

THE  
**Annexstad**  
FAMILY FOUNDATION

24 YEARS OF BUILDING  
LEADERS FOR TOMORROW



2024

# embarking on great adventures

## PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES AND INSPIRATION FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH BOLD ASPIRATIONS

### THE Annexstad FAMILY FOUNDATION

24 YEARS OF BUILDING  
LEADERS FOR TOMORROW

The Annexstad Family Foundation offers more than financial support. We offer friendship, guidance and an extended network for those who have faced challenges in their life head-on and are focused on forging a new path for their future. Investing in the potential of young adults has proven to have a ripple effect – not only on the futures of our Scholars, but also with their families, communities and society. By supporting over 1,400 Scholarships in 24 years, Annexstad Scholars are embarking on exciting adventures and initiating change in a big way.

Since the year 2000, partnering colleges and universities across the country have recognized the potential in our students and have selected them to receive our

Scholarships. Our funds help students meet the full cost of attendance without the need for loans, allowing Scholars to concentrate on their studies and take advantage of leadership opportunities, clubs and organizations that are so important for their college experience. Some of these activities include volunteering in their communities, researching alongside esteemed faculty and studying abroad. The financial freedom allows Scholars to focus on their passions. Following graduation, students pursue careers in healthcare, education, policy work, law and finance.

It is the Foundation's hope that Scholars can make connections and build relationships on campus and beyond. "Like many Annexstad Scholars, Al and I learned at a young age that one can grow from circumstances out of one's control," shares Foundation Co-founder and President **Cathy Annexstad**. "We grew up together and bonded over our shared experience of losing a parent. In search of mentors, we called upon our friends, families, neighbors, colleagues and acquaintances to ask for help and look for advice. Al and I took initiative in our lives to not let our circumstances in losing a parent define us. We owe our successes in all areas of our life to the connections we have made and the relationships we have built. Our perspective completely widened through the mentorship we received." The transformation that takes

place in these Scholars' undergraduate experiences from year one to year four is significant and a deciding factor in what life might look like beyond graduation.

**Khushi Patel**, a recent graduate from Washington University in St. Louis who earned her degrees in Computer Science and Finance shares,

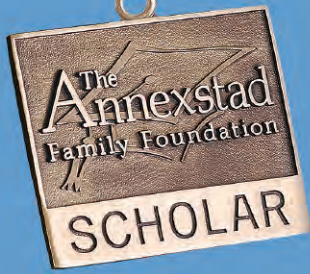


*Khushi Patel*

"Reflecting on my college journey, I have undergone profound growth and development from exploring new academic horizons and engaging in extracurricular activities. I value the life-changing encounters that have genuinely molded me into the person I am today. Each obstacle has presented an opportunity to advance both intellectually and personally, fostering resilience and adaptability within me. Whether it was conquering a challenging course or spearheading a student organization, I gained understanding about the importance of tenacity, collaboration and empathy. Looking ahead to my post-graduation aspirations, I am confident that my undergraduate experience has equipped me with the skills, knowledge and perspective necessary to achieve my goals. My involvement in a variety of extracurricular and academic endeavors has refined my critical thinking skills, developed my leadership qualities and honed a strong sense of social responsibility. Now I am eager to make a significant impact in my career in New York. Thank you for your unwavering support and belief in my potential. I am excited to embark on the next chapter of my journey, armed with the lessons learned and memories cherished during my time as a recipient of your generous Scholarship!" Khushi is currently a Product Asset Management Analyst at JPMorgan Chase in New York City.

"Our Foundation has invested in developing meaningful programs and events for our Scholars and Alumni. This starts by surveying





Scholars to develop our programs and events each academic year," shares Executive Director **Patti Annexstad**. "While surveying our Scholars in Fall 2023, we realized a gap in sharing experience surrounding life after college. In Spring 2024, The Annexstad Family Foundation launched a virtual *Alumni Fireside Discussion Investing in Yourself* series partnering with one of the Foundation's first Alumna, **Shawn Sanford**. This series touched on mentorship, personal finance and addressing the experience of life after graduation for a first-generation college graduate."

In 2024, the Foundation welcomed four new institutional partners to our *Leaders for Tomorrow* Scholarship program: **Claremont McKenna College, University of Wisconsin – Madison, Georgia State University and Holy Cross College**. It is our goal with these partnerships to continue to grow our impact of supporting Scholars across the country and to work with institutions committed to investing in student success.

With the passing of Al Annexstad in the summer of 2023, the Foundation's board and staff are committed to expanding his legacy of providing an opportunity to young people, just as a significant "tap on the shoulder" jump-started his career.

The Foundation continues to present each Annexstad Family Foundation Scholar a medallion to congratulate them on receiving the Scholarship and as a symbol of Al's "tap on the shoulder." It is an acknowledgement that Scholars demonstrate courage and determination to embark on a new chapter in higher education. When the Foundation presents the medallion to Scholars, they take tremendous pride in being recognized and belonging to a larger community.

"None of us takes the medallion lightly. It reaffirms the significant investment for the Scholar to reach the ultimate goal of graduation," shares Cathy.

As an organization, we have embarked on a new chapter, and our Scholars continue to take opportunity and run with it. Our organization is grateful to support these Scholars and walk alongside them as they actualize their potential to the graduation stage and beyond.

| **Cathy Annexstad**, Co-Founder/President  
**Patti Annexstad**, Executive Director



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### board of directors and officers

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# investing in yourself series:

## A GUIDE TO POST-GRADUATION SUCCESS



During meetings in Chicago in November 2023, Annexstad Family Foundation Alumna **Shawn Sanford** sparked an idea with Foundation leadership: hosting a virtual event series to share real and raw insights with Scholars and Alumni on life after college. The series would reveal both its triumphs and challenges. Shawn recognized a gap in receiving advice and insight from her own experience as a new graduate. Insight into finding an apartment, finding a non-predatory car loan and knowing what to look for in a job offer beyond the salary and more. In collaboration with the Foundation, the **Investing in Yourself** series was born. The purpose of the series is to discuss post-graduation topics and to inspire Scholars to invest their time and energy into becoming the best versions of themselves in the future.

Shawn's experience as an Annexstad Alumna is unique in that she paved the way as the first recipient and graduate of the

*Leaders for Tomorrow* scholarship. She graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 2008 with a degree in American and Africana studies. Following her graduation, Shawn pursued a role with AT&T in her hometown of Chicago. Shawn shared in the first virtual event that her first year post-graduation was challenging as a first-generation college graduate with little support as she didn't know what she didn't know. Shawn says, "I wish I had been more forthcoming in asking questions about things like my 401k and investing, but I hope through this event series that I can help students feel like they have the chance to ask those questions."

In the first virtual event, Shawn also discussed her life and journey in her hometown of Chicago beyond that first year at AT&T. From having her daughter, to switching sectors from Telecommunications to Association Management, to the excitement and nervousness of buying

her first home. Shawn took the webinar audience through the ups and downs of her pathway from graduation to 2024.

Shawn's first event focused primarily on personal finance and sharing her own personal experiences as a young adult. A few key takeaways she imparted on the Annexstad Scholar cohort included:

- Credit scores are incredibly important. Don't let anyone influence your credit score by co-signing or allowing them to "use" your credit.
- Live within your means by establishing and sticking to a budget.
- When comparing car loans, look out for predatory lenders – if it seems too good to be true, it probably is!
- Save money for a rainy day, no matter what the forecast looks like. Life will always throw you curveballs.

Shawn concluded the event with a call to action for the cohort to continue to ask for help and to reach out for support.

# investing in your future

**Shawn Sanford** was joined by longtime friend of the Foundation, **Tasha Murdoff** for this seminar. As the Chief Financial Officer of AMA Investments, Tasha has previously presented to Annexstad Scholars and Alumni on personal finance best practices. Tasha is a first-generation college graduate and was able to speak about her experience on how she set herself up for financial success. Here are a few takeaways from Tasha's savvy insights regarding what a first-year college student should know as it relates to their personal finances:

- 1 | Time is on your side... sometimes the hardest thing to do is start.**  
Money is intimidating. It can be challenging to wrap your head around if you don't break it down. One thing Annexstad Scholars and Alumni have on their side is time. The power of compound interest and time allows investments and savings to grow with interest.
- 2 | Save, even \$1...it will set you up for a better financial future.**  
A dollar today could have a different valuation than a dollar tomorrow. Starting small by setting modest financial goals can help you set yourself up for financial success in the future.



- 3 | Face your finances head on, even if it feels intimidating.**  
Finances are not going to go away! Facing your finances head on will help set expectations and alleviate anxiety.
- 4 | Build up your emergency savings; unexpected things happen in life.**  
Things happen in life even when you don't see them coming. It is important to have emergency savings to help navigate unexpected changes. Cars break down, hospital visits occur, hot water heaters run out – having emergency savings will keep a challenge from turning into a crisis.
- 5 | Ensure you have accounts through a financial institution that works best for you.**  
It is highly recommended to have a personal basic checking and basic savings account. Explore a financial institution that works best for you. There are banks and credit unions that may best serve your needs. Ask thorough questions regarding fees and interest rates with your financial institution.
- 6 | Explore high-yield savings accounts.**  
A high-yield savings account might be a smart fit for you. Do your research to ensure you are getting a rate that makes your money work for you.
- 7 | Research your benefits when presented with a job offer, this can help you take advantage of retirement savings.**  
Be sure to look at 401k contribution matches. If offered, these could help increase your retirement savings.

## shawn sanford



**Shawn Sanford**, class of 2008, is the first alumna of the LFT program at the University of Notre Dame. She began her career in telecommunications, where she quickly established herself as an innovative leader. Currently, Shawn is an executive in association management, specializing in membership engagement and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives. Her leadership fosters inclusive environments and enhances member experiences, ensuring diverse voices are heard and valued. Shawn's career reflects her dedication to excellence and her commitment to driving positive change within her field.

## tasha murdoff



**Tasha Murdoff** is Chief Financial Officer of AMA Investments, LLC. With over 29 years of investment experience in private equity, she manages investment strategies in real estate, bonds, equity and philanthropic giving throughout the United States. The first in her family to pursue higher education, Murdoff earned a Master of Business Administration from the University of St. Thomas and a bachelor's degree from Augsburg College in Minneapolis.

# investing in a trusted mentor

In the final installment of the *Investing in Yourself* series, Shawn Sanford was joined by her longtime mentor, **Lauren Robinson**, to discuss the significance of having a trusted mentor. “A mentor is a trusted advisor, someone who is lovingly honest,” **Lauren Robinson** shared. “It’s someone who cares about you enough to share hard truths. In a world where everyone wants to be friends, a true friend is someone who tells you what you need to improve upon.”

Lauren emphasized the importance of integrity in mentorship. “Your mentor needs to have integrity and sincerely want you to succeed. As a mentor, I wanted to give back. I’ve always been involved in tutoring, youth development and mentoring both formally and informally. I wanted to be the mentor I never had and invest in future generations.”

Lauren and Shawn’s relationship began organically 20 years ago and has been mutually beneficial. “It’s bilateral; it’s not just the protégé taking. Both of us are benefiting from it,” Lauren explained. She underscored the beauty of witnessing a mentee’s growth and development, expressing her fortune to be involved in Shawn’s journey.

Beyond academic talents, Lauren highlighted the necessity of social, verbal, written communication and interpersonal skills. “We need a trusted advisor to help us navigate work situations, address challenges or build our careers. A mentor can introduce you to people who can help in various areas.”

Lauren advised seeking mentors who are already experienced in mentoring others and stressed the value of diverse perspectives. “It’s important to get out of our echo chambers and cultivate constructive relationships with people who are different from us.”

She recommended using career center resources, staying connected with professors and leveraging professional networks like The Annexstad Family Foundation Alumni network. On LinkedIn, young professionals should introduce themselves with a sincere note and request a brief meeting to seek advice, not a job.

Lauren’s tips included being respectful of a mentor’s time, preparing questions and following up with a prompt and thoughtful thank-you email. She encouraged mentees to ask for recommendations on people or companies to connect with for growth in their field.

Shawn expressed gratitude for Lauren’s mentorship, highlighting the safe space Lauren created for vulnerability and difficult discussions. “Even when there was conflict, we could disagree and still be okay. The biggest thing is you allowed me to be vulnerable without judgment.”

Lauren found Shawn additional mentors, showing her the importance of having multiple sources of guidance. In turn, Shawn emphasized the value of showing appreciation to mentors, building relationships and understanding the mentor’s “professional love language.”

The mentor-mentee relationship is invaluable for personal and professional growth. A mentor provides honest feedback, introduces new opportunities and supports the mentee’s development. As Shawn and Lauren’s story illustrates, a trusted mentor is an essential guide on the path to success.

## lauren robinson



**Lauren Robinson** is a Senior Assistant General Counsel for the American Medical Association. Lauren provides legal and business advice to senior management and staff. She's experienced in corporate law and governance, corporate transactions, real estate leases, mergers and acquisitions, compliance and ethics. She implements the AMA Code of Conduct, which addresses harassment. Lauren is a graduate of New York University School of Law, the School of Public Service, and Vassar College.



# navigating the job market:

## NETWORK WITH CONFIDENCE

By Jenna Rogers, Founder and CEO of Career Civility



In my Career Civility blog, I have openly discussed my nonlinear career path, the “corprenuer” route I’ve decided to take and my corporate job search process. My perspective and advice stem from extensive job search experience. Recently, I conducted a survey within the Career Civility community and received the following insights:

### why are you currently looking for a job?

- 34% of respondents are unhappy at their current job
- 21% want to level up their career
- 18% have been laid off

### what has been the hardest part of searching for a job?

- 47% find networking the most challenging aspect
- 78% lack confidence in their networking skills
- 75% need communication templates to reach out to recruiters and hiring managers

I didn’t grasp the importance of networking until I pursued my Master of Science in Communication at Northwestern University. There, I learned the value of building a personal network and effective networking communication. The tips I’ve compiled here aim to boost your networking confidence and provide practical templates.

