

AN Bryce

WINTER 2016

# SCHOLARS INITIATIVE

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dr. Paulette G. Curtis  
Faculty Director of the AnBryce  
Scholars Initiative at Notre Dame

## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Jeff and Helen Cardon

## NEW YORK 2016

## SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

Zoë Usowski '19

Areli Rodriguez '17

Luis (Luigi) Ribera '19

Jahlecia Gregory '20

## TAILGATING FUN

## FALL SPEAKING EVENT



UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME SCHOLARS INITIATIVE

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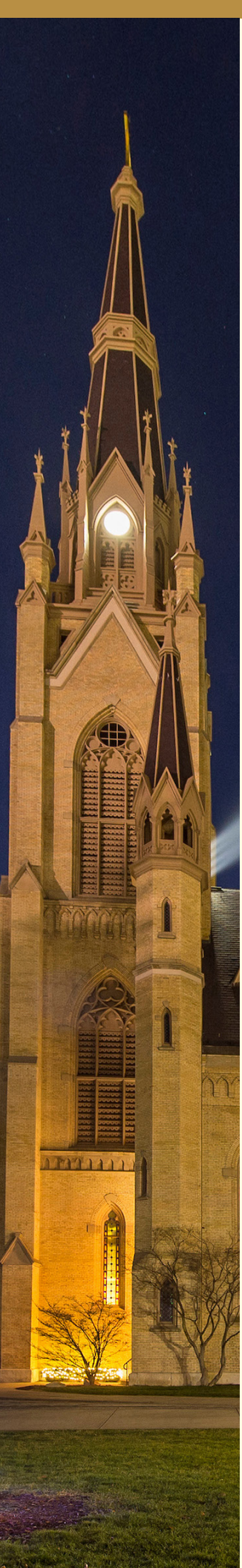
## FALL SPEAKING EVENT



## PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

Fall and Spring Sessions to Discuss Opportunities on Campus,  
Over Summer, and After College





# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

**This term's newsletter is filled with the wonder and excitement of possibility, and the hope inherent in new beginnings. We will introduce you to our newest cohort of Notre Dame AnBryce students, seven young men and two young women from California, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Texas and Wisconsin. In addition to infusing a dose of optimism into our now tried and tested student community, they have the important distinction of being our fourth, nay, "bookmarking" cohort. What an amazing milestone to have reached. In just six months, we will graduate our very first cohort of AnBryce Scholars at Notre Dame.**

You will also hear a good deal about one of our newest initiatives, the Professional and Personal Development Series (or "PPDS," as we refer to it, here in Brownson). Amanda Hammond, our Program Manager, and Sarah Kubinski, our Outreach Coordinator, have put together a roster of intimately-crafted sessions that are meant to assist students in developing the non-academic skills they need in college and beyond. Crafting resumes and doing job interviews, drafting a term-time budget and navigating the Study Abroad application process at Notre Dame are some of the sessions we have held thus far, one of which was led by one of our AnBryce supporters, Mrs. Toni Zepponi from Sonoma, California. We couldn't be more pleased with how well these sessions have been received by both students and presenters, and we will not only continue these sessions in the Spring, but supplement them with a trip to the Bay Area in March for a subset of our Scholars who will be introduced to careers in entrepreneurship and technology. Another group of our Scholars recently returned from New York City for the first of these professional sessions, where they not only got to hear about being prepared for post-college careers and networking, but did so jointly with their AnBryce NYU counterparts, their hosts. Our thanks to NYU, the Welters and our counterparts there for putting on such an informative event.

Of course, as is our custom, we have also highlighted the experiences and aspirations of a selection of our students, just so you can get to know them like we do; and we will soon be preparing for another immersion experience in London, our Spring speaker series and a number of other events, all of which will be highlighted in our next newsletter.

