

FALL 2017

# ANBryce SCHOLARS INITIATIVE

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

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

## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Jack Myers '86 and  
Nylce Prada '87

## SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

Elicia Dennis '18  
Armando Sanchez '20  
Jenna Kwak '19  
Shamar Cousin '21

## BIENNIAL ANBRYCE FORUM

## TAILGATING 2017



UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME SCHOLARS INITIATIVE

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## TAILGATING GALLERY

# BIENNIAL ANBRYCE FORUM

Navigating the Margins: Diversity, Inclusion and Access at the  
University of the 21st Century





# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



## THE ANBRYCE SCHOLARS INITIATIVE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

DR. PAULETTE G. CURTIS, Faculty Director

Greetings to everyone from my office on the second floor of historic Brownson Hall, which as I am very fond of saying now, is my humble home away from home.

I have probably misspoken in describing Brownson as “humble,” whatever its somewhat eclectic nooks and crannies. Rumor has it that founder and first Notre Dame President, Fr. Edward Sorin, laid the flooring in parts of Brownson, which would of course make Brownson a more stately and certainly more interesting space than we often give it credit for being (just don’t quote me on the veracity of the rumor). Knowing that Fr. Sorin may have played a part in laying the literal foundations of our space means that we should think of ourselves as carrying on his pioneering spirit, which I like to think is reflected in the work and events I write about below.

We celebrated the graduation of our first AnBryce Scholars cohort on May 22, 2017 in a lovely ceremony in the Oak Room. It was a wonderful experience, punctuated by heartfelt congratulations from friends and family. We cried and dried our tears that month, only to find ourselves three months later with a new cohort of eight bright-eyed and bushy-tailed first years on our proverbial doorstep; their group photo is included in this term’s newsletter. Our newest cohort comes from all over the United States, from Lakeside, Arizona to American Falls, Idaho to right here in South Bend, Indiana. Like each of our cohorts, the Cohort of the AnBryce Class of 2021 has its own personality, one that is decidedly lovely and sweet. We know you will enjoy getting to know them.

In other news, we have been keeping very busy with the planning of our biennial AnBryce Forum, which will take place November 6-8 in McKenna Hall. As all of you know, a significant aspect of the AnBryce program at Notre Dame is the cultivation of community through monthly “talk back” sessions and social events, where AnBryce students talk about their experiences at Notre Dame, and the

challenges they face, whether academic, social or personal. Our conversations with them are honest and thoughtful. We envision the AnBryce Forum as a continuation of these conversations for the campus community. The goal of the 2017 AnBryce Forum, which is entitled “Navigating the Margins: Diversity, Inclusion and Access at the University of the 21st Century”, will be to interrogate a number of important themes related to the diversity and inclusion mandate. Our panels and presentations will explore these themes in new and exciting ways that give the floor to students, faculty and invited guests from a variety of institutions (from our friends at Stanford on the West Coast to our sister institution, New York University, on the East Coast). By Forum’s end, we hope to have pushed the conversation campus and community-wide on this important topic.

“The goal of the 2017 AnBryce Forum, which is entitled “Navigating the Margins: Diversity, Inclusion and Access at the University of the 21st Century”, will be to interrogate a number of important themes related to the diversity and inclusion mandate.”

You will find a more complete description of our Forum and panels on pages 5 and 6 of this newsletter.

Any and all of you would be welcome to attend these events, as they are completely open to the public.

Finally, thanks to all of you who have supported our Personal and Professional Development Series, or PPDS, as we say. This Fall the students will have sessions with CUSE, the CSC, Financial Aid, the Career Center, Study Abroad and with our generous “Resumé Whisperer” Ms. Tonia Zepponi.

Hoping that the Fall term, with its transitional waxes and wanes, brings all of us good things.

Til’ we speak again,  
Paulette

# DONOR SPOTLIGHT: JACK MYERS '86 AND NYLCE PRADA '87



Jack Myers '86 and Nylce Prada '87 met as undergraduates at Notre Dame, marrying the year after her graduation from a Masters program at Washington University in St. Louis. “We always thought that we would be parents and have a large family with both biological and adopted kids. But life didn’t turn out the way we’d expected,” she says. That hasn’t stopped them from devoting their energies and resources toward helping the next generation.

An audit partner with KPMG, Jack has devoted time to volunteering with the Northern Star Council of the Boy Scouts of America, and Nylce, a former middle and high school teacher, regularly volunteers with various school and youth organizations. They have also served as hosts for and sponsors of Notre Dame students doing Summer Service Projects in Michigan, Virginia, and Minnesota, all states where they have lived.