## 5 STEPS TO GAIN NETWORKING CONFIDENCE

### 1 | define your personal brand

A personal brand helps clarify your identity. For guidance, visit [www.CareerCivility.com](http://www.CareerCivility.com) and read the “How To Advance Your Career By Communicating Your Personal Brand” article on the blog.

### 2 | create a professional board of directors

Assemble a group of mentors and advisors who can offer career guidance. This could include business partners, managers, colleagues, friends or industry leaders.

### 3 | start meeting with people

Aim to meet with one person each week, either virtually or in person.

### 4 | come to the conversation prepared

Be curious about their career path, ask specific questions about their job or industry and find ways to offer your help.

### 5 | pay it forward

Always think about how you can assist the other person by asking, “How can I help you?” This approach quickly demonstrates your value in networking interactions.

jenna  
rogers



Born out of the toxic corporate culture, **Jenna Rogers**, the Founder and CEO of Career Civility, is passionate about the people behind the bottom line. Career Civility is a communications consulting firm based in Chicago, IL, serving women in corporate, female business owners and working moms around the U.S. It is Jenna’s mission to make the workplace better for the women who will come after her. She helps her community and her clients communicate more effectively in the workplace, she creates conversation around the toxic culture and experiences of corporate and she specializes in communication training in the workplace.

To connect with Jenna, search @careercivility on Instagram or email [jenna@careercivility.com](mailto:jenna@careercivility.com).





## 8 NETWORKING TEMPLATES

### 1 | building a formal networking connection

Subject: Would you be open to connecting?

*"We have not yet been introduced and I am taking a leap of faith in sending this message.*

*I see we have some parallels in terms of the work we are doing/have done. Specifically related to [mutual connections]. I am looking to learn more about [specific interests] and thought you might be a great resource. In return, I'm here to support you however I can.*

*Would you have time to connect sometime later this month?*

*Appreciate it in advance!"*

Follow up email.

*"Hello [name]. Did you catch my last email? I know work and life are busy. Would next week work to meet? If you don't have time to meet right now, we can reconnect in the fall. All my best,"*

### 2 | recruiter/hiring manager communication

*"Hello [name]. I just applied for [role] that you are hiring for. With my experience in [relevant experience] I'd love to discuss how I could be an asset to your team. If you believe my candidacy warrants a further conversation, please contact me at [info]."*

### 3 | status of your application/interview

*"Hello [name]. I appreciate your time. I'm wondering if you have an update on the next steps or a timeline for the [role] position? I'm wrapping up other interviews but want to prioritize this role. Thank you for the insight!"*

### 4 | active networking conversation

*"I'm curious... how would I be able to help you? My network is your network! I'd be happy to help in any way I can."*

### 5 | paying it forward

*"Hello [name]. I'd like to introduce you to [name]. We were catching up and realized we have mutual connections. I thought you both might benefit from connecting. I'll let you take it from here!"*

### 6 | networking with friends

*"Hello [name]. It's funny how we've been friends for so long and I still have much to learn about the work you do. I'm currently exploring new opportunities. Any chance we could get together and talk about our career paths?"*

### 7 | networking with a colleague

*"Hello [name]. We haven't worked together closely, but I admire your work. Would you be open to connecting to learn more about each other's roles?"*

### 8 | thank you

*"Hello [name]. Before the day gets away from us, thank you for giving me some of your time this week. I really appreciated it and enjoyed [insert takeaway from the conversation]. Thank you so much!"*

Lead with your personality and your own communication style. Follow @careercivility on Instagram for daily updates on ways you can improve your professional communication style. Visit [www.CareerCivility.com](http://www.CareerCivility.com) to build your communication template toolbox!



# leaders for tomorrow partners

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship partnerships with Claremont McKenna College, University of Wisconsin – Madison, Georgia State University and Holy Cross College are perfectly aligned with the Foundation's mission, programming and focus on graduating first-generation, low-income Scholars in four years, debt-free.



Photo courtesy of Claremont McKenna College.

The Annexstad Family Foundation is proud to welcome Claremont McKenna College (CMC) as one of the newest *Leaders for Tomorrow* Scholarship partners. CMC is a top liberal arts institution based in Claremont, CA, with an undergraduate student body of approximately 1,300.

CMC aims to educate and foster growth in students both in and outside of the classroom. Students have access to 11 world-class research institutes with many undergraduates participating in research alongside distinguished professors. The College is committed to student success

through resources such as the Soll Center for Student Opportunity. Students also have access to individualized coaching, skill building, career readiness programs and alumni connections. CMC is a member of the Claremont College consortium as is AFF partner Pomona College.

"We are eager to support our first *Leaders for Tomorrow* cohort at Claremont McKenna College in the 2024-25 academic year," shares **Patti Annexstad**. "The college's spirit and commitment to low-income, first-generation success aligns with the Foundation's mission in allowing Scholars to grow and actualize their potential in and out of the classroom. The community feeling is palpable on CMC's campus, and we look forward to working together with the College's leadership in building out the Scholar cohort at CMC and across the consortium."

We are pleased to support the first cohort of *Leaders for Tomorrow* Scholars at the University of Wisconsin – Madison in the 2024 academic year. The University of Wisconsin is a leading public university based in Madison, WI, the capital city. Guided by the principle of the Wisconsin Idea, UW Madison aims to ensure that education influences students' lives beyond the boundaries of the classroom through public service, collaboration and research. UW Madison has an undergraduate student body of just under 35,000. Out of that student body, nearly one in five reports they are the first in their families to attend college, according to the University's Office of Student Affairs. Through the First-Generation Badgers program announced in 2023, the University aims to enhance coordination between various resources to better serve the first-generation community on campus.

In collaboration with The Annexstad Family Foundation, Office of Financial Aid and



Photo courtesy of the University of Wisconsin – Madison.

Office of Development, two new *Leaders for Tomorrow* Scholars will be awarded this academic year.

"It is an exciting time to partner with the University of Wisconsin – Madison," shares **Elin Wahman**, Director of Strategic Initiatives for The Annexstad Family Foundation. "The University has committed to expanding support for first-generation Scholars to

create community and belonging and to provide students with greater access to resources available on campus. The University shares the Foundation's goal in ensuring students utilize their education outside of the classroom and create impact in their local community and beyond. We are eager to walk alongside the first two UW Scholars from their first year to the graduation stage and beyond."



## GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY

*Photo courtesy of Georgia State University.*

We are delighted to welcome Georgia State University (GSU) in Atlanta to The Annexstad Family Foundation's network of partner institutions. This partnership aligns with our mission to provide first-generation, low-income students with the support they need to graduate in four years, debt-free.

GSU, a national leader in student success initiatives, has demonstrated a strong commitment to closing the achievement

gap and ensuring that all students, regardless of their background, have the resources they need to succeed. **Michael Sanseviro**, Ph.D., GSU's Vice President for Student Engagement, highlights the significance of this partnership:

"Georgia State is a university for all, a place where all students – no matter their background – can succeed. Partners like The Annexstad Family Foundation play an

important role in helping Georgia State deliver on its access mission by enabling us to provide more students with meaningful financial support. Georgia State has eliminated the achievement gap and established itself as a national leader in success initiatives. We've shown that all GSU students can achieve at high levels when barriers to that achievement are removed and students have the resources they need. As a minority-serving institution that educates students who are first-generation or low-income, we deeply value The Annexstad Family Foundation's generous commitment to our mission. It creates opportunities and helps open doors that might otherwise be inaccessible to many of our students. Their generosity gives our students choices and options, as well as access to the kinds of opportunities that unlock their unlimited potential."

We look forward to a fruitful collaboration with Georgia State University, helping to open doors and create opportunities for students to realize their unlimited potential.

The Annexstad Family Foundation is proud to partner with Holy Cross College in South Bend, IN. Founded by the Brothers of the Congregation of Holy Cross in 1966, Holy Cross College is a distinctly Catholic, residential liberal arts college set on a 70-acre wooded campus. Its 500 students hail from over 35 states and 14 countries, with enrollment comprising 60% male, 40% female, 34% students of color, and 24% first-generation students.

Holy Cross College's core curriculum is designed to form students as scholars, citizens, leaders and disciples. Driven by an expert faculty, it offers a rigorous liberal arts education, experiential learning, internships and study abroad opportunities within the Catholic intellectual tradition. As President **Marco Clark** explains, "Holy Cross' distinctive approach enkindles the heart, illumines the mind and guides the journey. We seek to educate and form students as leaders who would lead by



the highest intellectual and ethical standards in business, and their professional and civic lives. Our students will leave Holy Cross empowered to be leaders who transform the world."

Students at Holy Cross prepare for graduate school and meaningful careers while earning traditional bachelor's degrees, accelerated three-year degrees, associate of arts degrees, micro-credentials and specialized certifications. They also have the opportunity to participate in the Gateway Program through a partnership with the University of Notre Dame. Additionally, the college offers guaranteed Pathway Programs to graduate



*Photo courtesy of Holy Cross College.*

school at six affiliated institutions, including the University of Notre Dame, Saint Mary's College and two medical schools.

Through this partnership, The Annexstad Family Foundation and Holy Cross College will continue to support first-generation, low-income students, ensuring they graduate in four years, debt-free, and ready to make a positive impact on the world.



# The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarships

## LEADERS FOR TOMORROW NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The *Leaders for Tomorrow* (LFT) National Scholarship program makes a significant investment in developing future leaders who have exhibited incredible potential. Partner colleges and universities identify and select recipients who have demonstrated aspirations to one day create change and become leaders in their chosen fields.

## MARIE EUSTICE SCHOLARSHIP

The Marie Eustice Scholarship, named after Cathy's mother, is awarded by Minnesota State University, Mankato College of Education to two juniors pursuing the Elementary Education Professional Program and who are focused on becoming teachers.



*Boston College Scholars (l-r): Elif Yigit, Marc LaGrandier, Emma Anane, and Katie Hernandez.*



*University of Notre Dame Scholars (l-r): Marlett Reyes-Serenil and Santiago Hernandez Cortes.*



*(l-r): AFF's Zack Haas and Morgan Marinovich with University of Pennsylvania Scholars Wyatt Rohrer and Sean Hilgendorf.*

## HOPE AND INSPIRATION SCHOLARSHIP

The Hope and Inspiration Scholarship program focuses on supporting Scholars from special communities around the country. Currently the Foundation supports programs at Saint Peter High School in Saint Peter, MN, Kingsford High School in Kingsford, MI, Rabun County High School in Tiger, GA and at College of the Desert in California.

## VETERAN STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

As a veteran, AFF recognized the sacrifices our service men and women make for our country. Each year, AFF funds 25 Veteran Scholarships at College of the Desert in California.



*Santa Clara University Scholars (l-r): Noah Monterroza-Sanchez, Sandra del Torro, Paloma Ochoa and Paulina Salinas.*

# The Annexstad Family Foundation

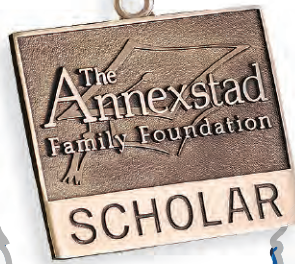
## SUPPORTS SCHOLARS AT 73 PRESTIGIOUS UNIVERSITIES



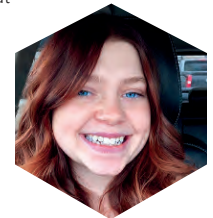
### GREAT SCHOOLS FOR GREAT MINDS

- 1 Auburn University
- 2 Augsburg University
- 3 Bemidji State University
- 4 Bethany Lutheran College
- 5 Bethel University
- 6 Boston College
- 7 Brenau University
- 8 California State University, San Bernardino
- 9 California State University, San Marcos
- 10 Carleton College
- 11 Claremont McKenna College
- 12 Clayton State University
- 13 Clemson University
- 14 Coastal Carolina University
- 15 College of Saint Benedict
- 16 College of the Desert
- 17 Concordia College
- 18 Crown College
- 19 Duke University
- 20 Emory University
- 21 Georgetown University
- 22 Georgia Institute of Technology
- 23 Georgia State University
- 24 Gonzaga University
- 25 Gustavus Adolphus College
- 26 Harvard University
- 27 High Point University
- 28 Hillsdale College
- 29 Holy Cross College
- 30 Indiana University Bloomington
- 31 Michigan Technological University
- 32 Minnesota State University, Mankato
- 33 Minnesota State University, Moorhead
- 34 Mississippi State University
- 35 North Dakota State University
- 36 Northern Michigan University
- 37 Piedmont University
- 38 Pitzer College
- 39 Pomona College
- 40 Saint John's University
- 41 St. Catherine University
- 42 St. Cloud State University
- 43 St. Olaf College
- 44 Santa Clara University
- 45 Southern Methodist University
- 46 Southwest Minnesota State University
- 47 Spelman College
- 48 Stanford University
- 49 Texas Christian University
- 50 University of Alabama
- 51 University of California, Berkeley
- 52 University of Chicago
- 53 University of Colorado, Boulder
- 54 University of Florida
- 55 University of Georgia
- 56 University of Michigan
- 57 University of Minnesota, Duluth
- 58 University of Minnesota, Morris
- 59 University of Minnesota, Rochester
- 60 University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
- 61 University of Mississippi
- 62 University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- 63 University of Notre Dame
- 64 University of Pennsylvania
- 65 University of Redlands
- 66 University of St. Thomas
- 67 University of Wisconsin – Madison
- 68 Valdosta State University
- 69 Vanderbilt University
- 70 Washington University in St. Louis
- 71 Western Carolina University
- 72 Winona State University
- 73 Yale University

# Proudly



The Annexstad Family Foundation recognizes the vast potential for their *Leaders for Tomorrow* Scholars, far exceeding our financial impact.



