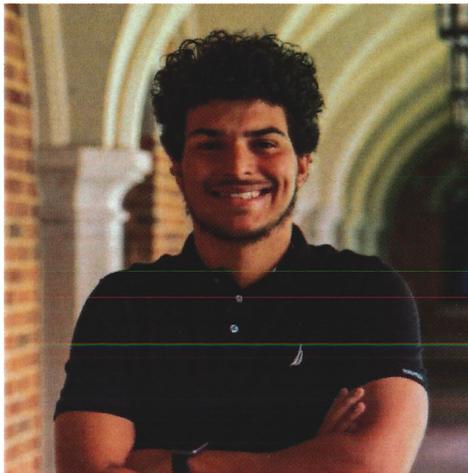


Fred Russell-Grantland Rice Scholarship in Sports Journalism, 2024–2025



David Alexander Hernandez

College of Arts and Science, Class of 2026
Political Science
Bronx, NY

"I am forever grateful for this scholarship and the opportunities that have been brought with it. Because of your generosity, I have been able to flourish as both a student and a person. The experience I've had at Vanderbilt is terrific and your donorship has allowed me to continue that experience."

Tell us about your background (where you're from, interests, family). Why did you choose Vanderbilt, and what influenced your decision?

My name is David Hernandez. I was born and raised in the Bronx in New York City and had the opportunity to come to Vanderbilt because I received a scholarship. However, what helped me ultimately choose Vanderbilt was the opportunity to expose myself to a new culture and a new city while still being at a premier institution. Outside of academics, I play rugby for the Vanderbilt University Rugby Football Club, I'm the lead sports analyst for the *Vanderbilt Hustler*, and I spend a lot of time traveling or exploring with my friends.

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

I currently live in McGill Hall, which is, in my opinion, the best community on campus. It has enhanced my experience as a student by providing me with a concrete support system, lovely people to be around, and frequent events to keep me engaged or to catch a break from student life. Especially in what would be considered a smaller community and a smaller dorm, everyone within the space is extremely friendly and caring, making it feel like an actual home.

How does Vanderbilt's motto, "Dare to Grow," resonate with your educational journey?

"Dare to Grow" represents two things for me. Firstly, it represents taking risks. Secondly, it represents not fearing change. Daring to grow means that you're willing to take the extra step to further yourself and alongside that, you aren't afraid of your path changing because you're simply aiming to grow. For me, as someone who switched into the pre-law lane without considering it initially, the motto of Vanderbilt epitomizes choices like this, where a student is pushing themselves to make a decision that better their overall plan.

What is your major (and minor, if applicable), and what led you to that choice?

I am a political science major with minors in communication studies and legal studies. As a pre-law student, I felt that these fields of study would equip me best and allow me to further develop specific skills that would translate to post-graduate study and a career. On top of that, I took my first political science class in the spring of my freshman year and fell in love with it. Every class in the department is unbelievably interesting, so, I went with it.

Tell us about an experience that stands out to you as one of your favorite examples of what Vanderbilt means to you.

Playing rugby at Vanderbilt has truthfully highlighted everything about Vanderbilt that I love. My teammates and I are comprised of such a diverse, unique group of individuals who still come together to play a sport that most of us never had before college. That experience overall displays not only the seamlessness in which you can find communities at Vanderbilt but also how Vanderbilt brings opportunities you'd never have considered before.

What career path do you want to pursue, and how has your Vanderbilt education prepared you for your future?

I desire to go into law and more specifically criminal law. Vanderbilt has prepared me for this by providing so many different resources for pre-law students to get career advice and law school advice. The development of the legal studies minor has done the most in terms of preparation, as it has linked my undergraduate experience directly with the law school and law professors, amplifying what I can learn even before I apply to law school.

What has this scholarship support empowered you to do that you otherwise wouldn't have been able to do?

In general, this scholarship has empowered me to keep taking advantage of the blessings I've been given. I wouldn't be able to attend Vanderbilt without the amount of support and scholarship I have, and it has allowed me to do things I never believed I would have before I went to college.