We keep busy here. We do that because we serve a group of deserving and talented young people whose success is our success, our University's success, our nation's success. It is so very important that we all continue to keep this fact in mind. While many of us feel disheartened by the kind of election year we have just experienced, dismayed and even apprehensive about the incendiary acts that have erupted all around us and the shape of the political future that is to come, I know that the promise of an inclusive, just, and progressive society is ours to make real. Our students, and the steps we have made in supporting them, are the way forward, their stories and dreams, as well as our own, lampposts for a truly new millennium, however dim the path may seem. I believe that hope should be the mood for the season.

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. Your support has never meant more.

Dr. Paulette G. Curtis  
Faculty Director of the AnBryce Scholars Initiative at Notre Dame

"We keep busy here. We do that because we serve a group of deserving and talented young people whose success is our success, our University's success, our nation's success. It is so very important that we all continue to keep this fact in mind."

# DONOR SPOTLIGHT: JEFF AND HELEN CARDON

Jeff and Helen Cardon, of Salt Lake City, Utah, joined the Notre Dame family when their son, George arrived on campus in 2008. (The Cardons also have a daughter, Maddy.) He was followed four years later by his brother, Charlie, who graduated in May. Development's Bruce Danielson learned of their "hands on" approach with marginalized children and families in the Salt Lake City area; and, he says "It was this desire to help non-traditional ND students that led me to introduce them to AnBryce."

Since then, they have been wonderful supporters of the program; and, as they learned more, Jeff, a University of Utah graduate, wondered if such a program could translate to his alma mater. The program had to have the guiding principles of the AnBryce Scholars Initiative. It had to not only provide financial assistance, something he argues is more available than many people know, but also provide the support and mentorship to sustain a student for four years of college.

He feels that is one way that AnBryce separates itself from other scholarships on campus. It is a truly multifaceted program that goes beyond just academics. The director and program staff work intimately with the students to give them guidance, a sounding board and a realistic assessment of life in college. There is accountability, as well as a chance to build a network many Notre Dame students arrive to campus possessing.

The Cardons say the First Ascent program they started at the University of Utah has been eye-opening. Their students must live on campus—a distinction, since the school is considered a commuter school. They meet regularly with the Cardons, the director, as well as the other students. Jeff says their stories are inspiring, as often as they are heartbreaking. The Cardons already see the benefits of this program on their students and hope to steadily increase the graduation rates of at-risk students.

The Cardons would love for this to be a model for other campuses. Jeff argues the ability to build families within your cohort and your program is vital to gain the most from your time in college and to ultimately attain your degree. "Everyone, at some point in college, feels like dropping out. It gets to be too much, too hard and, often, too lonely. It is, therefore, vital to have people surrounding you who challenge you to keep going, to not lose sight of the end goal."



## TAILGATING FUN

# SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT



Front: Dayeel Dauphine, Joseph Nwanebo, Brandon Hardy, Armando Sanchez, Jahlecia Gregory  
Back: Uriel Oropeza-Perez, Leesa Greenwood, Travon DeLeon, Lester Polty

We are thrilled to introduce the class of 2020 AnBryce Scholars. This is a special year for us at AnBryce as we now have all four classes of students and we could not be more pleased with our newest cohort. The class of 2020 is made up of nine students, all the way from California and as near as South Bend, Indiana. We have enjoyed getting to know one another over our monthly dinners and are very excited for our adventures in London next term!



## The challenge and rewards of following your passion as a first generation student



Zoë Usowski '19

When Notre Dame started the AnBryce Scholars Initiative, little did it know that it would provide Zoë Usowski '19, a place to embrace what makes her different thanks to the differences she saw in all of her fellow scholars. "I was able to come to terms with the fact that I am, indeed, different from a majority of students at Notre Dame, but that's okay. Knowing that everyone in AnBryce also breaks away from that conventional mold has made my experience exponentially better."