**ASHLEY WISE**  
Winona State University  
Major: Biochemistry  
Class of 2026

*My focus is to enhance treatment options for mental health disorders and dementia. Currently, I am researching the effects of deep tissue massages on muscle cells, which has confirmed my passion for neuroscience. My ultimate goal is to obtain a Ph.D. in the field.*



**TYLER LE**  
University of Alabama  
Majors: Cyber Security and  
Management Information Systems  
Class of 2025

*The demand for cyber security professionals is on the rise. The AFF Scholarship encouraged me to study my passion and serve as the V.P. of the Culverhouse College of Business Ambassadors, the Executive V.P. of the Interfraternity Council and to work in London for a year. I live by my motto: "Let your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears."*



**ESTEPHANIE LOPEZ MALDONADO**  
Clemson University  
Major: Biomedical Engineering  
Class of 2026

*As part of Clemson's Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, I organize STEM workshops for K-12 Hispanic students. As a PEER and WISE mentor, I guide 20 freshmen in STEM, developing action plans to enhance academic performance and leading General Electric Next Engineers workshops for high school students. I am also involved in the Society of Women Engineers, Catholic Tigers and the CECAS student advisory board with a goal to support girls pursuing STEM careers.*



**ALIYAH MAXWELL-ABRAMS**  
Michigan Technological University  
Major: Civil Engineering  
Class of 2025

*As an engineer, I can be an innovator, environmentalist, activist and mentor. Recently I received the Bob Mark Business Model Pitch Competition award for my entrepreneurial venture and secured a grant from the I-Corps program. My focus is to develop green cities and sustainable infrastructure, advocating for environmentally conscious practices in civil engineering.*

over **\$2M**  
in Scholarships  
awarded in  
2023-2024

**1,440**  
Scholarships  
awarded  
to date

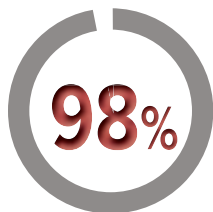
**851**  
Graduates  
through  
2024

**91%**  
retention rate  
for first-year  
Scholars

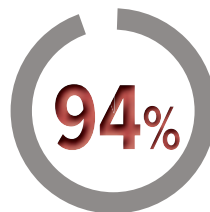
**92%**  
of LFT Scholars  
graduate in  
four years

**121**  
new  
Scholars  
2024-2025

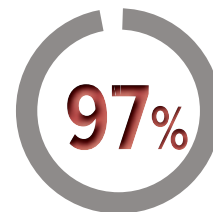
**Mission** | To provide college Scholarships to deserving young people who have “bright minds, big dreams and little means to make those dreams come true.”



of Annexstad Scholars enjoyed on-campus events in academic year 23-24



of Annexstad Scholars are interested in creating on-campus communities



of Annexstad Scholars are interested in virtual webinars

**Vision** | To build an ecosystem of resources and support in partnership with academic institutions to help low-income, first-generation students thrive on and off campus.

5 most popular college majors  
amongst Annexstad Scholars



Biology



Business



Psychology



Computer  
Science



Nursing

# The Annexstad Family Foundation Support Services

The Annexstad Family Foundation provides resources beyond the traditional scholarship model by offering comprehensive support to students. In addition to financial aid, the Foundation ensures that Scholars receive academic resources, personalized wellness support and professional services. This well-rounded approach empowers students during their college years to transition into their careers, fostering a successful journey into adulthood.

## ACADEMIC



### college success seminars

Webinars on study tools, wellness, graduate school preparation and more.

Scholarship dollars allow students to graduate as debt-free as possible.

## PERSONAL & WELLNESS



### personal visits and communication

Onsite visits, texts, calls and care packages.



### on-campus support

Foundation staff work with schools to connect Scholars with the right people on campus.



### scholar guidance

Staff help Scholars navigate the newness of a university setting so they stay on track to graduate.

## PROFESSIONAL



### networking and mentoring

Connecting Scholars with Alumni and industry professionals.



### career development

Industry experts share insights and experiences through Foundation webinars.



**Jenny Aguirre**  
High Point  
University  
Class of 2025

**Ana Gray, Christopher Ward  
and Emily Rodriguez**  
Stanford University Scholars





# Al Annexstad: A Philanthropic Leader's Legacy



*"Armed with world-class educations, our young Scholars have great potential to be extraordinary leaders in our world." – Al Annexstad*

Al Annexstad was an extraordinary person whose strong character, unwavering values and dedication to education left an indelible mark on the lives of many. From his humble beginnings to his rise as Chairman at Federated Insurance, to his devoted partnership with his wife Cathy, Al's life journey was a testament to the power of resiliency, entrepreneurial spirit and philanthropy.

At age five, Al lost his father and worked to support his family. At nine, he struck his first business deal with a store owner, whom Al agreed to pay \$1 a week for a year so he could purchase a bike for his paper route. Al's mother, Alice, provided his first example of integrity, serving others and the power of dedicated work.

Al completed his bachelor's degree at Minnesota State University, Mankato and started as a sales representative with Federated Insurance Companies. His record sales quickly propelled him to president and CEO in 1999 and chairman a year later. Al's strategies transformed Federated Insurance from a regional company into a prominent national organization with thousands of employees operating in 49 states. In 2005, Al was inducted into the Minnesota Business Hall of Fame.

Al attributed his success to his wife Cathy. Together, they founded The Annexstad

Family Foundation in 2000, awarding the first Scholarship to a Gustavus Adolphus College student in honor of Alice Annexstad.

"Annexstad Scholars are a testament to the power of vision and perseverance," said Al. "The essence of leadership is the ability to transform vision into reality. A leader sees a path to a promising future that they themselves first walk before taking the hands of others." The ripple effect of the Annexstad Family Foundation's Scholarship programs allow individuals to become leaders in their chosen fields and to develop communities, families and societies.

In July 2023, Al's journey on this earth came to an end, but his legacy lives on in those he impacted. The Foundation will continue to be a beacon of hope and opportunity for future generations, awarding new Scholarships for years to come. May his legacy inspire us all to dream big, pay it forward and make the world a better place.



Alice Annexstad

Marie Eustice

## INSPIRING MOTHERS LEAVE A LEGACY

**Alice Annexstad** was revered and loved by Gustavus Adolphus College students, faculty and administration not only for her fabulous cooking in the student cafeteria but also for the kindness she exuded toward the community. Inspired by Al's endearing memories and the countless sacrifices that his mother made for her family, in 2000, Al and Cathy established The Annexstad Family Foundation and awarded their first Scholarship in her honor.

The successful partnership with Gustavus has led to more than 30 Scholars and Graduates exhibiting the values inspired by Alice.

**Marie Eustice**, Cathy's mother, was renowned for her work ethic and her ability to prepare her grade-school students for lifelong learning before her untimely death in the late 1950s. In 2012, The Annexstad Family Foundation introduced the Marie Eustice Scholarship in the College of Education at Minnesota State University, Mankato, to support two students who plan to pursue careers in the education sector. We celebrate these Scholars and Graduates:

- 2024** **Fayth Wangongu**
- 2023** **Chloe Millard**  
**Hannah Olson**
- 2022** **Abigayle Marko, Graduate**  
**Nahomi Delgado, Graduate**
- 2021** **Darian Thompson, Graduate**
- 2020** **José Avila, Graduate**  
**Devon Minke, Graduate**
- 2019** **Irene Kim, Graduate**
- 2018** **George Vang, Graduate**
- 2017** **Vannessa Buth, Graduate**
- 2016** **Tierra Jorgensen, Graduate**

# The Goldie Initiative® Establishes New Annexstad Family Foundation Partnership

TO SUPPORT FEMALE GRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY

The **Goldie B. Wolfe Miller Women Leaders in Real Estate Initiative** (The Goldie Initiative®) is excited to announce a new partnership with The Annexstad Family Foundation. This collaboration aims to support two members of The Goldie Initiative's Goldie Scholars program, providing critical financial support for female graduate students pursuing careers in the commercial real estate (CRE) industry.

The Goldie Initiative® is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preparing women for senior leadership roles across all sectors of commercial real estate. By creating a professional community of women with exceptional academic and leadership potential, known as Goldie Scholars, the organization advances its mission to develop future leaders in CRE.

**"The Goldie Initiative® shares in The Annexstad Family Foundation's mission of providing scholarships to individuals who have demonstrated great potential to become leaders in their chosen fields. I had the privilege to meet TGI board member Molly Phelan during an industry event where we quickly realized the shared values of our respective organizations. This partnership is a chance for Goldie Scholars to further expand their networks across the Goldie Initiative® and Annexstad Family Foundation communities. The Annexstad Family Foundation is grateful to support two Goldie Scholars through scholarship and to work alongside The Goldie Initiative® to prepare more women for the C-suite."**

| MORGAN MARINOVICH  
AFF. TREASURER

The core mission of The Goldie Initiative® is to empower women to ascend as leaders in commercial real estate by offering both financial and professional support. Their prestigious leadership program is designed

to cultivate the next generation of female executives in the industry. Utilizing a strategic approach that combines scholarships, mentoring, networking and skills development, The Goldie Initiative® transforms talented women into influential leaders. The program supports women pursuing graduate-level studies in business, law, design or management with a real estate focus. Currently, over 30 Goldie Scholars are studying in real estate-related programs at nearly 20 universities nationwide, and since its inception in 2007, the Initiative has supported nearly 200 female graduate students.

**"The Goldie Initiative® is honored to create this historic partnership agreement with The Annexstad Family Foundation. As our organization grows beyond our Chicago roots and establishes a national presence, partnerships like this one are vital for success. We are most grateful to The Annexstad Family Foundation board and staff for the camaraderie and collaboration in support of the next generation of leaders."**

| MEGAN ABRAHAM  
CEO OF THE GOLDIE INITIATIVE®

The new partnership with The Annexstad Family Foundation will provide scholarship support for up to two Goldie Scholars over the next two years. These specific Goldie Scholars will be identified during the Scholarship selection process and will be eligible to receive additional benefits from The Annexstad Family Foundation, which offers supportive programming on many university campuses. Selected Goldie Scholars will have the opportunity to participate in the Foundation's in-person and virtual programming, becoming part of The Annexstad Family Foundation's extensive community of undergraduate Scholars and Alumni.

Thanks to this generous partnership, the upcoming Goldie Scholar cohorts will benefit from enhanced exposure and additional programming, further strengthening their leadership development.



*Goldie B. Wolfe Miller (second from left), Founder/Chair of The Goldie Initiative® with Annexstad Family Foundation board members Morgan Marinovich (left) and Maggie Marinovich (second from right) as well as Elin Wahman, Director, at a recent event in Chicago.*

# university of georgia

## LEADERS FOR TOMORROW PARTNER

*The Annexstad Family Foundation (AFF) has launched the Leaders for Tomorrow (LFT) Scholar program at universities around the country to support deserving undergraduate students. We would like to spotlight four of our valued partners: University of Georgia, Indiana University, North Dakota State University and Pomona College.*

The Annexstad Family Foundation (AFF) launched the *Leaders for Tomorrow* (LFT) Scholar program at the University of Georgia (UGA) in 2012. Following Al Annexstad's retirement from Federated Insurance, he and Cathy sought to assist students in their new home state. They shared UGA's commitment to educating and providing leadership opportunities for young adults needing financial assistance to achieve their college dreams.

"UGA has been an important partner for our Foundation," shares Cathy. "UGA Scholars are eager to make a difference, with many serving as mentors and community leaders. We are fortunate to have AFF's Regional Program Manager, **Maja Klos-Gromadzka**, a UGA LFT Alumna ('16), who works closely with UGA and their Scholars to build student connections from their first to final semester."

To date, AFF has supported 38 LFT Scholars, including 19 Alumni. Currently, 13 LFT Scholars are enrolled, pursuing studies in Electrical Engineering, Computer Science, Agricultural Business and Social Work. Since Fall 2012, AFF has collaborated with

UGA leadership in development, financial aid and admissions to create a Scholar community and offer holistic support.

Director of Student Financial Aid **Nancy Ferguson** emphasizes UGA's commitment: "Our vision for first-generation and low-income students is to be the best choice for success in their pursuit of higher education in the state of Georgia. Many tailored approaches enable us to retain and graduate these students, lowering barriers and debt loads. Extra support from organizations such as AFF helps relieve financial pressures, ensuring all students have the opportunity to teach, to serve and to inquire into the nature of things."

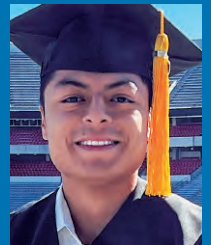
Recent AFF graduate **Hussain Hassan** ('23) earned his degree in Accounting and is completing his master's in Financial Planning and will work at Vanguard in Charlotte, NC. He aspires to become a Certified Financial Planner to empower



*Hussain Hassan*

underserved communities. "I've long harbored a passion for enhancing individuals' grasp of financial literacy," Hussain shares. "During my senior year, I realized that what truly counts are the connections and relationships forged during the journey."

**Nolberto Chastain** graduated with a degree in Computer Science in Fall 2023. Motivated by a middle school visit to UGA, he embraced challenges



*Nolberto Chastain*

and honed his technical skills to study software engineering. "My growth mindset focused on continuous improvement and innovation," he says. Nolberto advises new AFF Scholars: "Don't be afraid of failure; embrace failure head-on. It is a part of our journey towards mastery, offering learning opportunities and often with the most valuable insights. It's better to stumble forward than not to step at all."

*University of Georgia (l-r): Chase Blackwell ('26), Jupiter Neptune ('25), Hussain Hassan ('23), Amber McMahan ('27), Edward Tsui ('24) and Alyssa Huffman ('27).*

# indiana university

## LEADERS FOR TOMORROW PARTNER

The Annexstad Family Foundation (AFF) began the *Leaders for Tomorrow* (LFT) Scholarship at Indiana University (IU) in 2017. AFF partnered with IU and fortified its commitment to offering students opportunities to gain new perspectives and pursue their passions inside and outside the classroom. The LFT Scholarship supports exceptionally bright students from challenging backgrounds who demonstrate great leadership potential in their chosen fields. AFF supports three IU students each year.

