



Vol. 25, No. 4  
November 2024

# WISCONSIN ACHIEVERS

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

## Carthage College Student Builds Confidence

Since enrolling at Carthage College, Racine native and sophomore Azariah Oates has learned to “speak up and be bold.”



**Azariah Oates**

*“I am profoundly grateful for the Wisconsin Grant Program. This program has helped me concentrate exclusively on my studies.”*

Participating in Student Government as a freshman last year, Azariah’s voice caught the attention of her peers who admired what she said and the confidence with which she spoke.

Her passionate yet patient style has blossomed at Carthage, but it may have originated from observing her dad, who runs a church. Assisting her dad in his community

work gave her a heart for service and a role model for leadership.

A desire to serve her community inspired Azariah to pursue a degree in graphic design with a data science minor. She will graduate in 2027. This past summer, she worked for the city of Racine, teaching older adults how to use computers. After college, she envisions helping small businesses gain exposure or developing games for kids.

Azariah chose Carthage because it offered big learning opportunities in a smaller school setting. She wanted to be pushed while also having room “to figure it out.”

As a freshman, she got involved with Student Government, the Carthage Activities Board, and the Engagement and Inclusion Center. These extracurricular experiences complemented what she was learning in class—particularly in Intellectual Foundations, a course all freshmen take. Designed to hone skills in critical reading, writing, cultural literacy, and oral communication, the course pushed Azariah out of her comfort zone.

Azariah loved listening to her classmates’ opinions and

## Lakeland University Student Gains Work Experience

Gaining work experience while also earning a college degree is a challenge faced by many college students. However, for Gabe Ascher, it came naturally.

After his three short years at Lakeland University, Gabe will have plenty of experience to make his resume stand out. Between his time working for the Sheboygan County Chamber of Commerce to his impressive internship with Unilever, Gabe has taken advantage of every opportunity thrown his way.

From Wautoma, Gabe is a business administration major with an emphasis in finance. He chose Lakeland for several reasons, including the opportunity to compete in two sports, basketball and golf, at the collegiate level. He also appreciated the welcoming atmosphere of the campus and a generous financial aid package that

included funds from the Wisconsin Grant Program. His time at Lakeland has significantly affected him, teaching him valuable lessons about himself and shaping his professional aspirations.

“I have met many professors who I seek advice from and enjoy talking to every time I bump into them in the halls” Gabe says. “I have also met some of my lifelong friends here at Lakeland that have made my time here very enjoyable.”



**Gabe Ascher**

*“If I look back to when I was a high school senior, the Wisconsin Grant played a part in which schools I was looking at attending.”*

This past summer, Gabe landed a highly sought-after finance internship with global consumer goods company Unilever at their U.S. headquarters in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. Unilever owns approximately 400 brands, including products like Dove, Marmite, Lynx, Ben & Jerry’s and Hellmann’s.



WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT  
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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

## Our Members

Alverno College  
Bellin College  
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 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.

## Azariah Oates

ideas during class discussions, which prepared her to better articulate her own thoughts. She says that Professor Annette Duncan helped her find her spark for loving to learn.

The respect is mutual. "After class, I could count on her to stay to discuss an idea or a text in greater depth," says Professor Duncan. "Both her critical thinking and her written expression are exceptional strengths."

Financial support from the Wisconsin Grant Program offered financial stability so Azariah could excel in class and focus on extracurricular leadership opportunities. "I am profoundly thankful for the Wisconsin Grant Program. This program has helped me concentrate exclusively on my studies, engage in campus life, and alleviate financial concerns," she says.

After COVID disruptions left her feeling isolated and unmotivated in school, Azariah's first semester at Carthage marked a turning point. She quickly found the support she needed to get her academics back on track. "Getting on the dean's list really meant a lot to me, since I love learning and getting an education," Azariah adds.

Azariah is eager to build on her early success. Her plans include serving as a writing fellow who helps other students with writing projects. She plans to participate in one of Carthage's J-Term study abroad tours and other opportunities that will expand her horizons and enrich her college experience.

With her determination and drive, she will leave a lasting impact at Carthage.

## Gabe Ascher

Gabe's internship at Unilever was a crucial step in building his finance career. Working for a global consumer packaged goods company that operates in approximately 200 countries gave him valuable insight into corporate operations and the decision-making processes that occur daily.

He focused on networking, making connections throughout the company during his short time there. This experience confirmed his interest in corporate finance and helped him realize it's the right path for him. One of his key takeaways was the importance of taking chances—he landed the internship through an online application despite not knowing anyone at the company. With a smile, he says, "You'll never know what you are capable of until you apply."

"If I look back to when I was a high school senior, the Wisconsin Grant played a part in which schools I was looking at attending," he says. "With the grant reducing the cost of attendance, I can better focus on my academics and my professional future."

Gabe plans to graduate this May, three years after coming to Lakeland. He plans to pursue a role as a corporate financial analyst while remaining in his home state. Gabe is a dedicated and hardworking student-athlete who has leveraged opportunities like the Wisconsin Grant and an internship to shape his future.

## FACT OF THE MONTH

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

Source: NACE's First Destination Survey, 2023.