

ALVERNO COLLEGE
BELLIN COLLEGE
BELOIT COLLEGE
CARDINAL STRITCH UNIVERSITY
CARROLL UNIVERSITY
CARTHAGE COLLEGE
CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
EDGEWOOD COLLEGE
HERZING UNIVERSITY
HOLY FAMILY COLLEGE
LAKELAND UNIVERSITY
LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY



WISCONSIN'S PRIVATE, NONPROFIT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
WORKING TOGETHER FOR EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

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

November 1, 2019

Connie Hutchison, Ph.D., Executive Secretary
Higher Educational Aids Board
4822 Madison Yards Way, Seventh Floor
P.O. Box 7885
Madison, WI 53707-7885

Dear Executive Secretary Hutchison,

As directed by Wisconsin statute, I am sharing my recommendation for the Wisconsin Grants funding formula for low-income Wisconsin students attending private, nonprofit colleges and universities. The Wisconsin Grant is designed to assist Wisconsin's neediest students and allow them the opportunity to choose the institution that is best suited for them. WAICU's mission is "working together for educational opportunity." With that mission, we believe that all Wisconsin students who are academically qualified deserve the opportunity to get a quality education. Wisconsin's workforce also depends on it, by 2020, 62 percent of all jobs will require a postsecondary credential. Unfortunately, we are lagging behind with only 50 percent of Wisconsinites having that credential. The Wisconsin Grants are a targeted way to direct dollars to low-income individuals to gain a postsecondary credential which otherwise would be beyond their reach. The grant helps low-income Wisconsin students persist to graduation and go on to fill critical workforce shortages in today's job market.

WAICU remains committed to the long-held principles that the Wisconsin Grants should contribute a meaningful portion of a student's overall financial aid package; that the students needing the most support receive the greatest share of benefits under the program; and that the total allocation of the Wisconsin Grants appropriation should be distributed equitably among independent and dependent students. Accordingly, for the 2020-21 academic year, I recommend the maximum grant be set at \$3500 and the minimum award continue to be set at \$1000. This change provides a boost to the level of award to students – especially those students with the greatest financial need. I also recommend the "inflation factor" for dependent students stay at 340 percent and at 620 percent for independent students and that the base maintenance be set at \$10,000.

WAICU members do not receive direct operating support from the state as do public institutions. WAICU members do, however, provide over \$500 million annually in privately raised dollars in grants and scholarships directly to students. For every \$1 in state grants, students in the WAICU sector receive \$20 in private or institutional aid. WAICU members are significant contributors to Wisconsin's workforce, educating nearly 56,000 students each year and graduating 25 percent of the state's bachelor's degrees and 35 percent of the state's graduate degrees. The Wisconsin Grants program for low-income student attending a private, nonprofit institution provides a significant return on investment for Wisconsin's economy.

As you know, spending on the grants is very dependent on enrollments and the specific economic needs of the actual applying students. Thus, the projected spending results are a moving target. WAICU and WAICU members work very closely with HEAB staff to ensure all qualified applicants receive a grant and enrollment lists are as up-to-date as possible. The simulation process, using historic data and best estimates, is useful in predicting spending, but can never be exact as to future actual conditions. For these reasons, I reserve the right to again recommend modification in the formula should actual experience with Wisconsin Grants necessitate change.

The development of this formula recommendation is the direct result of the hard work of Sherrie Nelson and Joy Dyer, WAICU staff and WAICU Financial Aid Directors. HEAB staff continue to work tirelessly to promote a positive and constructive working relationship. I know WAICU staff, and WAICU-member financial aid directors appreciate HEAB's responsiveness, professionalism, and dedication.

Should you have questions or concerns regarding this WAICU recommendation, please contact me or Ms. Rebecca Larson, WAICU Senior Vice President for Advocacy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rolf Wegenke', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rolf Wegenke, Ph.D.
President

C: WAICU Presidents
WAICU Financial Aid Directors Group