### Annexstad Scholar **Andreas Mullendore**

(’26), is pursuing a Biochemistry degree and dreams of becoming a physician. “I’m inspired by my mother who dreamed of working in the medical field, but could not due to her blindness. She’s always been supportive and proud of me,” Andreas says. He is active both academically and as a member of the Indiana Marching Hundred Band. “I’ve met many people and had amazing opportunities I wouldn’t have had without being in the band.”



*Andreas Mullendore*

LFT Scholar **Cassidy Witt** (’25) aims to make a difference in medicine as a Community Health major. “I hope to help people struggling to get the medical help and education they need,” Cassidy shares. “I want everyone to receive equal treatment and opportunities.” As a first-generation college student, Cassidy dreamt of attending IU and has flourished. “I would have been a third-generation farmer. I always knew from a young age that I was going to college.”



*Cassidy Witt*

IU selects LFT Scholarship recipients and collaborates with campus leadership in development, financial aid and admissions to create a Scholar community and provide holistic support. To date, six LFT Scholars have graduated from IU, and nine are currently enrolled, studying fields such as Nursing, Biology, Broadcast Journalism and Neuroscience.

“Student success is a top priority for IU, and that means taking a student-centered approach,” shares **David Johnson**, Vice Provost for Enrollment Management.

“For our first-generation and low-income students, we expand financial resources and provide support through advising, career coaching, internships and study abroad. We are honored to have AFF Scholars as members of the Hoosier Scholars community.”

The AFF Scholar cohort continues to grow, and Cassidy and Andreas offer insights for fellow Scholars. Cassidy advises, “Do not give up when it gets hard. You’d be surprised at what you can do when things are tough. It’s easier to take a small break than to give up on everything you’ve worked so hard for.”

Andreas adds, “Do not be afraid to talk to new people. I was really shy, but I’ve grown. College is hard! Don’t compare yourself to your peers too much. Be proud of what you’ve accomplished and don’t be afraid to share your achievements, no matter how small.”

*AFF Regional Program Manager Zack Haas  
with IU Scholar Eva Guzman.*



PERSON TIDE ACHIEVEMENT  
MATER CULTURE INSPIRED

The Annexstad Family Foundation  
SCHOLAR

The Annexstad Family Foundation  
SCHOLAR

The Annexstad Family Foundation  
SCHOLAR

The Annexstad Family Foundation  
SCHOLAR

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

graduates

# graduates



**AHMED  
ABDULRAHMAN**

**DUKE UNIVERSITY**  
**DEGREE: ENGINEERING**

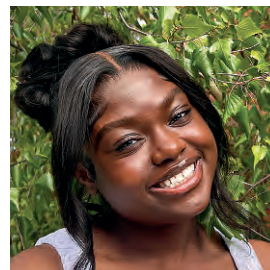
I have fallen in love with engineering, and I hope to pursue further education in the future. My degree has opened up a wide field of amazing opportunities, which I would not have had without my education at Duke. I have made many valuable friendships and had life-changing experiences that were made possible to me through your Scholarship.



**TANIA  
ACEVEDO GARCIA**

**BETHEL UNIVERSITY**  
**DEGREE: SOCIAL WORK**

Every year, I learn more about myself, my capabilities and the kind of person this world needs me to be. I am humbled by all of the generous people who have helped bring about my success. All I am, or could ever hope to be, I owe to those who believed in me. I owe it to myself and all those who have helped push me along the way to live compassionately and strive for the best and most capable version of myself.



**AYOMIDE  
ADESANYA**

**BETHEL UNIVERSITY**  
**DEGREE: SOCIAL WORK**

Since my freshman year, I have grown really well in my understanding of people. Particularly being open-minded to everyone regardless of a difference in opinions. I have come to understand how to remain patient with others and listen well to their intentions. Listening to understand them and not listening to counter against people. In addition, my undergraduate degree in Social Work has given me the perspective of social justice, which inspires my drive to want to work within the system. I hope to dismantle a system that creates barriers for people and replace it with one that benefits all humans and creates equity for all.



**IJAABO  
ALI**

**BOSTON COLLEGE**  
**DEGREE: NURSING**

Since my freshman year, I've grown to be a more outgoing and adventurous person but I have also picked up a passion in rugby, going as far as joining the club team and becoming a part of our Eboard. This extracurricular has taught me that I can truly accomplish great things and excel at anything I put my mind to. It has provided me with the foundation to continue to grow and try new things post-grad.



**LOGAN  
BALFANTZ**

**UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME**  
**DEGREE: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

I am profoundly grateful for the invaluable support your Scholarship has provided over my collegiate experience. Studying business analytics, delving into future-of-work business topics and advocating for inclusivity both in and out of the classroom have laid a robust foundation for my career in business. Your belief in me has been a driving force, and I am deeply appreciative of the opportunities your generosity has afforded me. Thank you for investing in my future and empowering me to pursue my passions.

**DANIEL  
BAPTIST**

**UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME**  
**DEGREE: APPLIED AND COMPUTATIONAL  
MATHEMATICS AND STATISTICS**

I have grown significantly, both personally and academically, since my freshman year. My undergraduate experience not only prepared me with the knowledge I need to be successful post-graduation, but also the confidence and interpersonal skills to do so.



# embarking on great adventures

## destination: SEVILLA, SPAIN

**AVA BROWN**  
COLLEGE OF SAINT BENEDICT  
CLASS OF 2026  
PSYCHOLOGY AND GLOBAL BUSINESS



Ava's journey began with a simple desire to learn Spanish, a language she was determined to master. Driven by this goal, Ava immersed herself in the vibrant Spanish culture, eager to explore not only the language but also the differences in lifestyle.

Ava found herself constantly growing and learning, with each day bringing new discoveries, from mastering slang to adapting to a slower pace of life.

Despite occasional waves of homesickness, Ava avidly recommends for others to seize the opportunity to study abroad. She emphasizes the transformative power of the experience. From forging new friendships to broadening one's perspective, studying abroad offers invaluable lessons and memories that last a lifetime. As Ava reflects on excursions to Granada and Lisbon, Portugal, she encourages fellow Scholars to embrace the adventure and embrace the world with open arms.

## NOOR BEHNAM

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
DEGREE: CHEMICAL ENGINEERING



I am more confident in my identity and have discovered causes that I am passionate about and have dedicated myself to them. I am prepared to venture into new spaces and adapt to find success with others, while staying true to myself. My focus is pursuing an M.D., using everything I have learned to help patients feel comfortable and safe in times of vulnerability. As a Chemical Engineering major, I have learned that failure is a necessary part of growth, and that through collaboration and persistence great challenges can be overcome.

*Cheyenne Moyer*  
Northern Michigan University  
2024 Graduate



## ELIJAH BROWNE

SAINT JOHN'S UNIVERSITY  
DEGREE: EDUCATIONAL MEDIA

Four years ago I would have never imagined I would be an accomplished video producer and writer. I have learned so much about myself and my passions. I am now on the road to becoming an instructional technologist thanks to the wonderful support of AFF and Saint John's University.

## KEVIN BUI

CARLETON COLLEGE  
DEGREE: MATHEMATICS

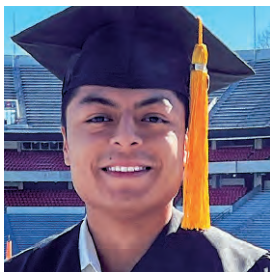
I'm deeply grateful for the transformative opportunity your Scholarship provided over the past five years. Despite the challenges of Covid, I entered college in 2019 and took a gap year, which led to securing a job offer post-graduation. Your support has been instrumental in my personal growth and academic success. I'm confident that my education and diverse experiences will propel me toward success in my field. Thank you for believing in me and investing in my future.



*North Dakota State University  
Scholars **Maya Hanson** and  
**Tanner Verbitsky** with  
President **David Cook**.*



# graduates



**NOLBERTO  
CHASTAIN**

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
DEGREE: COMPUTER SCIENCE

Embracing challenges head-on has strengthened my perseverance and determination, while sharpening my technical skills and fostering a growth mindset. Your belief in my potential has fueled my creativity and expanded my perception of what is achievable. My growth has broadened my creativity and expanded my perception of what's possible.



**JOHN  
CHOE**

YALE UNIVERSITY  
DEGREES: ECONOMICS; POLITICAL SCIENCE

As a first-generation college student, I felt overwhelmed by my talented peers and countless opportunities. However, my journey here has been transformative. Beyond academics, Yale provided a platform for personal and professional growth. Through classes and extracurriculars, I honed communication, teamwork and critical thinking skills. As I prepare to graduate and enter management consulting, I realize how integral my Yale experience has been. It has instilled confidence and equipped me with a versatile skill set to tackle challenges and make a positive impact in my career.



**SALLIE  
DARBY**

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY  
DEGREE: PSYCHOLOGY

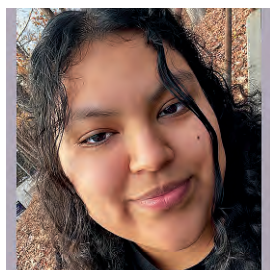
Since stepping foot on campus during my freshman year, I've embarked on a journey of profound self-discovery through deep introspection and reflection. This heightened self-awareness is invaluable as I navigate toward my post-graduation aspirations, particularly in my envisioned career path as a counselor. Understanding myself on a deeper level equips me with the empathy, insight and authenticity necessary to support and guide others effectively. As I embark on my career, I am grateful for the personal growth and clarity that will undoubtedly enhance my professional endeavors.



**JACI  
DAVIS**

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
DEGREE: FINE ARTS

When I first started college, I was very shy and not very social. However, my undergraduate experience taught me important social skills and how to make connections, which have already started to help me with my career as an artist.

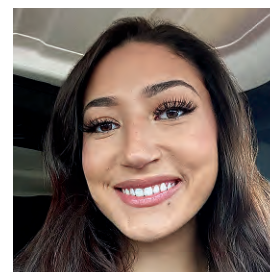


Starting my undergraduate journey felt overwhelming, especially as the first in my family to pursue higher education. However, over the past four years, I've grown immensely. I've become more confident, adaptable and open-minded, ready to take on any challenge. My undergraduate experience has equipped me with the skills and resilience needed to pursue my post-graduation goals with determination and passion.

**DULCE  
DE LA CRUZ** EMORY UNIVERSITY  
DEGREE: LANGUAGE STUDIES

**SANDRA  
DEL TORO** SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY  
DEGREE: NEUROSCIENCE

Santa Clara has given me an incredible opportunity to be passionate about my future career. I look at the world with a lot of questions. I don't think I would have appreciated my educational experience as much had it not been for the holistic approach to Jesuit education. Santa Clara drilled the importance of being men and women for and with others and approaching life with a generous mindset.





# destination: TAIPEI, TAIWAN

**ELSI MUÑOZ-RAMOS**  
UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI  
CLASS OF 2024  
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AND CHINESE



As a first-generation and low-income student, **Elsi** believed that studying abroad was beyond her reach. She soon discovered that perseverance and scholarships made international education a reality.

Elsi chose the CET Taiwan program due to National Taiwan University's intensive language program and internship elective. Immersed in Taiwan's rich culture and history, she honed her Mandarin, developed confidence and forged meaningful connections with fellow students.

Despite the initial challenges of living abroad, Elsi's determination propelled her toward solo travels and forming deep friendships with local students, and her journey was marked by moments of self-discovery and empowerment.

Upon returning home, Elsi found that her study abroad experience equipped her to serve as an interpreter for Chinese families at Oxford Elementary School and within her own community in Mississippi. Her newfound capability allowed her to make a positive impact on others, reinforcing her belief in the importance of cultural exchange.

Through Elsi's experiences, she has learned that the rewards of stepping outside one's comfort zone are immeasurable, leaving a lasting mark on personal and professional growth.

*Quincy Garrow, Franziska White, Haylee Pattersen and Kaamaakshi Ati*  
*University of Michigan*



## NAHOMI DELGADO

**MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO**  
**DEGREE: ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**

College has been a transformative experience, revealing insights into my identity and propelling me beyond my comfort zone to evolve both personally and professionally as an educator. Throughout my undergraduate years, I've honed my work ethic, goal-setting abilities and commitment to delivering exceptional learning experiences for my students. These invaluable lessons will undoubtedly shape my approach to education beyond graduation, empowering me to continue striving for excellence and fostering growth in myself and others.



## DAVID DILLARD

**UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA**  
**DEGREE: COMPUTER SCIENCE**

I've undergone significant personal growth. My most notable transformation has been in my social confidence. While I was once shy and withdrawn in high school, participating in Annexstad events and other campus clubs has helped me break out of my shell. Additionally, the university's various opportunities, such as the co-op program, have been instrumental in securing a job post-graduation. I'm especially grateful for the chance to gain valuable work experience through the co-op program before completing my degree.



## AMY DO

**UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME**  
**DEGREE: FINANCE**

For me, The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship was the first assurance that I had support and encouragement outside of my family at college. I cannot thank you enough.



## KATE DONOHUE

**UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME**  
**DEGREE: LANGUAGE STUDIES**

As a Language Studies major, my academic pursuits have reshaped my goals and interactions, both with my studies and with others. I've embraced a newfound willingness to take risks and venture into uncharted territories, allowing my efforts to guide me toward unexpected paths of growth and discovery. This journey has not only transformed my academic trajectory but has also fostered a deeper understanding and appreciation of myself and my capabilities.

# graduates



**ANTONIO  
DUMNICH**

HILLSDALE COLLEGE  
DEGREE: POLITICS

My faith journey has been profound, revealing insights into myself and my purpose. Through education, I've grown as a writer, thinker and individual, humbled by the vastness of God's glory. My studies have instilled a deep love for our Lord, guiding me to prioritize knowing and loving Him above all else. Additionally, I've developed a refined intellect, a strong work ethic and a profound appreciation for humanity's achievements. Ultimately, my journey has led me to embrace the true, the good and the beautiful, all manifestations of God's grace.



