

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



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“Thank you so much for believing in me and supporting me throughout my college journey. I will continue to work to be the best person I can be to live up to the promise of this scholarship. I hope to change someone’s life with kindness in the way that you have changed mine down the line. Thank you!”

### **What advice would you give to an incoming first-year student on how to make the most out of their Vanderbilt experience?**

Vanderbilt stands out in my eyes as a place where each student can pursue success and community in their own way. To make the most of your time here, I would encourage you to be curious and focused. The city of Nashville offers so much and it presents the opportunity for exploration - make sure to take these opportunities while in school! As I look back, listening to live music, watching the Predators play at Bridgestone, going to a Titans game, and eating Nashville hot chicken are all things that I will remember for a long time - being curious about the city, your classmates, your course concepts, and about what you can accomplish will help you generate meaningful experiences. However, with all that the city has to offer, it is also important to stay focused; work can pile up fast and time flies by when living and studying here - make sure you stay focused on leaving after four years as a successful, informed, and educated Vanderbilt graduate. In conclusion, make sure you make time to explore and be curious, but make sure you are still dedicating time to your responsibilities and studies to get the most out of your education here.

### **Describe an experience like an internship, a research assistantship, a leadership position, or study abroad, that helped you grow personally and/or professionally.**

I have been presented with multiple opportunities to get involved in internships and leadership positions since coming to Vanderbilt. One that specifically stands out to me is my experience as the CEO of an on-campus bed rental company called Black Star Rentals (BSR). BSR is a fully student-owned and operated business that provides rental beds to other students on campus. In this role, I have done everything from preparing taxes and generating financial statements to physically moving beds and leading deliveries. It has helped me grow as a professional but has also helped to develop my work ethic and confidence. This also helped me build my resume to be strong enough to get the internships I was applying to over the past few summers.

**How has Opportunity Vanderbilt, the university's initiative to meet the financial needs of every undergraduate through scholarship support, affected your life at Vanderbilt and beyond?**

Opportunity Vanderbilt, and the financial support provided through scholarships, have impacted my life profoundly at Vanderbilt and beyond. It has allowed me the flexibility to invest in my entrepreneurial projects while still having the resources I need to be a successful student. Without this financial support, I would have been much more limited in my experiences and what I have done to develop professionally. This would likely have impacted my ability to get the internships I have been applying to throughout college, seriously altering the path of my life. Without the support that has allowed me to be tenacious and bold in pursuit of professional development, I would be a less capable, less experienced, and less ambitious person.

**What are your plans following graduation, and how did your time at Vanderbilt influence those plans?**

After graduation, I currently plan to move to Los Angeles to work in Real Estate Private Equity. My time at Vanderbilt influenced these plans significantly. In my first semester, I joined Delta Sigma Pi a professional business fraternity. My classmates in this on-campus club would help to familiarize me with what professional financial recruitment looks like while stoking interest in all things business. Additionally, I always felt most interested in the financially focused business minor classes, and I loved talking to professors and diving into the dynamics of investments and debt. Overall, my time here helped me realize what I wanted to do, and how to position myself to do it, and it connected me with peers who helped me grow into a capable person.

**What is the most important thing Vanderbilt taught you? What are you most proud of accomplishing during your time at Vanderbilt?**

The most important thing Vanderbilt taught me was the value of intellectual curiosity and humility. The sheer volume of incredible people that are on this campus is deeply humbling, and finding yourself here is a tremendous opportunity to connect with these peers and grow in an environment characterized by excellence.

**How has your Immersion experience complemented your Vanderbilt education? Was there a specific moment during your experience when you were able to make connections with what you've learned in the classroom?**

My Immersion experience complemented my Vanderbilt education as it put the concepts I was learning in the classroom into action in the real world. I was forced to apply the financial knowledge I learned in the business minor to my projects in my Immersion experience, and applying it like this reinforced my understanding and helped me make valuable connections. Additionally, my Immersion experience exposed me to international finance, political considerations, and research that I was able to use my political science education to navigate. Lastly, my Immersion experience put me in a newer firm that was growing - this allowed me to think about and discuss how organizational improvement and management (from human and organizational development) would apply in various real-world situations. Overall, all elements of my Vanderbilt education proved to be very useful for me in my Immersion experience, and I was using concepts from the classroom on a near-daily basis.