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WISCONSIN ACHIEVERS

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St. Norbert Student Embraces Human Connection and Hard Work

St. Norbert College (SNC) senior Nayeli Perez's college experience has been defined by human connection. The

college's small class sizes allow her to form strong relationships with her professors and fellow students.

As a commuter student from Green Bay, Nayeli has continued to find a balance between seeing her family regularly and forming new relationships on campus. "So far, one of the best parts of college has been the many connections I have made with people.

Although SNC isn't the biggest campus, there are so many great people," she explains.

Nayeli values the relationships made through her position as a student worker in the St. Norbert College financial aid office. "I enjoy being able to help students and families understand their financial aid, as well as run behind-the-scenes processes that help the office run smoothly," she adds. "I am grateful for the amazing financial aid counselors I get to call coworkers, who have taught me so much valuable information."

Nayeli's college experience, especially as a first-generation student, has been filled with a lot of hard work. "I always knew I wanted to attend college but wasn't sure how I would pay for it," she notes. "Although my parents help me pay for college, which I will forever be grateful for, receiving this grant through the Wisconsin Grant Program helps relieve some of that financial burden. Receiving the grant has helped make my dreams a reality."

During her sophomore year, Nayeli realized that if she took a few extra classes in the summer, she would



Nayeli Perez

"Receiving the Wisconsin Grant has helped make my dreams a reality."

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WLC Achiever Hopes to Make Impact as a History Teacher

For Ben Thoma, a senior from Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin Lutheran College (WLC) was the perfect fit. As a student at a Christian grade school and Manitowoc Lutheran High School, finding a college that was faith-focused was important to him.

"I found that Wisconsin Lutheran College had a great Christian atmosphere. Another reason why I chose WLC was because of their amazing education program," says Ben. "I knew that the connections I could make in the Milwaukee area through WLC would be critical later on in my teaching career."

While studying to be a teacher, Ben also enjoys all the extracurricular activities in which he can participate. He has been in choir throughout his entire time at WLC, where he has had the opportunity to sing at different

churches throughout the country during choir tours. Having played volleyball at WLC his first two years, Ben now manages the team, which he says is a way he can make money and still see his friends while being around the sport he loves.

His campus involvement doesn't end there. As a resident assistant, Ben is a leader on campus, where he is responsible for planning programs and events

for students to attend, as well as working at the front desk of residence halls. "I love making connections with students and being a helpful resource for them," he says. "Over these past couple years, it has been so fun having many opportunities to be involved here on campus."



Ben Thoma

"Receiving the Wisconsin Grant has been a truly amazing blessing. Without financial aid, there was no way I was going to be able to pay for college."

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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.

Nayeli Perez

be able to graduate in three years. Her hard work and dedication will allow her to accomplish that goal, and get a head start on her career.

Her work ethic and dedication to human connection led Nayeli to become a business administration major with a concentration in human resources. "I want to help make a difference. It is important for employees to be satisfied at work, and I believe that starts with a good human resource team," she explains. "A lot of people see HR as bad, but I want to be able to change that and have people see it as a department that is there to help assist workers."

Nayeli hopes to find a job in the human resources field after graduation, using her drive and determination to eventually transition into business ownership.

Ben Thoma

None of these opportunities would have been available without financial assistance from the Wisconsin Grant Program. "Receiving the Wisconsin Grant has been a truly amazing blessing. Without financial aid, there was no way I was going to be able to pay for college. I am so grateful and humbled to have received such a grant."

The financial support has given him the chance to obtain a college degree, which he says prepares him for a future career as an educator and for other aspects of his life. "Through general education classes I have learned how to professionally communicate, problem solve, and work together in small groups." After graduating in the spring of 2025, Ben will finish one semester of student teaching.

"I am excited and passionate about teaching history classes in either a middle school or high school." Thanks to the Wisconsin Grant, Ben will be well prepared when that opportunity comes.

FACT OF THE MONTH

The ROI of a college education is nearly fourteen percent, far exceeding investment benchmarks such as the long-term seven percent return on stocks or the three percent on bonds.

Source: Federal Reserve Bank of New York, 2019