**SHAKER  
ERBINI**

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
DEGREE: NEUROSCIENCE AND BEHAVIOR

Since freshman year, I've evolved, deepening my understanding of my Muslim faith. My undergraduate journey has equipped me with crucial skills for achieving my post-graduation goals, particularly in medical school. Balancing academic demands, self-care and social life has been a significant challenge, refining my ability to prioritize effectively. This skill set will undoubtedly serve me well as I navigate the rigors of medical school and beyond.



**ABIGAIL  
FALKOWSKI**

COLLEGE OF THE DESERT  
DEGREE: POLITICAL SCIENCE

I'm delighted by the person I've become. I've gained confidence and clarity regarding my life goals, evolving into someone my younger self would admire. My undergraduate experience has cultivated qualities like perseverance, leadership and courage, essential for my future endeavors. These attributes will undoubtedly support me as I pursue my career and further education, shaping me into a capable and resilient individual prepared for the challenges ahead.



**BRIANNA  
FRAGOSO**

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY  
DEGREE: PSYCHOLOGY

Thank you for your profound generosity. Since my first year at WCU, I've grown more confident in what I want out of life and my career goals. I am far more comfortable with the unknown, which is just the first step on the path to knowing more.

**GISELLE  
GAMBOA**

UNIVERSITY OF REDLANDS  
DEGREE: LIBERAL STUDIES

I came into my undergrad years excited about so many things, yet unsure of where life would take me. College taught me that an unceasing willingness to learn and to work hard to master a new concept is one of the greatest skills a person can have. And I carry this skill that I've cultivated with me as I enter the workforce and prepare to learn new things on the job.



**JONATHAN  
GARCIA CORTEZ**

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL  
DEGREE: POLITICAL SCIENCE

Your Foundation has provided me with more than just a Scholarship; you have given me a chance to change my life. For this I am eternally grateful. Because of your Scholarship, I have opportunities that I never before dreamed of, and I am going to make the most of them!



# destination: SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL

**DULCE DE LA CRUZ**  
EMORY UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2024  
LANGUAGE STUDIES



Studying abroad was crucial to **Dulce's** undergraduate experience as it allowed her to fully immerse in a culture where Portuguese is the primary language, solidifying her textbook knowledge through real-world application. "Emory offers a summer program in Brazil every other summer, and I have aimed to participate since freshman year," she says. "Living in Brazil expanded my worldview, making me more self-aware and curious about other cultures. My favorite excursion was visiting the Landless Workers' Movement Camp which was enlightening and emphasized the movement's significance in South America. My experience taught me about social justice issues and the resilience of communities fighting for their rights."

"For those considering studying abroad, I encourage you to do it if your schedule allows. Don't let financial worries hold you back – numerous scholarships are available to support you! Studying abroad can be a transformative experience, providing not only academic and linguistic benefits but also personal growth and a deeper understanding of the world. It's an opportunity you won't regret taking."

## ROBERTO GARCIA-URISTA

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
DEGREE: MECHANICAL ENGINEERING



I am extremely grateful to The Annexstad Family Foundation because they not only gave me financial support for my education but also the security and stability so I could focus on excelling in my courses.

*Jose Izaguirre,  
Austin Wheeler,  
and Elijah Robuck  
Emory University*



## STEVEN GLIDEWELL

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA  
DEGREE: PSYCHOLOGY

I have changed quite a lot, garnering a deeper appreciation for connections with students, alumni and individuals across various fields. Learning the importance of giving back to the community was significant. Through my experience, I've made connections with physicians and upcoming medical students, which I believe will aid me in my journey through medical school and into the profession.



## MARK GONZALEZ

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY  
DEGREES: DATA SCIENCE; COMPUTER SCIENCE

Since arriving at UC Berkeley as an excited freshman with a head full of big ideas and goals, I have become a graduating senior who has turned the big ideas into concrete actionable steps towards achieving my hopes and dreams. I have become much more grounded in my ability and my future steps while maintaining hope for the future.



## RAMSAY GOYAL

YALE UNIVERSITY  
DEGREE: URBAN STUDIES

During college, I evolved into a multifaceted leader and community member. My Yale experience has been a journey of growth, where I've learned as much outside the classroom as within. I've honed skills as an empathetic mentor, reflective leader and advocate for urban equity. Collaborating with diverse groups and navigating varied interests and strengths has prepared me for post-graduation pursuits, which center on team-based projects in areas of varying familiarity. These experiences have equipped me to thrive in dynamic environments and contribute meaningfully to future endeavors.

# graduates



**LEYLA  
HAGEN**

**GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY**  
**DEGREE: GLOBAL AFFAIRS**

Despite our freshman year being on Zoom at home, my three years on campus have been invaluable in preparing me for the professional world, especially as a low-income student. The education I've received at Georgetown has been instrumental in shaping my post-graduation goals. While I'm still seeking funds for graduate school, I'm confident that my undergraduate degree will serve as a solid foundation to kickstart my full-time career.



**HUSSAIN  
HASSAN**

**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**  
**DEGREE: ACCOUNTING**

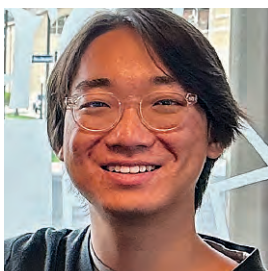
In my senior year, I underwent substantial personal growth through introspection, realizing the profound significance of the connections and relationships formed along the journey. This newfound understanding has enriched my perspective, highlighting the importance of meaningful human connections in life's unfolding narrative.



**SEAN  
HILGENDORF**

**UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA**  
**DEGREE: BIOCHEMISTRY**

While earning my degree, I have had the freedom to embark in extracurricular activities. I also assumed high-commitment roles, honing my leadership skills and learning to weigh the impact of decisions. Collaborating with diverse individuals exposed me to varying leadership styles, fostering adaptability. Initially hesitant about social involvement, I now cherish the clubs I joined. These experiences have primed me for medical school, where I anticipate thriving in team-based settings. I'm eager to contribute to my medical community, having mastered the balance between academic rigor and personal fulfillment.



**JOHN  
IN**

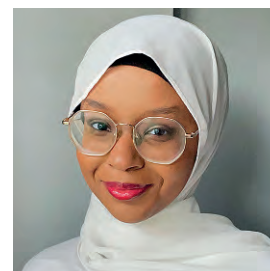
**UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME**  
**DEGREE: BUSINESS ANALYTICS**

It was a blessing when I found out that I had received your Scholarship. You have made it possible for me to pursue my career and have a successful future. I am forever grateful.

**RAHMA  
JAMAC**

**UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, TWIN CITIES**  
**DEGREE: BIOCHEMISTRY**

I am utilizing my education to work in the field of biochemistry. The University of Minnesota has equipped me for my future. Your generosity has made it possible for me to attend college, and it has been a huge blessing to receive your Scholarship. Thank you for everything!



**JADA  
KELLY**

**UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI**  
**DEGREE: PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES**

Since my freshman year of college, I've grown significantly in knowledge, responsibility and maturity. My undergraduate experience greatly contributed to my acceptance into pharmacy school, where I eagerly anticipate enhancing my skills. Now I'm focused on achieving my post-graduation goal: earning my Pharm.D. to pursue a career as a pharmacist.

# destination: LONDON, ENGLAND

**ETHAN JONES**

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
CLASS OF 2026  
MARKETING AND FILM, TELEVISION  
AND THEATRE



Studying abroad was a pivotal chapter in **Ethan's** life, offering him a gateway to personal and academic growth. Embracing new cultures and traditions, he discovered a newfound resilience to navigate through life's challenges.

Choosing his study abroad program in London through the University of Notre Dame's website, Ethan embarked on a journey of self-discovery. He learned to trust his abilities, becoming more self-assertive and independent. Overcoming past struggles with anxiety and imposter syndrome, Ethan emerged from the experience with heightened confidence and self-assurance.

Among his many adventures abroad, one excursion stood out: a trip to Paris. Beholding iconic landmarks and indulging in culinary delights reinforced his belief that nothing is beyond reach with determination and perseverance.

Ethan shares, "Studying abroad offers this imperative exposure because it immerses you in different cultures and traditions, which in turn causes you to grow and better understand yourself and, quite frankly, humanity as a whole."

*Dani Hoepfner, Ashley Wise,  
Tatiana Butt and Jaclyn Walsh*  
Winona State University



**FELIXANDER  
KERY**

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
DEGREE: COMPUTER SCIENCE

I am much more confident in my abilities and have learned the usefulness of being able to talk to people and make connections. Undergrad set me up with a strong network of alumni and soft skills so that I will be able to quickly move up in the field and has given me the confidence in myself that I am able to learn whatever I need to be successful.

**ERIC  
KIM**

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
DEGREE: FINANCE

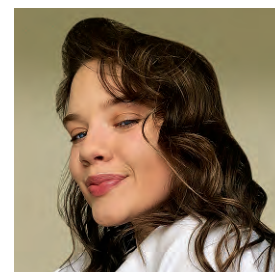
I've changed a lot since my first year on campus. For one, I've mellowed out a lot, but at the same time, I've also learned to embrace my identity and not be shy about who I am. Without my undergraduate experience, I would never have been able to follow my dreams, as Notre Dame really made sure that I succeeded.



**MAKAYLA  
LENDE**

WINONA STATE UNIVERSITY  
DEGREE: COMMUNITY HEALTH

In a life full of unknowns, receiving your Scholarship and graduating from Winona State University has been one of my life's highlights. You have lifted financial burdens and given me the opportunity to learn how best to take care of people and become actively involved in my community.



**WESLEY  
LOCKHART**

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA  
DEGREE: COMPUTER SCIENCE

Your Scholarship took away an overwhelming financial burden in my life. I am extremely thankful for this, but even more thrilled and excited about the one-on-one support and connections that have come from others associated with this Scholarship, including representative staff members and other students.

# graduates



## YENO LOKOSANG

**NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**DEGREE: CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Since my first year on campus, I have become a much better student, applying myself and committing to my goals. North Dakota State University has properly prepared me for my ventures after graduation. I've learned many applicable skills during my education and work experience.



## DYLAN LONG

**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**  
**DEGREE: POLITICAL SCIENCE**

The Annexstad Family Foundation has made it possible for me to receive a high-quality education while also relieving me of the stress I would otherwise feel regarding the price of my education. I cannot thank you enough for investing and believing in me and my potential to be great. Hopefully, I can inspire and support someone the way you have done for me.



## BRANDON LOPEZ

**DUKE UNIVERSITY**  
**DEGREE: COMPUTER SCIENCE**

I have evolved to embrace my identity and feel confident about my future. Initially, uncertainty loomed, with doubts about the payoff of my efforts and fear of potential setbacks. However, as my journey unfolded, I realized that uncertainty need not dictate my path. I began acknowledging my achievements and resilience, fostering a resilient mindset. My undergraduate experience taught me the importance of social connections and self-reliance, nurturing valuable friendships and broadening my perspective. I now feel equipped to face any challenge with confidence and adaptability.



## SHIRLEY LOPEZ DE LEON

**WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS**  
**DEGREE: BIOLOGY**

I am filled with excitement and pride for my journey at WashU. Despite numerous challenges, I've grown immensely, gaining confidence, finding my voice and accumulating valuable experiences. My undergraduate education has prepared me for the academic rigor of my post-graduate aspirations, particularly in medical school. With extensive research experience, I feel ready to contribute to groundbreaking work at the NIH. I'm deeply grateful to the Foundation for their unwavering support and encouragement throughout my academic endeavors.



## HAK LUONG

**PITZER COLLEGE**  
**DEGREE: MATHEMATICAL ECONOMICS**

The Annexstad Family Foundation provided me with a chance to earn a better life. When I thought all the doors were shut, a window leading to higher education and infinitely more opportunities opened, guiding me to a much brighter future. Thank you!



## DANNY LUSTER, JR.

**UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA**  
**DEGREE: COMMERCE AND BUSINESS**  
**ADMINISTRATION**

Nothing is impossible because the word itself is the phrase "I'm possible." Thank you to The Annexstad Family Foundation for your support during my time at the University of Alabama.

# destination: SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA

**DESTINY KIRKSEY**  
UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI  
CLASS OF 2026  
BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE



The allure of exploring a country with a rich history captivated **Destiny**, igniting a desire to delve deeper into the cultural tapestry of Costa Rica.

Guided by her Grove Scholar advisor at Ole Miss, who recognized the transformative potential of international education, Destiny seized the opportunity to broaden her horizons.

Destiny embraced a curriculum centered around projects and research. She honed her public speaking skills, mastering the art of presenting to a global audience with confidence and clarity.

Destiny's favorite excursion was a journey to witness the majestic volcanoes of La Fortuna. Surrounded by breathtaking landscapes and the rush of cascading waterfalls, she found inspiration in its natural wonders.

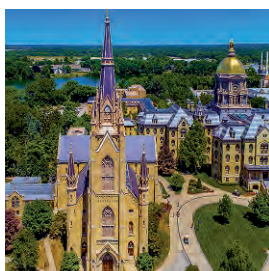
Despite initial apprehensions, Destiny discovered a world of possibilities and embraced the joy of exploration. She was initially nervous about going away for a month but quickly realized how much fun she was having. It opened her eyes to new ideas and opportunities outside the U.S.

*Paloma Ochoa, Sandra Del Torro  
and Paulina Salinas*  
Santa Clara University



**GRACE LYNN** UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, TWIN CITIES  
DEGREE: PSYCHOLOGY

My college experience has allowed me to grow in ways I never expected. I have become more confident in my opinions and beliefs, but most importantly, I learned not to be afraid to take up space.



**CLAIRE LYONS**  
UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
DEGREES: POLITICAL SCIENCE AND ENGLISH

You have been integral to my ability to pursue Political Science and English. I have grown confident in my abilities and desires for the future over the course of my college career. I hope to support people who are going through my same journey by way of personal and career mentorship.



