



Vol. 25, No. 1
August 2024

WISCONSIN ACHIEVERS

Wisconsin Achievers is published by the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU)

Alverno College Student Loves Science and Helping Others

Elaina Chilson, class of 2027, has spent most of her life in and around Alverno. “I literally grew up here,” she says as she talks about what drew her to the college. As a baby, she attended the on-campus daycare where her mother works, and currently lives just five minutes away. But her familiarity with the campus wasn’t the only draw.



Elaina Chilson

“Without the grant I don’t know if I could even be here. If I didn’t have the grant, it would change the trajectory of my career and my life.”

“The fact that it’s an all-women’s college really inspired me. A lot of like-minded individuals come here. People are serious and ready to work, they’re willing to make sacrifices to get their education.”

The biomedical sciences major is serious about her education too, working two jobs to make ends meet. Her ultimate goal is to work as a diagnostic radiologist. “I took an anatomy class in high school and fell in love with it. I like analyzing images—here’s what is normal, how is this image different and what does it mean? How can I help this person?”

Elaina knows she’ll need a lot of education to reach her goal, which is why the Wisconsin Grant Program is so vital to her success. “Without the grant I don’t know if I could even be here,” she explains.

“It’s saving me a lot of time and energy, allowing me to focus on my education. If I didn’t have the grant, it would change the trajectory of my career and my life. I wouldn’t have the opportunity to have my dream job without the extra tuition help.”

Her college experience is helping her in other ways as well. “I was very shy in high school in Milwaukee,” she shares. “It was hard for me to communicate. I would feel more uncomfortable talking to people if I didn’t go to

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Wisconsin Grant Program: A Game Changer for Edgewood Student

As a three-sport student-athlete from Hales Corners, Wisconsin, Kallie Norby excelled both academically and athletically in high school. Standing at six feet tall, she found her true passion in basketball, thriving in competitive team environments.

During her time at Whitnall High School, Kallie’s exceptional skills on and off the court earned her “Second-Team All-Conference” in her senior year, establishing herself as a dominant leader.

Her hard work on the court paid off when she earned a spot on a Division II college basketball team, complete with a full scholarship. She was thrilled to discover that a small, private college in another state could help make her college basketball dream come true, allowing her to build a future upon the game she loves.



Kallie Norby

“This financial support has been an absolute game changer and allows me to shift focus to academics and athletics, devoting my energy to both.”

While grateful for the opportunity, Kallie admits it didn’t go exactly as she had hoped. Starting college in 2020, the global pandemic affected many college students. Classes were moved online, and the only students allowed to stay on campus were athletes.

Although she did have social interaction with her team, Kallie spent a lot of time isolated. Kallie struggled with

her major, and the rural environment felt foreign. And then she lost her scholarship, as the college grappled with revenue losses due to the pandemic.

Without the scholarship, Kallie faced great uncertainty. With the assistance of her coach, Kallie entered

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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.

Elaina Chilson

Alverno. I didn't have the confidence or authority to say this is who I am, and this is what I can do and what I can improve upon. Alverno has improved my confidence."

She credits her newfound self-assurance to a combination of campus activities, clubs, and most importantly, the one-to-one attention from Alverno faculty.

"I have relationships with my professors. I can email them any time I have a question—it's very important to ask questions." They've also taught her to advocate for herself. "I really do love my faculty," she says.

Looking forward, Elaina plans to earn a Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Sciences and then continue to medical school. She's excited to combine her love for science with her desire to help others, and the Wisconsin Grant is allowing her to pursue her dream and one day give back to the community.

Kallie Norby

the "transfer portal." Edgewood College was one of several schools that reached out to her. Despite her concerns, Kallie kept an open mind. During her initial visit, she fell in love with the beautiful campus, unbeatable location, and the strong athletic and academic programs. The prestigious nursing program quickly attracted her interest – putting Edgewood at the top of her list.

Recognizing that the financial component was the biggest hurdle, Kallie's Edgewood coach connected her with the financial aid team. Kallie found the support she needed to choose Edgewood College.

Through her financial aid package, she qualified for the Wisconsin Grant Program, which made all the difference. As she approaches her fourth and final year as an Eagle, Kallie shares, "This financial support has been an absolute game changer and allows me to shift focus to both academics and athletics, emerging as a leader because I can devote my energy to excelling in both."

Kallie's accomplishments and accolades highlight her character and commitment. She found the nursing program at Edgewood to be a perfect fit for her future career aspirations. She is slated to graduate in May of 2025. Though her path was far from linear, Kallie's resilience and determination demonstrate the importance of perseverance no matter the challenge.

FACT OF THE MONTH

WAICU members produce 24 percent of all bachelor's degrees and 34 percent of advanced degrees statewide with no direct operating support from taxpayers.

Source: IPEDS, Completions Survey, 2021-2022.