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WISCONSIN ACHIEVERS

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Grant Opens Doors Close to Home for Alverno Student

The Wisconsin Grant is more than just a grant—it's fuel for student opportunities across the state. For one Alverno College student, receiving funds through the Wisconsin



Haley Marini

"The Wisconsin Grant means so much to me—not only because I'm proud to be a Wisconsin resident, but also because it gives me the opportunity to receive a quality education close to home."

Grant Program has allowed her to be an active member in her college community.

Haley Marini is a current senior, planning to graduate in December of 2025 with a bachelor's degree. She is a student athlete and member of multiple clubs across campus—including holding the vice president position of both Alverno Dance Company and Greater Deed, a student organization that focuses on promoting service and community engagement. She's accomplished all this as a first-generation

college student.

A large part of what sets the Wisconsin Grant apart from other grants is the fact that it comes from a place that many students call home. "The Wisconsin Grant means so much to me—not only because I'm proud to be a Wisconsin resident, but also because it gives me the opportunity to receive a quality education close to home. I'm incredibly grateful for the chance to learn and grow," Haley explains.

As a student from Friendship, Haley had multiple colleges to choose from across the state, but Alverno College caught her attention. "Alums had really nice things to say about their time spent at Alverno," she says. "I really value the close relationships with professors and the genuine care they show for their students. Even some of my friends at other schools have noticed it—just from the way I talk about my professors, they

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Lakeland Junior Finds Her Heart's Desire with Lions, Tigers

Lakeland University junior Arfee Edwards, a sport management & leadership major from Bayfield, spent a valuable summer working for the Detroit Tigers, earning a host of real-world experience along with academic credit toward her degree.

She served a variety of roles, including supervising and training volunteers that sell 50-50 raffle tickets, choosing fans who get their seats upgraded during the game, walking guests down to the field post-game, and a range of other interactions with fans.

Arfee always arrived at the ballpark early, often making her way onto the field, introducing herself and talking to the players. "I did not expect how welcoming everyone was," she says. "I loved it. The amount of people I connected with on LinkedIn was awesome."

She made a positive impact on the field and with her supervisors. She won an employee award for the first two weeks of July, and the Tigers talked to her about returning next summer.



Arfee Edwards

"The Wisconsin Grant and the rest of my financial aid package make it possible for me to attend Lakeland and develop the skills I need to succeed in my career after graduation."

Arfee, who serves Lakeland as a Blue & Gold Champion and is a member of the volleyball team, initially was interested in being a physical education teacher. Her Lakeland experience has her on the pro sports career path with the goal of one day working for the Detroit Lions.

"I always wanted to be in the sports realm,"

Arfee adds. "The classes I've taken here and the number of departments I've worked with have been eye opening for me. My career path changed as I was introduced to new

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The Wisconsin Grant Program

Our private, nonprofit colleges and universities operate without direct taxpayer support, but provide 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.

Since 1965, the Wisconsin Grant has helped qualified Wisconsin citizens succeed. Wisconsin Achievers share success stories of Wisconsinites at WAICU-member campuses for whom the Wisconsin Grant Program has made a significant difference.

Haley Marini

can tell how supported we are."

A strong support system can make all the difference for students, but especially for first-generation students. "I come from a family filled with love and strong support. As a first-generation student, I'm proud to be paving the way as the first Marini to earn a college degree." Especially in a time when many young people are considering whether they should pursue a college degree, being a first-generation student speaks volumes about the passion and dedication students like Haley have. "I believe education is a privilege. I'm beyond grateful to have shared my experience, and I hope to continue to be a student of life after graduation."

Her post-graduation plans include working at an adult day center for individuals who are disabled, but her long-term goal is to work in youth ministry. "I remember how youth ministry formed me in my Catholic identity, and I would love to give that gift to others," says Haley.

The Wisconsin Grant is just one aspect of a big support system for many college students across the state, and a critical one. The Wisconsin Grant has given Haley the opportunity to be an active member of her Alverno College community while working toward her goals and honing her strengths. "Alverno has helped me grow into a more confident and purpose-driven person. Through its supportive community, I've learned to use my voice, take on leadership roles, and step outside my comfort zone. I've become more self-aware, resilient, and grounded in my values."

Arfee Edwards

ideas. I want to help and give back."

She attends Lakeland thanks to a financial aid package, which includes financial aid from the Wisconsin Grant Program, making college possible for her. "The Wisconsin Grant and the rest of my financial aid package make it possible for me to attend Lakeland and develop the skills I need to succeed in my career after graduation," she says.

This summer was Arfee's second taste of working in a pro sports setting, the first coming in April when she was part of the Lakeland volleyball team that worked the NFL draft in Green Bay.

There she met Cynthia Frelund, a TV sports analyst for the NFL Network and Colleen Wolfe, an on-air talent for the NFL Network. Frelund and Arfee had lunch at the end of June and Frelund gave her a tour of Ford Field, the home of the Detroit Lions.

One thing Arfee is not is shy. She attributes her inquisitive nature to her childhood. Arfee was born in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, in western Africa. She was raised in an orphanage and adopted at the age of four by her parents, Tim Edwards and Heidi Goehring.

"I had so many unknowns growing up," Arfee says. "I always had that, 'Why? Why me?' I love meeting and talking to people. I want to hear their 'why'."

FACT OF THE MONTH

Twenty-six percent of all WAICU undergraduates are first-generation students.

Source: WAICU Institutional Survey, 2023-2024.