**FIDAN MALIKOVA**  
MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY  
DEGREE: CHEMICAL ENGINEERING

In the past several years, I've become increasingly engaged in extracurricular activities, actively contributing to campus life. Moreover, I've prioritized nurturing meaningful relationships, recognizing their importance in both personal and professional spheres. As I look toward post-graduation goals, I'm confident that these connections and diverse experiences will be instrumental. Building strong relationships fosters collaboration and support, while engaging in a variety of activities promotes holistic well-being and enriches life beyond academics or work.



**ABIGAYLE MARKO** MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO  
DEGREE: ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

At school, I have become far more independent and confident in my abilities and have faced challenges with a positive outlook. College has helped prepare me to be an educator by giving me opportunities to be in classrooms where I was able to be surrounded by encouraging mentors. I was also able to spend time teaching lessons to gain confidence as an educator as I progressed through my program.

# graduates



**JASMIN  
MEDINA MARTINEZ**

**UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA**  
**DEGREE: NURSING**

I arrived at the University of Pennsylvania an introvert, but college gave me the opportunity to break out of my social shell. I would not be the person that I am today if it wasn't for all of the professors, friends, family and your Foundation who helped me get where I am now.



**LANCE  
MINOR**

**TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**  
**DEGREES: JOURNALISM AND SOCIOLOGY**

Thanks to The Annexstad Family Foundation, I am pleased to acknowledge that while I have undergone changes, I have also retained essential aspects of myself. My undergraduate journey has equipped me with valuable skills to navigate interactions with others.



**ANGELINE  
MORGAN**

**UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI**  
**DEGREE: FINE ARTS**

During college, my confidence in my creative skills and my passion for non-profit work have grown immensely. Within my cohort and department, I have had the resources to undertake creative, collaborative projects that have prepared me for my upcoming career and community service.



**CHEYENNE  
MOYER**

**NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY**  
**DEGREE: NURSING**

Since my first year of college, I feel as if I have drastically grown into a young adult and matured. I feel more responsible and have a different outlook on the world. After going through nursing school, I now feel ready to enter the medical field and I am ready to help make a difference in other people's lives. As a new graduate nurse, I want to make an impact on the patients I see and care for them to the best of my ability.



**PEYTON  
MUELLER**

**UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME**  
**DEGREE: SCIENCE-BUSINESS**

I have undergone significant changes in numerous ways during my time at Notre Dame. I have grown as a person by learning from others and their experiences, fostering humility in my interactions. Additionally, I have acquired the ability to forge lasting connections with friends, peers and colleagues. Importantly, I have learned the value of seeking assistance, recognizing it as a crucial avenue for learning and personal growth. These skills will undoubtedly contribute to my aspirations of one day establishing my own dental practice, shaping me into a well-rounded and personable dentist committed to delivering exceptional patient care.

**ELSI  
MUÑOZ-RAMOS**

**UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI**  
**DEGREE: GLOBAL AFFAIRS**

As a first-generation Mexican-American student, my initial year, amidst Covid, was filled with new experiences. I embraced curiosity, unafraid to ask questions and eager to forge new connections.

As regulations eased, I found solace in international friendships, sustaining me during tough times. Thanks to generous scholarships, I studied abroad in Taipei during my junior year, enhancing my Chinese language skills and immersing in Taiwanese culture. As I conclude my thesis on Chinese Foreign Direct Investment in Mexico and navigate post-graduation prospects, I carry lessons of perseverance, responsibility and optimism. Uncertain yet hopeful, I look forward to the adventures ahead.





# destination: LONDON, ENGLAND

**SHIV PATEL**  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
AT CHAPEL HILL  
CLASS OF 2026  
PSYCHOLOGY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
AND FAMILY SCIENCE



For **Shiv**, studying abroad wasn't just about fulfilling academic requirements – he eagerly pursued a program tailored to Psychology majors, allowing him to delve into unique courses including the Psychology of Music.

Having never ventured outside the U.S. before, his time in London proved to be a profound expansion of his worldview. From exploring iconic landmarks to enjoying favorite meals at Covent Garden with newfound friends, every moment became a cherished memory.

Shiv encourages others to seize the opportunity to study abroad, regardless of financial concerns. He emphasizes the abundance of scholarships available, including the Gilman Scholarship, which can provide invaluable financial support. Shiv adds, “I never knew what was out there waiting for me, but what’s out there is something amazing. What’s out there is a chance to experience something different, unlike anything you’ve ever experienced before.”

*Lynn Poland, Emogene Cook  
and Kendell Osabu-kle*  
Texas Christian University



## LUCKY NGUYEN

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, TWIN CITIES  
DEGREE: COMMUNICATIONS



As I am originally from Vietnam, college presented a pivotal opportunity for real-world experience, unprecedented in my family tree. As a freshman, I was scared, lacking confidence and a sense of self, uncertain about my future. However, over four years of undergrad, I've studied abroad, lived independently, traveled solo to different states and worked internships and part-time jobs. These experiences have bolstered my confidence significantly. They've instilled in me the courage and foundational identity needed to pursue my biggest dreams of working abroad.

## ALLY NOHMY

BOSTON COLLEGE  
DEGREE: BIOCHEMISTRY

Beginning college amidst Covid posed challenges. Learning discipline amidst virtual classes from the comfort of my bed and navigating limited social circles tested me. Yet the greatest lesson learned was time management. Balancing academics, service, clubs and friendships became my forte. These past four years have been transformative, and I eagerly anticipate what the future holds.



## KHUSHI PATEL

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS  
DEGREES: COMPUTER SCIENCE; FINANCE

I've undergone profound growth by exploring new academic avenues. Each obstacle offered an opportunity for intellectual and personal advancement, fostering resilience and adaptability. From conquering challenging courses to leading student organizations, I've learned the importance of tenacity, collaboration and empathy. College has equipped me with the skills and perspective needed to succeed, honing my critical thinking, leadership and social responsibility. Thank you for your unwavering support.



## DANNERYS PERALTA ORTIZ

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
DEGREES: GLOBAL STUDIES; LINGUISTICS

You have provided me with more financial support than I could have hoped for and allowed me to make higher education possible. I have ambitious goals in the world of global studies and linguistics. My perspectives and ideas have broadened at the University of Chicago, and a new craving for knowledge has been born.

# graduates



## BELLA PETTENGILL

POMONA COLLEGE  
DEGREES: COGNITIVE SCIENCE AND ART

I have developed a dedicated studio and research practice in painting, which has culminated into a final body of work and exhibition. This marks an initial emergence as I continue to make work and engage with the arts. As a first-generation student, I am immensely grateful for the opportunities I have been given during undergraduate school, and I cherish my education for the dimensionality and skills it has provided me.



## KIANA PITSCH

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE  
DEGREE: POLITICAL STUDIES

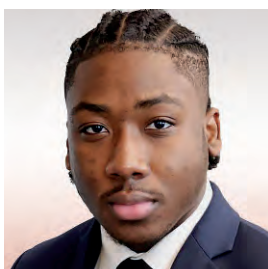
In college I've experienced significant personal and professional growth. My liberal arts education, coupled with robust support systems, has been instrumental in cultivating the interpersonal and critical thinking skills essential for success in my future legal education and career. Through academic challenges and extracurricular experiences, I've developed a deep understanding of diverse perspectives and refined my ability to analyze complex issues. I'm confident that these skills will serve as a strong foundation as I pursue further education and embark on my legal career.



## ASHIYA PROWELL

UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS  
DEGREE: MARKETING

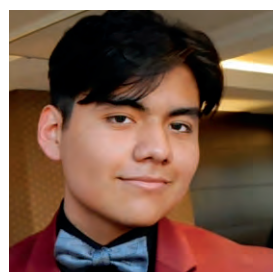
My skills have flourished, particularly in relationship management, communication and public speaking. Above all, I've learned the art of effective teamwork, becoming an invaluable asset to my teams. I grasp team dynamics and management intricacies, enhancing my performance both academically and professionally. As graduation approaches, I've actively sought mentorship from professors, St. Thomas alumni and peers. My time here has underscored the value of seeking insights from others, fostering quality connections. I envision future reunions, where we can engage in mutually beneficial interactions beyond campus.



## ELIE RATHON

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
DEGREE: ECONOMICS

It is the Annexstad family who has lifted an extreme economic burden from my family's shoulders and given me a chance to attend college. Thank you for supporting my dreams.



## MARTIN RIOS DE LA ROSA

UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS  
DEGREE: MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

My journey from my first year on campus to now has been transformative. Initially, I was unsure about my path, but, over time, I have gained confidence and competence. Through the challenges I have faced, I have learned the importance of resilience, adaptability and seeking support when needed. My undergraduate experience has provided me with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills that are relevant to my career. I feel well-prepared to face the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead after graduation.

## JORDAN ROBBINS

HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
DEGREE: NEUROBIOLOGY

While my passion for biology and languages has remained steadfast throughout my time on campus, I've discovered invaluable resources to further my aspirations. Upon graduation, I'll pursue a dual MD-Ph.D. degree, aiming to merge scientific interests in cerebrovascular disease with clinical passions in neurology and related fields like neuropathology, neuroradiology and physiatry. Despite the lengthy pathway, my undergraduate journey has instilled confidence in my chosen career trajectory, affirming its alignment with my aspirations and potential for significant impact.



# destination: TAIPEI, TAIWAN

**KAMAAL SOMJI**  
CARLETON COLLEGE  
CLASS OF 2026  
BIOCHEMISTRY AND CHINESE



Studying abroad in Taipei, Taiwan, was a transformative part of **Kamaal's** undergraduate experience. It provided an invaluable opportunity to explore the world while gaining educational and career experience. It fostered connections and friendships with people from diverse cultures and nations.

Kamaal selected his study abroad program by emailing a medical research professor to inquire about research assistance opportunities. This proactive approach led to an internship where he delved into the study of Seborrheic Dermatitis, gaining significant knowledge and experience in the field.

The experience greatly enhanced Kamaal's confidence and conversational skills, especially as he navigated daily life in Mandarin. Asking for help and directions in a foreign language was challenging at first, but it was instrumental in improving his Mandarin and offering deep cultural insights.

"One of my favorite excursions was hiking Mount Xiangshan with friends followed by the culinary delights of the Raohe Night Market," he says. Kamaal advises other AFF Scholars to make friends with locals, as these relationships enrich the experience and provide unique cultural insights.

*Shayne Carson and  
Edward Wilson*  
University of Mississippi  
Class of 2027



**AIDEN  
ROBERTSON**  
UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
DEGREE: MECHANICAL ENGINEERING



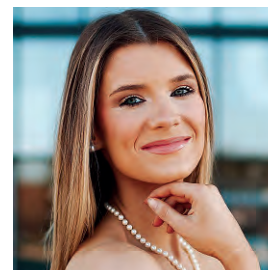
Growing up struggling financially has taught me the value of working hard to capitalize on any opportunity. I possess a dynamic drive to give 100% and take every day as it comes. The generosity that you have given me is the chance to apply my focus at Notre Dame and learn at the highest level – an opportunity I will look back on and be grateful for throughout the rest of my life.



**EMILY  
RODRIGUEZ**  
STANFORD UNIVERSITY  
DEGREE: COMPARATIVE STUDIES  
IN RACE AND ETHNICITY

I've undergone significant transformation since my first year, both intellectually and personally, shaping my outlook and aspirations. I'm more optimistic about the future and eagerly anticipate reaping the rewards of my efforts. As a first-generation, low-income student, my journey has prepared me to empathize and address the needs of students like me. I've navigated financial constraints, sought resources and advocated for myself. These experiences have fueled my commitment to community service, empowering me to make a difference in fields like education, social work or public policy. My degree equips me with the knowledge and skills to mentor and uplift others, advocate for equitable access and contribute to initiatives that are breaking down barriers to success.

I have gained a better understanding of working with people and adapting to meet their needs through various campus jobs. Additionally, I've learned to communicate effectively and adjust my approach to explaining topics, ensuring my ideas are clearly understood by others.



**KAYLA  
ROWE**  
UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA  
DEGREE: PUBLIC HEALTH

Before attending college, I was very reserved and doubtful of my intelligence and skills. Throughout my time at Alabama, I have grown into a confident young woman and learned how my skills and abilities will be helpful in the real world. Specifically, my growth in communication skills and time management should help me land my desired job after graduating.



**LAVONTE  
SAUNDERS**  
VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY  
DEGREE: PRE-MED

# graduates



## COOPER SCHOLL

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
DEGREES: ECONOMICS AND MATHEMATICS

Earning a degree from the University of Notre Dame has been a dream of mine for a long time. I am in awe of everyone who has supported my journey and I cannot wait to build on my career. Thank you Annexstad Family Foundation for absolutely everything!



## CLEMENTINE SHAO

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY  
DEGREE: ENGLISH

The world has become more beautiful, and I have realized how little I know.



## JAZARAH SHIM

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY  
DEGREE: SOCIOLOGY

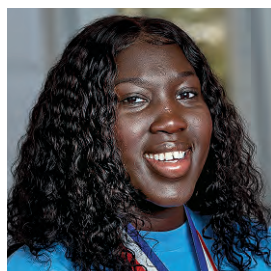
College connected me with a community of other supportive students who have given me tools for success. My college experience was made more positive because I will now be graduating without any student debt or loans. I will always be grateful for what the Foundation has done for me and the positive impact the team had on my college experience.



## ALONDRA SOLIS

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY  
DEGREES: SOCIAL WELFARE, SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT

As a first-generation, low-income student, fear of failure loomed large. Yet, reflecting on my undergraduate journey, I've realized I do belong and deserve to occupy spaces valuing my perspectives and experiences. Building self-confidence, I'm proud of creating a community and defying odds. My diverse professional experiences, from consulting to nonprofit and government work, have shaped me. They've instilled a commitment to public service and community-based research, empowering me to provide resources for thriving communities.