Zoë says she gained more than friends when she came to Notre Dame. "My favorite part of AnBryce has been the extended family I have gained through the program, especially my cohort. They are the siblings I never had. We support each other in our vastly different endeavors, and act as sounding boards whenever someone needs to talk out an idea." Zoë also gained an insight into a world outside her hometown. "The immersion experience last spring has resonated with me beyond belief. I had never left the country before we went to London, despite having ties to the United Kingdom in my family. I could see myself living there full time one day."

Zoë's relocation goals have taken a backseat to her current schedule, filled to the brim with theater. "I was cast in the first-ever staging of a new play, *The Pink Pope*, this past October, accepted a role in the upcoming spring opera, was part of the cast for the Student Players Production of *Stop Kiss*, and made my first foray into acting in front of a camera for a short film, *Fated Mishap*. It is no surprise that her hopes for the summer include an internship in Los Angeles, New York or Toronto—all film industry hubs. She has advice for younger scholars: "Do not be afraid to take an unconventional path as a first generation student. I spent the entirety of my first year believing that I needed to become a doctor or a lawyer to be deemed successful. However, my heart was never tied to conventional professions, and I decided to use the opportunity for higher education to enrich my true passion."



## AnBryce Scholar finds stability and possibility in college



Areli Rodriguez '17

Areli Rodriguez '17, did not have to come far to join our first cohort of AnBryce Scholars. Graduating from Hammond High School, in Hammond, IN, he had experienced a lot of educational upheaval in high school. "After my freshman year, my school had to undergo a rebirth in which half of the staff was replaced. I was told we were in the bottom five worst performing schools in the entire state." Though many of his peers opted for community college, Areli wanted to do more and be a role model for younger students who also aspired to great things.

He credits the AnBryce Scholars Initiative for helping his transition to Notre Dame. "I always know that there is a group of people going through similar experiences for the first time." Humorously, he recounts learning about the program. "When I was making the college decision, AnBryce was not a thing yet, so when I received a brochure and invitation to apply in an overnighted envelope, it caught my attention." Many aspects of the program have left an impression on him. "As a history major, going to London was an incredible experience. It was great to see many of the places and monuments I had only read about." He also says meeting Supreme Court Justice, Sonia Sotomayor was one of the most memorable experiences. "She was so personable and made an effort to connect with every one of us in a very genuine way that one would not expect." Areli has accepted an offer from Ernst and Young in Chicago and will work for their Forensic Technology and Discovery Services group. He feels he has come a long way from his days in high school, just imagining more possibilities.



## Expanding horizons in college and in the air



Luis (Luigi) Ribera '19

Luis (Luigi) Ribera '19, was born in Bolivia and came to the United States in 2001. He is well aware of the sacrifice his parents made, leaving lives and family behind so that they could give him the best possible start in life. "My mother promised me that people who work hard in this country thrive no matter who they are. Of course she told me this in Spanish but from that point on education became a huge priority in my life." As a Questbridge Scholar, no day was more exciting than the day he found out his match. "Let me tell you, there are no words to describe the feeling of getting matched to the University of Notre Dame. My hard work that got me into an amazing school was my way of saying thank you to my parents."

Though he did not know about AnBryce before he received his letter, Luigi took part in a community program called Quest, which he felt was similar. This program helped negotiate many common pitfalls of preparing for college. He says, "Quest provided me with guidance, helping me avoid mistakes other students make." He feels the same is true with AnBryce, which offers many insights and opportunities which prepare him for success in the future. Though school is very important to Luigi and something he sees as the key to honoring his parents and their sacrifices, he is not always in a classroom. Last summer he completed training and earned his pilot's license. Originally, just a recreational interest, he says, "I had a breakthrough this semester and I think I want to become a commercial pilot after graduation. It's a really great feeling to know what I want to do and work towards that." We can't wait to fly with him.



