommendations

Faculty Shortages

As shared previously, WAICU-member programs are facing similar faculty shortages as are our public sector counterparts. Given our institutions are nonprofit entities, it is also difficult for our members to recruit faculty at a competitive wage comparable to what healthcare workers can receive in patient care or other settings. Our institutions have found the Wisconsin Nurse Educator Program (NEP) administered by the Higher Educational Aids Board to be effective in addressing the faculty shortage concern, and WAICU has supported its expansion given the program is currently underfunded to meet the demand. The NEP was a collaborative solution designed and supported by all three sectors of higher education, including private, nonprofit college and university partners. The significant shortages in the healthcare workforce require a comprehensive solution like NEP, accessible to all students in both public and private, nonprofit sectors of higher education. There have been discussions in the Task Force of supporting other health care professions with this model. WAICU would support the development of a separate program for other professional faculty. However, given the Nurse Educator Program is underfunded, it would be wise to design them as separate programs with separate appropriations to ensure each is adequately funded.

Clinical Training Sites

Securing clinical training sites continues to be a challenge for all healthcare related programs. WAICU supports creating a registry for clinical experiences. We have discussed the idea of a shared statewide or regional clinical placement consortium to streamline the nursing placement process. All of WAICU members are nonprofit and accredited institutions and would also welcome a grant program, or some other funding mechanism made available to institutions with healthcare programs, to support the development of simulation labs to help students gain

practical experiences as well as funding for preceptors. State grants for initial program start-up costs would also be a useful tool for our institutions.

Reducing Barriers to Training for Wisconsinites – Increasing Financial Aid

WAICU members provide significant institutional aid to students. In fact, for the average student at a Wisconsin private, nonprofit institution, 65 percent of their tuition is covered by grants and scholarships funded by the institution. However, state need-based aid has remained stagnant and is not keeping pace with inflation for our lowest-income students to enroll and persist in postsecondary education. Need-based aid has also not kept pace with our Midwestern counterparts who have significantly increased the state investment in student grant aid in recent years. Wisconsin is now the lowest of the Midwest states in providing need-based aid to students. This Task Force should consider a recommendation to significantly increase need-based aid to support the enrollment of our lowest income students whether they choose to attend a Universities of Wisconsin institution, a Wisconsin Technical College System institution, or a Wisconsin private, nonprofit institution. Given the workforce shortages that plague nearly all industries across the state, it has become more important than ever to grow our own talent pool and incentivize them to stay in Wisconsin. WAICU members would also welcome wraparound support programs for our students needing transportation, childcare and basic needs support.

Recruiting and Retaining in Areas of Need

Loan forgiveness programs can be a useful tool to incentivize individuals to accept positions in rural programs and other parts of the state with the greatest need. We request that graduates from a healthcare-related program at either an accredited Wisconsin public or private, nonprofit institution be eligible for any loan repayment/forgiveness program should they gain employment in a designated area of need.

Expand Dual Enrollment and Align Funding

The state could incentivize dual enrollment opportunities for all students while in high school. The current fractured framework of dual enrollment throughout the state is leaving many students behind who could otherwise benefit from a dual enrollment option to accelerate their pathways towards a desired degree, including a healthcare pathway. Nearly all WAICU members have dual enrollment offerings for high school students.

Supporting Innovation

WAICU has been working collaboratively with the Universities of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Technical College System on the state attainment goal known as 60 Forward. The higher education sectors are now coordinating attainment goals regionally to support employer-based workforce needs as the next phase of the 60 Forward initiative. Given the significant demands of the healthcare workforce, this could be an effective way for the higher education sectors, the Department of Public Instruction, and the state's economic development entities to better target degree productivity to meet regional market demands.

Strengthen State Capacity for Licensure Regulations

WAICU has been partnering with the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) on their efforts to expedite time to licensure and to participate in the rollout of the higher education licensure portal. WAICU members are grateful for the Department's proactive work on these programs. WAICU will continue to support the Department's efforts and continue to serve as the liaison between the Department and our member accredited private, nonprofit institutions.