## NANCY SORO

COLLEGE OF SAINT BENEDICT  
DEGREE: GLOBAL BUSINESS

While there are great responsibilities with classes and extracurriculars, there is also a great deal to learn in life. My friends inspired me to take control of my life and to learn to accept imperfection, while still holding myself to a high academic standard. I have learned incredible life lessons, found happiness and developed my productivity. Now I am successfully graduating with a degree in Global Business.



*University of Notre Dame Scholars*

# destination: LONDON, ENGLAND

**TYLER LE**  
UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA  
CLASS OF 2025  
CYBER SECURITY AND MANAGEMENT  
INFORMATION SYSTEMS



Tyler says, "Growing up and attending college in the same state made me feel confined within a familiar bubble. Studying abroad in London shattered that bubble, exposing me to diverse cultures and the possibility of moving away. This experience broadened my understanding of the world."

He chose his study abroad program after a first-generation faculty member referred him to an interest meeting for a scholarship. His financial constraints made this opportunity to live and study in London seem like a dream come true.

"Abroad, I experienced significant personal growth. As the child of immigrants, I equated a high salary with happiness, leading to self-induced stress. Living in a different culture taught me that peace and happiness aren't destinations but experiences. I learned to work to live, not live to work."

"A favorite memory was a weekend trip to Milan with friends, exploring architecture, shopping and attending a Lumineers concert. For other Scholars, my advice is simple: go for it! Money can be earned back, but the experiences and memories are irreplaceable. Plan weekend trips in advance to save on flights and immerse yourself in the local culture."

*Radha Patel, Maci McCutchan and Estephanie Lopez Maldonado  
Clemson University*



## ROMEL TINTERO

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY,  
SAN BERNARDINO  
DEGREE: NURSING



From the start, I was shy and apprehensive, dreading what was to come. I started college during the pandemic and uncertainty was always hanging in the air. Now, as I look at the end of my undergrad, I view myself as optimistic, confident and ready to take charge of my life as a graduate nurse. I've learned a lot about myself and discovered what I like, dislike, want to accomplish and what to keep doing. Post-graduation and with the goals I have in mind, I will always use the lessons I learned to narrow down the ways I can achieve my goals but also be willing to expand beyond it and strive to learn new ways.

## EDWARD TSUI

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
DEGREES: POLITICAL SCIENCE  
AND ECONOMICS



My college experience has profoundly shaped my personal growth and professional journey. Through my pursuit of higher education, I have developed into the person I am today, enriched by advancements in communication networking and academic commitment. I've cultivated essential skills and expanded my network, all in pursuit of my aspirations for law school and a career in nonprofit work. I am immensely grateful to The Annexstad Family Foundation for providing the support and resources necessary to pursue my dreams. I am the man I am today because of my experiences at UGA.

I've become more proactive and adept at problem solving and time management. My undergraduate experience will facilitate the achievement of my goals due to the guidance of exceptional teachers who have positioned me for success. Engaging in an apprenticeship with the WCU football team and an upcoming internship with the Asheville City SC soccer team, facilitated by my undergraduate program, has provided invaluable experience. Now, I'm poised to demonstrate to employers the value I can bring to their organizations.

## DE'JON WARREN

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
DEGREES: PSYCHOLOGY AND  
CREATIVE WRITING



Having the opportunity to study at the University of Chicago has been one of the proudest experiences of my life. I will forever be grateful to The Annexstad Family Foundation, to all the friends I have made and for all of the memories I have gathered during my time here!



## DAVID WELCOME

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY  
DEGREE: INTEGRATED HEALTH SCIENCE

# graduates



## AUSTIN WHEELER

EMORY UNIVERSITY  
DEGREE: COMPUTER SCIENCE

College has encouraged my growth, shaping me into a more curious and engaged individual. The most significant lesson from my undergraduate experience is learning how to learn. I now believe that any goal I set is attainable through acquiring the necessary knowledge. Being an undergraduate at Emory has provided me with the resources, mentorship and motivation needed to pursue and achieve my ambitions.



## DANIEL WILLIAMS

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE  
DEGREE: BIOLOGY

Through all of my experiences in music, friendships and classes, I feel that college has provided the opportunity for growth that no other option could have given me. My experiences at the school are what allowed me to apply and get accepted to a master's program and are helping me reach a long-term goal with a sustainable job.



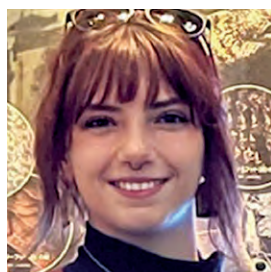
## JACKSON WILLIAMS

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY  
DEGREE: CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

When I began my Clemson studies, Covid hindered my ability to forge connections and pursue opportunities. Despite the initial hurdles, delving into university life proved transformative. Engaging in campus activities, securing research positions and selecting a major aligned with my passion for positive change and bolstered my confidence. Now I advocate for causes I believe in and am transitioning into a new career and life chapter. I am ready to tackle future endeavors with resilience and purpose.



**Desarae Rivas**  
University of Notre Dame



I didn't enter college with a strong passion for nature; it developed through my classes, where I learned the significance of all living things and their interconnections. My academic experience and personal growth have motivated me to continue learning and working to protect our environment.

**ANNA WINFREY** UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA  
DEGREE: BIOLOGY

## HARLEY YOPP

GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
DEGREE: BIOLOGY

Before college, I lived next to a cow farm in rural Georgia. Needless to say, moving to Atlanta was a significant shift. I encountered experiences I had never considered and had my thoughts challenged in ways I had never perceived. Throughout my undergraduate years, I grew as a leader and listener, becoming more confident and compassionate towards others. I've also learned the importance of asking for help when needed. I'm thrilled to pursue my dream of becoming a doctor, knowing that my time at Georgia Tech and my diverse experiences have prepared me emotionally, mentally and academically for the journey ahead.



# north dakota state university

## LEADERS FOR TOMORROW PARTNER

North Dakota State University's (NDSU) holistic and financial investment in the Annexstad Scholar community has allowed their partnership to grow since 2015. Cathy Annexstad shares, "The University's leadership has made a dedicated effort to connect with our Scholars, including providing grand opportunities for our future changemakers and dinner invitations to President **David Cook's** home. Currently, The Annexstad Family Foundation supports seven *Leaders for Tomorrow* Scholars and 12 Alumni pursuing careers in medicine, construction management and engineering."



Maya Hanson



Tanner Verbitsky

**Maya Hanson** and **Tanner Verbitsky**, both Family and Consumer Science Education majors at NDSU, know the importance of perseverance. After facing several

challenging life events before the age of 18, neither Maya nor Tanner thought college would be a possibility. Both wanted to become teachers, which led them to NDSU.

Through NDSU, Maya and Tanner were selected for the *Leaders for Tomorrow* Scholarship, given to students who have overcome significant life events, such as death in their family, extreme poverty, foster care, etc., and who show academic and leadership promise.

"As I approach graduation, I see more potential within myself," Maya says. "It isn't that I didn't have it before, but being so close to the finish line, I have contemplated where I want to go and now I can actually see myself in different positions."

Since being in college, Tanner has noticed his potential grow as he has gained more confidence to speak up in classes and reach out for help.

In addition to The Annexstad Family Foundation's support, Maya and Tanner have utilized campus resources and services.

"NDSU is a student-focused, land-grant, research university that strives to provide access to students from diverse backgrounds," says **Laura Oster-Aaland**, NDSU Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Institutional Equity. "We believe in students' ability to overcome challenges, and we provide them with the tools and support to succeed at NDSU and in life. We have been impressed with the success of our Annexstad Scholars and are excited to see what they achieve next."

"NDSU has doubled down on our land-grant mission of providing access to education by investing in various need-based scholarships that benefit first-generation and low-income students," says Cook. "The Tuition Award Program fully covers base tuition and student fees for Pell-eligible North Dakota and Minnesota students with family incomes of \$80,000 or less for their first and second years at NDSU."

As they work toward their degrees, Maya and Tanner aim to become classroom leaders who will inspire their future students for years to come.



# pomona college

## LEADERS FOR TOMORROW PARTNER

The Annexstad Family Foundation (AFF) first partnered with Pomona College in Claremont, CA, in 2016 with the goal to support deserving and determined undergraduate students through the *Leaders for Tomorrow* (LFT) Scholarship program. The Foundation was eager to partner with Pomona due to their commitment to offering an engaging and supportive educational environment to help students pursue passions inside and outside of the classroom. As with other LFT partners, Pomona selects the recipients for the Scholarship program from the incoming class of first-year students. Since the Fall of 2016, AFF has worked closely with campus leadership in development, financial aid and admissions to help create a community of Scholars and offer holistic support.

“Pomona College aspires for all students to flourish and develop lives of meaning during their time on campus. This means creating and maintaining equitable experiences for first-generation and low-income students — and every student at the College,” says President **G. Gabrielle Starr**. “We are national leaders in educational access — and we have been for decades — because we prioritize financial support for tuition, technology, student health insurance and other critical needs. We also provide broad experiential learning opportunities that

prepare our students to excel after graduation, robust on-campus health and wellness programs and a diverse and tight-knit campus community where meaningful, lasting relationships are forged and all members aim to support and guide one another.”

“There is something very special about Pomona; you can feel it when you step on campus,” shares **Elin Wahman**, Director of Strategic Initiatives for The Annexstad Family Foundation. “Beyond the beautiful natural surroundings of the physical campus, Pomona offers an environment where Scholars can commit to their studies but also discover and invest in their interests in research, art, community development and leadership. In my experience working with Pomona, staff and College leadership have a sincere and personal commitment to student success and want to ensure Scholars can maximize and recognize their potential during their four years and beyond.”

The Foundation’s Regional Program Manager, **Maja Klos-Gromadzka**, works closely with college representatives and Scholars to help offer support and walk alongside students through their four years. Scholars gather from time to time on campus for an Annexstad Scholar event to share their experiences and foster community.

Recent Pomona Graduate **Bella Pettengill** shares, “In my time at Pomona College, I developed a dedicated studio and research practice in painting, which has culminated into a final body of work and exhibition. This exhibition marks an initial emergence as I continue to make work and engage with the arts. As a first-generation student, I am immensely grateful for the opportunities I had been given during undergraduate school, and I cherish my education for the dimensionality and skills it has provided me.”



*Bella Pettengill*

To date, the Foundation has supported nine LFT Scholars at Pomona; four of those recipients have graduated. Currently, five LFT Scholars are enrolled. Scholars have pursued studies in areas such as Public Policy, Cognitive Psychology, Chemistry and Media Studies. Previously one student was awarded the LFT Scholarship per year. In January 2023, the Foundation committed to supporting two new Scholars per year. The goal is to grow the Scholarship cohort to continue to expand the Annexstad Scholar community in the Claremont area.







The Annexstad Family Foundation  
SCHOLAR

# Scholars

INDIANA  
18  $\Psi$  20  
HOOSIERS

INDIANA  
 $\Psi$   
HOOSIERS

INDIANA  
18  $\Psi$  20  
HOOSIERS

# scholars



**CASEY  
ARIAS**

YALE UNIVERSITY  
MAJOR: POLITICAL SCIENCE



**MUSKAAN  
BADLIA**

SOUTHERN METHODIST  
UNIVERSITY  
MAJOR: BIOLOGY



**KAAMAAKSHI  
ATI**

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
MAJOR: ENGINEERING



**DHRUVA  
BARUA**

DUKE UNIVERSITY  
MAJOR: COMPUTER SCIENCE



**TABITHA  
BATES**

REDLANDS UNIVERSITY  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED



**TSION  
BEZABIH**

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA  
MAJOR: ECONOMICS



**ELIZABETH  
BLAIR**

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE  
MAJOR: BIOLOGY



**OLIVIA  
BETZEN**

GONZAGA UNIVERSITY  
MAJOR: PSYCHOLOGY



**KYLIE  
BUCKLEY**

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI  
MAJOR: CHEMISTRY

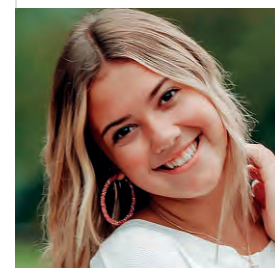


**SHAKERA  
BULLI**

EMORY UNIVERSITY  
MAJOR: BIOLOGY

**TATIANA  
BUTT**

WINONA STATE UNIVERSITY  
MAJOR: PSYCHOLOGY



# feeling more CONNECTED on campus

*Excerpt from JEDFoundation.org*

Starting college is exciting, and right from the beginning you have opportunities to connect with others who share your interests, questions and anxieties to make the transition smoother.

## Reach Out Before You Arrive

- Ask your guidance counselor to connect you with high school alumni attending the same college.
- Join the “Class of” group on social media.
- Attend accepted students' weekends or regional meet-ups.
- Contact your roommate once you receive their information.

## Campus Connections

- Introduce yourself to 10 new people every day.
- Start conversations with classmates; ask them to grab coffee or study together.
- Join activities that interest you such as theater, dance, academic clubs, Greek life or intramural sports.

## Be Patient

Making friends takes time. Be open to new experiences and people. Eventually, you'll build a great group of friends.

## You're Not Alone

When you see groups of students laughing together, remember most first-year students are navigating the same process. Any feelings of being left out are normal and will improve with time. Building a community can be tough, but that's okay. Learn about building connections and fighting loneliness. Peer support is important, but being comfortable alone has its benefits too!



