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# WISCONSIN ACHIEVERS

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## Marian University Senior's Moxie Helps Him Succeed

Kyle Beck would tell you he was shy when he came to Marian University as a freshman. To see him now is to realize his college adventure

has been nothing short of transformative. When the senior from Madison, Wisconsin, crossed the campus, he easily engaged with everyone.

He worked as a resident assistant, was active in many organizations on campus, and earlier this year, was the keynote speaker at Marian University's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Prayer Breakfast.

Kyle found his voice with the help of Steve Kiszely, J.D., an Adjunct Professor at Marian who

teaches Speech and Communication courses. "These courses have helped me develop my individuality and to articulate my thoughts effectively," says Kyle. "Professor Kiszely's support has been instrumental in transforming me from a shy freshman to a confident and ambitious senior."

All of this was made possible by the Wisconsin Grant. The Wisconsin Grant helped him overcome obstacles and move forward in his academic career. "The Wisconsin Grant provided the support I needed to overcome financial obstacles that would have impeded my ability to move forward."

Despite his initial shyness, Kyle always knew he had an innate ability to connect with others and make them feel comfortable and understood. This gift, along with a fascination with human behavior, fueled his interest



**Kyle Beck**

*"The Wisconsin Grant has provided the support I needed to help me overcome financial obstacles that would have impeded my ability to move forward."*

## Options Abound for Viterbo University Biology Major

Attending Little Chute Career Pathways Academy as a high school student gave Jon Vissers unique perspective into the medical field and confirmed his interest in the sciences. Now, he is pursuing his career aspirations as a biology major and chemistry minor at Viterbo University.

"I would like to work in a hospital laboratory or go on to earn a master's degree in public health," says Jon about his plans after graduation in May 2026. "I might also become an epidemiologist one day."

Jon chose to attend Viterbo because of the beauty of the La Crosse area and the opportunity for unique connections made between faculty and students.

"The professors here really want to get to know their students and help them learn," Jon says. "They challenge you but also support you. I really enjoy it here and I am learning a lot."

Every science student at Viterbo conducts a faculty-mentored research project, and during the spring 2025 semester Jon was "searching for new antibiotics within the gut microbiome" under the guidance of assistant professor of biology, biochemistry, and neuroscience Luke Bussiere.

"So far, so good," Jon says. "I found some antibiotic producers in my sample, and now I'm working to identify the bacteria."

For Jon and many other students and families, the Wisconsin Grant and other forms of financial aid play a crucial role in their ability to attend college. "The Wis-



**Jon Vissers**

*"The Wisconsin Grant helps make my education affordable. I wouldn't be able to earn a degree and accomplish my career goals without grants and scholarships."*



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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 52,000 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.

## Kyle Beck

in majoring in Psychology. He also credits his parents with instilling in him the importance of cultivating strong, meaningful relationships. After graduation, Kyle plans to enter the field of clinical counseling, where he hopes to help others navigate life's challenges with resilience and purpose.

Kyle graduated in May. His academic journey was marked by consistent excellence, landing him on the Dean's List multiple times. Kyle leaves behind another legacy. He is a founder of Marian's new, wildly popular Ping Pong Club.

The group started last fall and has expanded to more than 100 members. The club took over a little-used room on campus and turned it into the Ping Pong Clubhouse, which has become a fun and inclusive space for students to connect and unwind. The Ping Pong Club recently hosted a tournament where the students took on the faculty and staff. It is friendships like those fostered over ping pong that have made Kyle's college adventure memorable.

"My professors have been extremely supportive of my goals and have spent time in and out of class helping me develop a vision and steps to achieving my dreams," says Kyle. "I wouldn't be who I am without having come to Marian University."

## Jon Vissers

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Jon's favorite science courses so far have been immunology and Molecular and Cellular Basis of Life. He found the sociology course Death and Dying to be very interesting and with a long-time affinity for the performing arts, he greatly enjoyed a stage lighting theatre course.

Outside of the classroom, Jon is active in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) club and works as a tutor in the university's Academic Resource Center and as a campus tour guide. He also enjoys reading, hiking, and spending time with friends.

Catherine Wright, Viterbo's STEM laboratory manager, is very confident that Jon will excel, no matter which specific career path he chooses.

"Jon is a wonderful person and student who is great to be around," Wright said. "I have enjoyed his positive attitude, determination, and his passion for people and learning. When experiments don't go as expected, he remains positive and figures it out. He also reads a book every week! Jon makes a significant impact on the Viterbo STEM community now and will continue to do so in the field after he graduates."

## FACT OF THE MONTH

**WAICU-member campuses produce 23 percent of bachelor's degrees and 33 percent of advanced degrees statewide with no direct operating support from taxpayers.**

Source: IPEDS Completion Survey, 2022-2023.