WAICU-Member Alumni at 300-Plus Largest Employers in Wisconsin

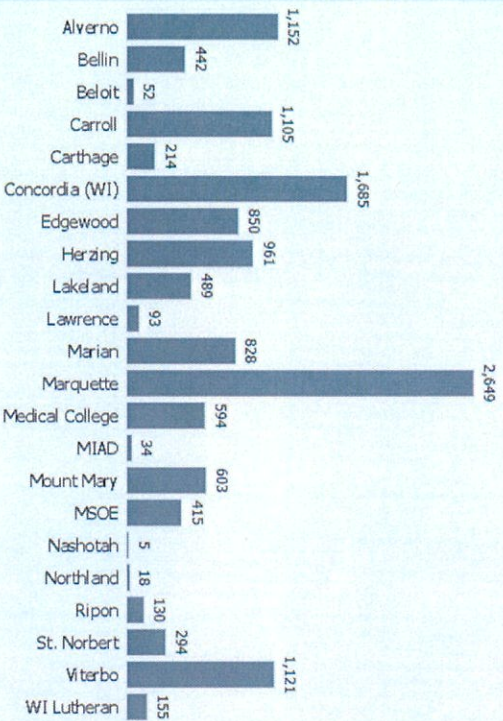
The Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU) conducted a LinkedIn research project in March of 2024 and found that at least **38,700** alumni of 22 WAICU-member institutions were employed at the 300-plus biggest companies in Wisconsin across various industries.

Take a look at WAICU-member alumni working for major Wisconsin healthcare providers.

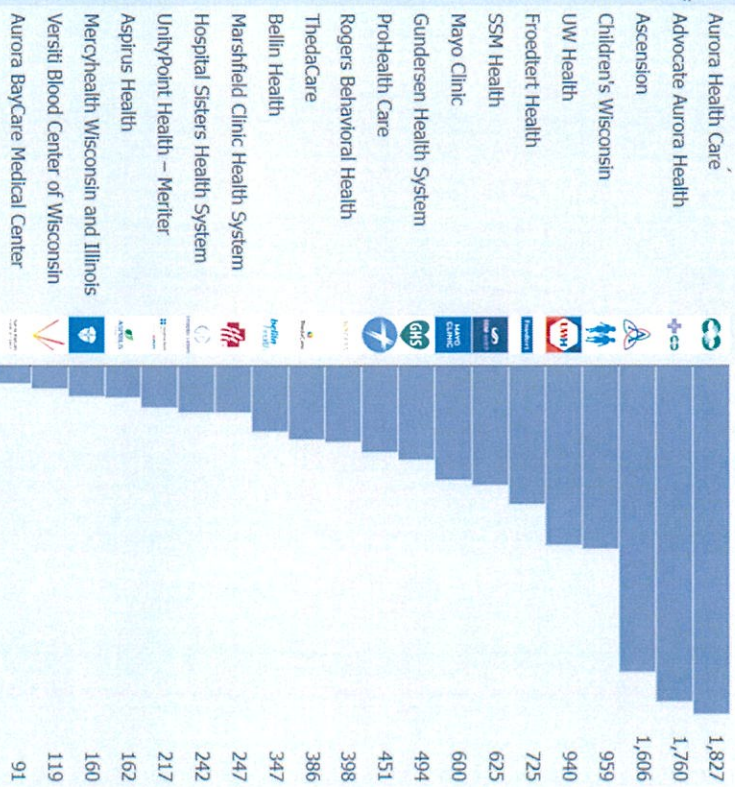
41 Companies

13,024 WAICU Alumni

Number of WAICU-Member Alumni Working at Major Healthcare Employers, by WAICU Institution



Top 20 Wisconsin Healthcare Employers with the Most WAICU Alumni



The snapshot above showed only results for 41 major healthcare providers in Wisconsin (non-healthcare companies were excluded). To view the original dashboard with data of all 302 companies, visit WAICU's website <https://www.wisconsinprivatecolleges.org/waicu-alumni-employment-data/>