**SEANTHOMAS CAMPBELL**

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA  
MAJOR: PSYCHOLOGY



**SHAYNE CARSON**

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI  
MAJOR: POLITICAL SCIENCE



**KAITLIN CAUGHMAN**

HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
MAJOR: MOLECULAR BIOLOGY



**YOSELIN COLIN**

YALE UNIVERSITY  
MAJOR: POLITICAL SCIENCE



**EMOGENE COOK**

TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY  
MAJOR: BUSINESS



**MICHAELA COOPER**

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
MAJOR: FINANCE



**NICHOLAS CLEPHAS**

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA  
MAJOR: AEROSPACE ENGINEERING



**GRACE COMERFORD**

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY  
MAJOR: MOLECULAR BIOLOGY

*Emily Hall and Antonio Dumnich  
Hillsdale College  
Scholars*



# scholars



**DAIRA  
CRUZ HERNANDEZ**

COLLEGE OF SAINT BENEDICT  
MAJOR: PSYCHOLOGY



**SHEMAIAH  
DEJORGE**

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY  
MAJOR: PRE-LAW



**KAHLOMO  
CUNNINGHAM**

GONZAGA UNIVERSITY  
MAJOR: ENGINEERING



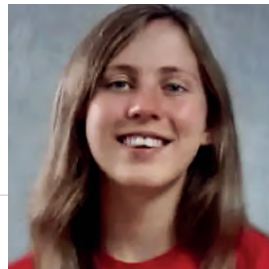
**DANIEL  
DIAZ**

UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS  
MAJOR: COMPUTER SCIENCE



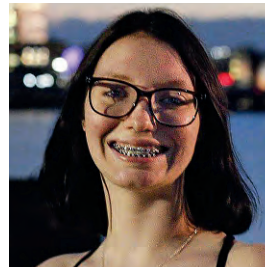
**NATHANIEL  
DIERS**

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
AT CHAPEL HILL  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED



**CAITLIN  
DRESSELHAUS**

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE  
MAJOR: PSYCHOLOGY

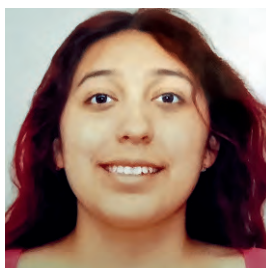


**ZOE  
ENGELBRECHT**

INDIANA UNIVERSITY, BLOOMINGTON  
MAJOR: ENVIRONMENTAL AND  
SUSTAINABILITY STUDIES

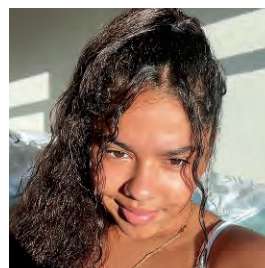
**KARLI  
FELLAND**

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
MAJOR: ANIMAL SCIENCE



**VENUS  
FERNANDEZ**

REDLANDS UNIVERSITY  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED

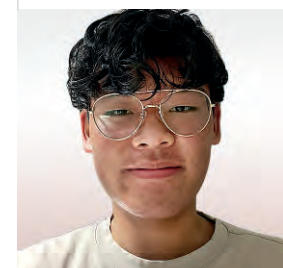


**ANA  
GRAY**

STANFORD UNIVERSITY  
MAJORS: PSYCHOLOGY  
AND COMMUNICATION

**CRUZ  
GUO**

GEORGIA INSTITUTE  
OF TECHNOLOGY  
MAJOR: COMPUTER SCIENCE



# resume skills RECRUITERS will notice

Job postings are gold mines in finding the skills most important to an employer. You'll notice they tend to be in there more than once.

On your resume, it's important to sort skills by relevance and make a connection with what you are currently doing. If you are applying for a sales position and your background is as a server, list the skills that you perform such as upselling wines, specials and desserts, providing full-circle customer service and perhaps the volume of guests you care for in one sitting. Upselling, customer service and process-management skills will catch someone's eye.

Show your value by stating achievement-based results in a highlights section. Add increased percentages, initiated programs or services and list results. Recruiters love to see process improvements, change management and excelling customer-experience skills.

Here's a list of soft and hard skills that you should consider when reviewing the job descriptions to get you noticed:

## soft skills

- Problem Solving
- Critical Thinking
- Flexibility
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Organization
- Creativity
- Emotional Intelligence
- Attention to Detail
- Responsibility

## hard skills

- Coding
- Design
- Data Analysis
- Negotiation
- Mathematics
- Marketing
- Project Management
- Administrative
- Writing
- Foreign Languages



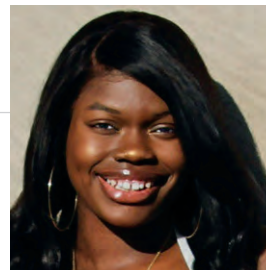
**EVA  
GUZMAN**

INDIANA UNIVERSITY, BLOOMINGTON  
MAJOR: BIOLOGY



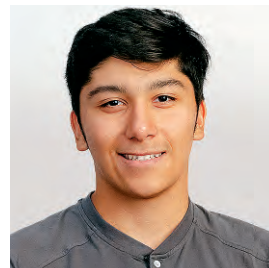
**ELI  
HAMRE**

POMONA COLLEGE  
MAJOR: MEDIA STUDIES



**MADISON  
HANDSOME**

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY  
MAJOR: SOCIOLOGY



**SANTIAGO  
HERNANDEZ  
CORTES**

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
MAJOR: ENGINEERING



**DALTON  
HUNNICUTT**

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA  
MAJOR: POLITICAL SCIENCE



*Martin Rios De La Rosa  
and Kryzma Moore*  
University of St. Thomas



**ELIZABETH  
HAZARD**

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA  
MAJOR: FINANCE

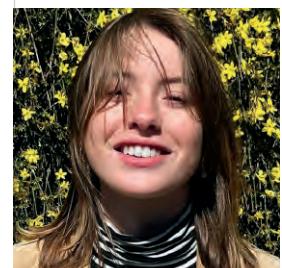


**ALYSSA  
HUFFMAN**

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
MAJOR: CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**MEGAN  
HURLEY**

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
MAJOR: ENGLISH



# scholars



**MATTHEW  
IVES**

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY  
MAJOR: ENGINEERING



**DEJA  
JOHNSON**

INDIANA UNIVERSITY,  
BLOOMINGTON  
MAJOR: PSYCHOLOGY



**ALAYNA  
JOHNSON**

CARLETON COLLEGE  
MAJOR: PRE-MED



**KIMBERLY  
JUSTO**

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO  
MAJOR: PRE-NURSING



**MAKAYLA  
KONTZ**

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
MAJOR: ELEMENTARY  
EDUCATION



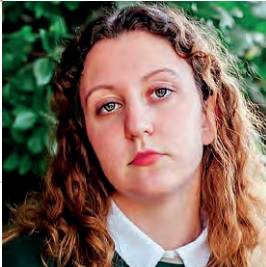
**MARC  
LAGRANDIER**

BOSTON COLLEGE  
MAJOR: NURSING



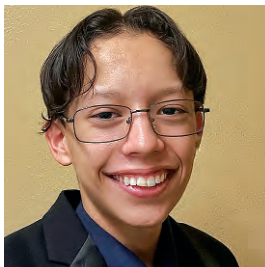
**TYLER  
LE**

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA  
MAJORS: CYBER SECURITY  
AND MANAGEMENT  
INFORMATION SYSTEMS



**TALIA  
KRUMKOP**

GONZAGA UNIVERSITY  
MAJOR: ENGLISH



**EDEL  
LEM  
QUINONEZ**

SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY  
MAJOR: FINANCE



**CHRISTOPHER  
LENHARDT**

GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
MAJOR: COMPUTER SCIENCE



**ALONDRA  
MAQUEDA**

GONZAGA UNIVERSITY  
MAJOR: CRIMINOLOGY  
AND SOCIOLOGY

essential skills  
**SHAPING**  
 tomorrow's leaders



The demand for employees equipped with analytical thinking, decision making and equitable leadership skills is more pronounced than ever before. These competencies drive organizational success and foster a culture of innovation and inclusivity.

Employees with strong analytical-thinking abilities possess the agility to anticipate obstacles, navigate complex challenges and find effective solutions. In a dynamic business landscape, individuals who can identify root causes, analyze data and propose viable strategies are invaluable assets.

Similarly, adept decision-makers are essential for driving progress and achieving organizational goals. Whether faced with high-stakes dilemmas or everyday choices, employees who can evaluate options, weigh risks and make informed decisions contribute to efficient operations and sustainable growth.

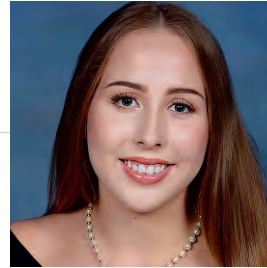
Equitable leadership skills are equally crucial. Leaders who prioritize fairness, inclusivity and empathy foster environments where every voice is heard and valued. By promoting diversity and creating opportunities for all employees to thrive, equitable leaders drive innovation and employee engagement.

In essence, hiring employees with these essential skills enhances organizational performance and cultivates a culture of adaptability, resilience and fairness. In a competitive global marketplace, companies that prioritize these valuable skills are better positioned to succeed and thrive.



**SYLVESTER MARONA**

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
 MAJOR: MARKETING



**RUBY MATTIA-McMULLAN**

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY  
 MAJOR: ENGINEERING



**BRADEN McCONAGHY**  
 GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY  
 MAJOR: COMPUTER SCIENCE



**HAYLEE MEDENWALDT**

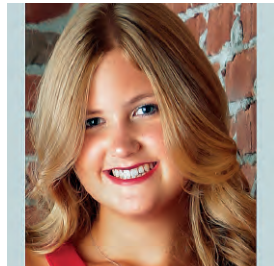
NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY  
 MAJOR: RADIOLOGY AND SONOGRAPHY



**YAMIL MENDOZA ESPINOZA**

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY  
 MAJOR: EXERCISE AND HEALTH SCIENCE

*Aliyah Maxwell-Abrams  
 and Sophia Rewers*  
 Michigan Technological  
 University



**AMBER McMAHON**

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
 MAJOR: ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCE

**NANCY MEMBRENO**

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
 AT CHAPEL HILL  
 MAJOR: UNDECIDED



**KANE MERRELL**

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA  
 MAJOR: ENGINEERING

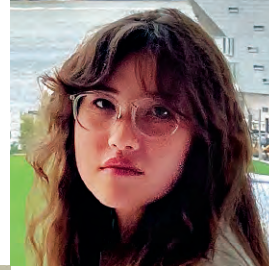


# scholars



**JACQUELINE  
METZGER**

HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
MAJOR: PSYCHOLOGY



**REAGAN  
MOORE**

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY  
MAJOR: BIOCHEMISTRY



**CHLOE  
MILLARD**

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY,  
MANKATO  
MAJOR: ELEMENTARY EDUCATION



**ISAIAH  
MORRIS**

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
MAJOR: NEUROSCIENCE AND BEHAVIOR



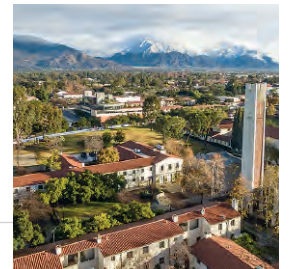
**OLIVIA  
NEWSOME**

HILLSDALE COLLEGE  
MAJOR: BIOLOGY



**MAKYLA  
PIRTLE**

DUKE UNIVERSITY  
MAJOR: UNDECIDED



**VICTORIA  
PROKOPENKO**

POMONA COLLEGE  
MAJOR: COGNITIVE SCIENCE



**GUILLAUME  
ODED**

CARLETON COLLEGE  
MAJOR: PHILOSOPHY



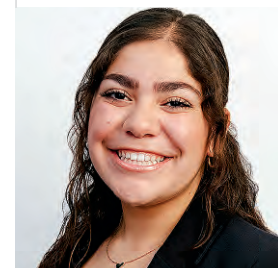
**RAINNY  
RAMEY**

BRENAU UNIVERSITY  
MAJOR: EDUCATION



**SOPHIA  
REWERS**

MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL  
UNIVERSITY  
MAJOR: COMPUTER SCIENCE



**MARLETT  
REYES-SERENIL**

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
MAJOR: INDUSTRIAL DESIGN



# care for your MENTAL HEALTH

Excerpt from JEDFoundation.org

Most of us have strategies for taking care of our physical health, so here is a guide to nurture your mental health also.

## CIRCLE OF CARE

We are social creatures, so a support network is essential. Identify who you can lean on for help when you're struggling.

## EMOTIONAL SELF-CARE

**Journaling** | Write about your feelings daily to process and understand them.

**Maintain Relationships** | Deepen friendships by sharing openly, checking in and spending quality time together.

**Meditate** | Practice simple meditation to clear your mind and stay present.

## PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Seeking help is a sign of strength. Regular check-ins with a professional provide valuable support.

## WORK/SCHOOL SELF-CARE

- Set up support systems.
- Find a mentor for guidance and advocacy.
- Seek help from teachers or colleagues when needed.
- Participate in professional development opportunities.

## PHYSICAL SELF-CARE

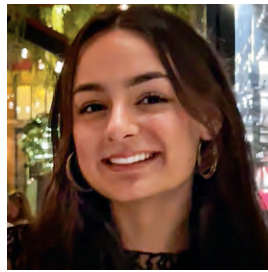
- Get 7-8 hours of quality sleep.
- Eat nutritious foods, especially fruits and vegetables.
- Spend time outdoors and move regularly.
- Take breaks from screens and stretch or walk every 30 minutes.

## CREATE YOUR PLAN

Customize your mental health plan based on your needs. Start with the area you need the most help with and build from there. There's no one-size-fits-all plan – just the one that works for you.

## YOU'RE NOT ALONE

Navigating mental health can be challenging, but you're not alone. Building a support network and taking proactive steps can make all the difference.



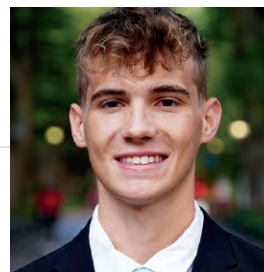
**AUTUMN RIVERA**

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
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Cathy Annexstad (middle) with Annexstad Scholars  
(l to r): Abigail Falkowski, Jason Davalos, Katrina Estacio and Trinity Duenas.