## Former Leadership Seminar Scholar brings mature outlook to college experience



Jahlecia Gregory '20

Jahlecia Gregory '20, had Notre Dame on her radar before many students, thanks to its Pre-College Programs (also under the directorship of Dr. Curtis). "I heard about Pre-college Programs through Questbridge, and as a junior, I was able to participate in a summer program from a partner college or university." She stepped out of her comfort zone a bit, opting for the American Arts, Popular Culture and Social Change track, rather than one dealing with science—her intended major. "It was the best decision I could have made. Learning from Professor Jason Ruiz and Anne Garcia-Romero was engaging, challenging, and indicative of what I was looking for in an undergraduate institution. Those ten days were intense, but also extremely gratifying. I met an amazing group of students that I still keep in touch with to this day."

Now a first year student and part of the fourth cohort, Jahlecia has lofty college goals for herself. "I hope to be stretched academically, spiritually and culturally. I hope to learn from the experiences of others, while also using my experiences to hopefully inspire other students who may feel as if attending a prestigious university is unattainable." She admits to being most excited about the Spring trip to London. Jahlecia admits to some bumps in her first few months at college. "Being away from home while being immersed in academics 24/7 is a huge change from high school." She has found some balance within the AnBryce program and its offering and she takes a decidedly mature view of her time at Notre Dame. "I think a huge part of transitioning into college is allowing yourself to fail and make mistakes without letting it stop you from improving and doing better next time."



## NEW YORK, NEW YORK!

This past September, some of the AnBryce Scholars had an exciting opportunity to travel to New York City. There, they joined the AnBryce Scholars studying at NYU and NYU Law School for a Career and Life After College Seminar. Students were joined by panelists from Law, Business, Nonprofit, Tech, and Accounting fields, who shared their journeys from undergraduate to the life beyond. Later, we were joined by Ellen Wilson, Executive Vice President, Human Capital of UnitedHealth Group. Ms. Wilson offered our students a candid discussion about balancing careers, personal relationships, and hobbies and interests. While much of the day was dedicated to career discovery, we were honored to have the opportunity to join the Welters family, AnBryce Foundation staff, NYU undergrads, law students and alumni for dinner, where we were able to catch up with old friends as well as meet many new faces in our AnBryce family.

The following day we had an exciting day out in the city with our NYU student hosts. We stumbled upon the Chili Pepper Festival in the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and sampled some spicy food, as well as explored some of New York City's iconic areas. Later in the evening, we spent the night out on the town with dinner in Little Italy followed by the Broadway musical the Color Purple – where our students met the lead cast! We are so thankful for our hosts and the AnBryce Foundation for making this possible.



One thing that emerged over our student dinners, one-on-one meetings and drop-ins was a collective desire to know more about opportunities on campus, over summer, and after college. Previously, we invited representatives from various campus organizations (ACE, CUSE, Study Abroad) to our monthly cohort dinners. However, as the number of cohorts grew, we found it was less and less organic to combine food and information. We also realized the students wanted time to let their guards down and talk about issues they encountered in classes and elsewhere. We knew we wanted to provide the information, but needed a way to share it, without adding more to the very busy schedules of our students.

Over the summer, Amanda and Sarah started collecting various ideas that ultimately became The Personal and Professional Development Series. The sessions usually last an hour and are purposefully kept intimate—we wanted to use our wonderful student lounge for the meetings and we wanted the students to really engage the speaker. As this will be something we do every semester, we knew we could keep the groups small, since students could sign up for sessions as the material becomes more pertinent to them (though we never dissuade intrepid freshmen from taking in it all!). Below, you will find descriptions of the Fall Series, as well as the proposed topics for Spring.

# PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

### FINANCIAL AID SEPT 26

Financial Aid's Jessica Schiller had a wonderful talk with our students about planning for the future, being careful with funds now, and even discussed retirement funds! She was very candid about the hidden costs of moving off campus, which was eye-opening to many. She encouraged the students to attend campus discussions about 401Ks and Roth IRAs, so that they are aware of the terms and what they can do to prepare (even if it seems so far off). What started off as a discussion on managing financial aid funds, really became a lesson on money for all areas of your life. This session will definitely appear every fall!

