

Fred Russell-Grantland Rice Scholarship in Sports Journalism, 2023–2024



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Economics

Clemmons, NC

“Thank you so much for your generous gifts that allow me to work towards a career in sports journalism. I truly love every moment of participating in collegiate athletics at Vanderbilt because of this scholarship. My future in the industry would not be possible without you all.”

Where do you live and how does it enhance your Vanderbilt student experience?

I live in Lupton House within the Branscomb Quadrangle. It is the heart of the social scene for Vanderbilt, and I love living here with all my friends for that very reason. Being at the center of campus as a sophomore, a time when it is most crucial to invest your time in making meaningful connections with peers, is such an impactful experience following the first year on Commons.

Tell us about some of the extracurricular or community service activities in which you participate.

On campus, I am actively involved in Vanderbilt Athletics and the Vanderbilt Undergraduate Real Estate Club as well as being a member of the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity. With the athletic department, I work within communications on many sports, specifically doing journalism for the golf teams and lacrosse. Commercial real estate is also one of my passions, so I am an active member of the VUREC club which provides undergraduates with tools and connections to succeed early in the field. ATO coordinates many philanthropic events on campus such as our annual Taus for Paws campaign with the Humane Society.

What has been your favorite course thus far and why was it your favorite? What did you take away from that course?

My favorite course that I have taken at Vanderbilt has been Dante's Divine Comedy. Although I am not an Italian or English major, I enrolled in the course because of the professor's reputation in the field of Dante, and I have always wanted to read the poem. The professor, Dr. William Franke, has made the course, each day blowing me away with incredible analysis of the poem and its connection to my own life in the present. It truly has been a life-changing course.

Which faculty or staff member has made a significant impact on you? How have they influenced your development?

The most impactful staff member at Vanderbilt for me has been the assistant athletic director in charge of communications, Brian Fremund. I have worked closely with him ever since I got to Vanderbilt and took on my position within the athletic department. Brian's charisma and professionalism have been very impactful to me as a young man hoping to succeed in the sports journalism industry. I feel that his maturity has definitely rubbed off on me over the past three semesters, and I look forward to our future together.

A cornerstone of the Vanderbilt community is overcoming challenges through collaborative discovery. Describe a time when you solved a problem or learned something new through collaboration.

Last spring, I had a group project in my organizational development business module that involved improving a company's social standing. The biggest problem that my group ran into was deciding what needed to be fixed within the company. Because of all of our different perspectives and preferences, it was difficult to choose which part of the company needed improvement, and we struggled to qualify each other's ideas as impactful changes for our company's presence within the world. We eventually decided that restructuring the board with more diversity would be the best option for our team. Through this collaborative experience, I learned how to bring a random group together to achieve the task at hand.

What type of Immersion experience are you planning? What led you to choose this project?

I have not fully decided on what my Immersion experience will be, but I have narrowed down my options to either studying abroad or doing an internship. I feel that immersing myself in a foreign country will be very beneficial to me truly understanding myself and will enhance my world knowledge. However, I do not know if I will be willing to spend an entire semester away from the US and athletics. Therefore, I might instead choose to do an internship that will have tangible benefits for my future. I would enjoy doing something within college athletics related to the expansion of name-image-likeness or something involved in conference realignment.