



Vol. 26, No. 8
April 2026

WISCONSIN ACHIEVERS

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

Charting a Path in Accounting: A Lakeland University Story

Allie Smith has discovered her enjoyment for accounting at Lakeland University thanks to numerous work world opportunities that complement her classroom learning.



Allie Smith

"With the help of several scholarships and the Wisconsin Grant, I have found myself planning for an unexpected future here at Lakeland. With my financial aid, I have made my family proud and will be the first to receive a college degree."

Last fall, the junior accounting major from Manitowoc completed her fourth hands-on learning experience as an accounting intern at Curt G. Joa, Inc.

By the end of the fall semester, she had earned twelve academic credits through a variety of work experiences via Lakeland's Cooperative Education program, including working as an operations intern with CliftonLarsonAllen; completing a tax internship with Corson, Peterson & Hamann

SC in Sheboygan; and tutoring her peers in financial accounting.

Smith says the collective experiences help her see various career paths while she builds the skills needed for post-graduation success.

"With the help of several scholarships and the Wisconsin Grant Program, I have found myself planning for an unexpected future here at Lakeland. With my financial aid, I have made my family proud and will be the first to receive a college degree."

"This isn't just a job, it's so much more," adds Allie, who is on track to graduate in May of 2027.

"I'm getting hands-on experience, and I can put this experience together to choose a field. I can take the

continued on page 2

Viterbo Nursing Student Has a Passion for Helping Others

Viterbo University nursing student Maddie Schendel never had far to look for inspiration to help others.

"I think that passion comes from my family," says Maddie, a junior from Cashton. *"My dad is a firefighter at Ft. McCoy, an EMT, and serves on a rescue dive team. My mom works in the office at Scenic Bluffs Community Health Centers, and my aunt is a nurse practitioner with Emplify Health in Hillsboro."*

Maddie has found Viterbo University to be the perfect place to carry on her family tradition. She has appreciated the close community, small class sizes, and the many hands-on educational opportunities that will help her in her future career as an RN.

"Coming from a small town, I've been more at home at Viterbo than I would have at a larger school," Maddie adds. *"It has always felt like family*



Maddie Schendel

"The Wisconsin Grant Program and other financial aid is helping make my college education possible. It's definitely a big help," she says. *"I greatly appreciate it."*

here. Professors know your name, care about your success, and help you grow as a student and person."

Viterbo also aligns closely with Maddie's faith and values. This is especially true of the university's Franciscan value of hospitality. She and her roommate are doing their part to welcome others into their newly created Miles and Smiles Viterbo Run Club to promote wellness and friendship.

"I also play intramural sports," she says.

"Staying fit keeps me grounded and helps me care better for others."

Maddie works as a Certified Nursing Assistant

continued on page 2

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 University
Herzing University
Lakeland University
Lawrence University
Marian University of Wisconsin
Marquette University
Medical College of Wisconsin
Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design
Milwaukee School of Engineering
Mount Mary University
Ripon College
St. Norbert College
Viterbo University
Wisconsin Lutheran College

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.

Allie Smith

hypothetical and put it into the real world."

In her role at Curt G. Joa, Inc. last fall, she performed a variety of tasks including completing month-end reports and revenue recognition meeting workbooks, working with orders and invoices, and learning a variety of industry software programs.

"I take the burden off some of my coworkers and, with what I do as an intern, I feel like I'm making a difference," Allie says. "I appreciate the faith they're putting in me. I recently got assigned a new project, and I'm the only one doing it."

Allie, a Manitowoc Lutheran High School graduate, toured several colleges and selected Lakeland since it was close to home and her family. She explored accounting thanks to a suggestion from her father.

She's completing a forensic/fraud emphasis as part of her accounting degree. While she's still exploring career paths, she plans to earn certified public accountant credentials. The various work experiences will also help her complete the 150-credit requirement to sit for the CPA exam.

Smith, who is also part of Lakeland's Accounting Club, participated last fall in the Tenth Annual Internship Draft Day at Lambeau Field in Green Bay. She was one of more than 250 students participating in interviews, showcasing their skills, and building professional connections.

Maddie Schendel

(CNA) on the medical and oncology floor at Emplify Health in La Crosse. It is a job that helps pay her way through school and provides her with excellent experience in her chosen field while working in a hospital setting. Many student nurses work as CNAs during college.

"I love the job and everyone I work with," explains Maddie. "I'm going to be hired as an RN on the same floor when I graduate from Viterbo."

In addition to income from her CNA position and occasional nanny gigs, Maddie says, "The Wisconsin Grant and other financial aid is helping make my college education possible. It's definitely a big help," she says. "I greatly appreciate it."

Describing herself as very family-oriented, Maddie enjoys spending time with family and friends, being outdoors, listening to music, working out, and cooking.

She is learning a great deal from her nursing clinical experiences and is applying for summer internships. Maddie also will take advantage of a unique opportunity to do a medical helicopter ride with Emplify in April.

"I'm not sure what kind of nurse I want to be long-term, but I do like the adrenaline rush that comes with being a flight nurse," she said. "Pediatric oncology is another challenge I'm considering."

FACT OF THE MONTH

Wisconsin Grants transform lives: 93,254 grants were awarded to students attending private, nonprofit institutions in the past ten years between 2014 and 2024.

Source: HEAB, Student Aid Expenditure reports, 2014-2015 to 2023-2024.