### CUSE OCTOBER 5

Led by Jeff Thiebert, the Flatley Center for Undergraduate Scholarly Engagement (CUSE) spoke to students about undergraduate research opportunities and fellowships. They discussed the various, nationally competitive application processes and how valuable the application process itself can be for furthering educational and professional goals.

### CSC OCTOBER 13

Discussions were led by Emily Garvey, Jimena Holguin and Rosie McDowell. AnBryce students traveled to Geddes Hall to talk with Notre Dame's Center for Social Concerns about various service initiatives, and, specifically, their Summer Service Learning Program (SSLP) and their International Summer Service Learning Program (ISSLP). In the words of the University's mission statement, the SSLP, "seeks to cultivate in its students... a disciplined sensibility to the poverty, injustice and oppression that burden the lives of so many. The aim is to create a sense of human solidarity and concern for the common good that will bear fruit as learning becomes service to justice." They were joined

by AnBryce supporter and the SSLP alumni facilitator for Minneapolis, Nylce Prada Myers. Salonee Seecharan '19, spoke of her SSLP last summer at St Margaret's House in South Bend.

### INTERNATIONAL, STUDY ABROAD NOVEMBER 1

Kyle Sturges joined us from Notre Dame International. As an Assistant Director in the office of Study Abroad, he spoke both in general and specific terms about the Study Abroad experience. The students had many questions about the application process and the programs offered. Kyle also shared information about the new Identity Abroad program, hosted by NDI and other campus groups.

### RESUME WORKSHOP AND CRITIQUES NOVEMBER 17-18

Toni Zeponi, an AnBryce donor and mother of an ND women's soccer player, was with us for two days in November. She held a session on the basics of creating a resume. This was incredibly interesting, as resumes have changed a good bit over the past few years. She then did several one-on-one critiques with our students. This is something Mrs. Zeponi does for many students in the Bay Area (and elsewhere) and we are so excited she is sharing her talents with us. We hope to see her again in the spring for a soft skills workshop.

### ACE NOVEMBER 30

Ally Jeter from Notre Dame's Alliance for Catholic Education joined us to talk opportunities after college. Though this was primarily for our juniors and seniors, several sophomores also attended. ACE seeks to develop a corps of highly motivated and committed educators to meet the needs of our country's most underserved parochial elementary and secondary schools. ACE provides an intensive two-year service experience encompassing professional development, community life, and spiritual growth. Ally's personal insights (as a graduate

of the program) were truly invaluable and she answered many questions about the academic and professional components of the program. The students were impressed by the support the teachers are given from their community and the ACE staff.

### CAMP DOGWOOD DECEMBER 3

One of our own, Cassidy Lawrence ('17) led an informative discussion on Camp Dogwood, located in Wolfstown, VA. Founded by Anthony and Beatrice Welters, Camp Dogwood Summer Academy is the cornerstone of the AnBryce Foundation. It offers distinct summer experiences for young people ages 7-18; **Camp Dogwood** for rising 2nd through 9th graders; **Rites of Passage (ROP)** for rising 10th through 12th graders, and the **Staff Training Enrichment Program (STEP)** for rising 11th and 12th graders. For over a decade, the counselor-to-camper ratio has remained 1:2 to ensure individualized mentoring and instruction. The camp resides on the site of the original 75 acres purchased by the Welters. As a child, Ms. Welters experienced the magic of a summer camp in the Catskill Mountains, operated by her grandmother. Camp Dogwood seeks to be bring the same magic to children today.

### PROPOSED SPRING SESSIONS

**Financial Aid:** focus on FAFSA

**Resumes:** Soft skills: What are they? Which ones do you possess? What are the most prized soft skills in the work place?

**Work/Life Skills:** 1. Workplace dress and etiquette 2. Cooking, shopping and budgeting 3. Graduate/Professional School 4. Public speaking and introductions

**Summer skills:** making money, taking classes, preparing for fall semester

**Lessons from AnBryce Seniors:** making the most of the ND experience