Not having children of their own to educate, they decided early to direct their annual contributions toward Notre Dame’s general scholarship funds. “I was grateful for aid that I received as a student, and I wanted to pay that forward,” says Nylce.

Both of them note the sacrifices their own parents made on behalf of their educations, and they realize how much more difficult it is for students and families now to afford the cost of attending Notre Dame. But it is first generation students who particularly call to their hearts. “Our dads were once in their places,” says Nylce, reflecting on the difficulties

students from low-income backgrounds encounter while adapting to life on a university campus. And as an immigrant from Colombia who grew up in GA, she’s also keenly aware of the social and cultural challenges posed to first generation students studying far from home.

Aware of these interests, Mike Seeley, who used to work with Notre Dame’s Development Office before transitioning to work with Enrollment, introduced Jack and Nylce to the AnBryce program in 2014. “He sent us a link to a video,” Jack remembers.

“We watched it together, and we both cried,” says Nylce.

Since then the Myers have worked together with Notre Dame Development to direct some of their contributions to AnBryce and toward creating an endowed fund that will help other first generation students attain their Notre Dame dreams so they can be forces for good in the world. “We like to think of all of them as ‘our’ kids,” they say.

“I was grateful for aid that I received as a student, and I wanted to pay that forward,” says Nylce.



# SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT



Front: Eamon Lopez Marmion, Tia Wilson, Teayanna Leytham, Isel Otero Torres  
Back: Odalis Gonzalez, Shamar Cousin, Christina Dulal, Raphael Banuelos

Introducing the class of 2021 and our 5th cohort of scholars! One sang with Journey, one discovered in middle school that the secret to success is to be confident at all times, one drove 26 hours to get to campus, one's last name is not pronounced Coo-zehn, one is a Physics major, one is nicknamed Rafa, one worked at IHOP, and one comes from the city where 7-Up and ice cream cones were invented.

## In Her Own Words: Excerpts from Elicia Dennis's Reflection on A Balanced Equation

In the summer of 2016, I worked with a team put together by the production company Roadtrip Nation to research the lack of diversity in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields. Over 29 days we traveled almost 4,000mi along the east coast and southern United States interviewing women in STEM along the way in hopes of gaining a better understanding of their experiences and challenges thus far. We focused on both their career paths and where they saw areas for improvement for diversity both within STEM and the broader society.

It became obvious early on that I needed to take chances and say yes to things that were intimidating if I wanted to make the most of experience. I knew living with 4 other people in an RV while working on such a tight filming schedule was going to be challenging and I almost said no to the opportunity. Ultimately, the road trip and the individual moments within it empowered me to trust myself and my ability to adapt in new environments and challenging circumstances.

During the course of our trip, we interviewed over 20 leaders in the STEM fields. While a wide variety of meaningful advice was imparted, one common lesson stood out. Many of the women stressed the importance of finding mentors and support systems. Mentors and peers help you navigate challenges and make it easier to overcome moments of adversity. While I have been offered support throughout my time as a student, I did not fully appreciate things such as the relationships available through AnBryce or the sincere care that motivated them. This newfound understanding of the importance of support systems has led me to become more engaged with my role within the AnBryce program as both a student and member of the family we have created.

Ultimately, these experiences have translated to some significant changes in my life. I have left the college of engineering to pursue a degree in Sociology in hopes of better understanding the social causes of the lack of diversity in technical industries such as STEM. The road trip has made me realize that careers do not always follow a straight path, nor is there a single way to reach a goal. I am now working to combine my interests in a way that will allow me to both continue my work with computing while improving access to opportunity for others.

Elicia's full reflection can be found at [anbryce.nd.edu](http://anbryce.nd.edu). For more information about Roadtrip Nation go to [roadtripnation.com](http://roadtripnation.com).



Elicia Dennis '18



## Finding ways to connect, no matter how trivial the interaction to better serve others.

Visalia California native, Armando Sanchez '20, originally thought AnBryce was "just" a scholarship program for first-generation students. Arriving on campus, "I found out that AnBryce was more than a scholarship organization. It is a family dedicated to serving students who otherwise wouldn't have support. It is a network of people who understand each other and help each other reach their goals."

Armando and Logan McAbee-Thomas '19 learned how this idea permeates the greater AnBryce Foundation when they spent ten weeks at Camp Dogwood in Virginia, the camp started by AnBryce founders, Ambassador Beatrice Welters and her husband Anthony. Campers are mostly from under-resourced areas around Washington, D.C. and come for one or two week sessions.

"The skill that impacted me the most was finding a way to connect with someone, no matter how trivial the interaction. I had to get to know the campers quickly, so I could better serve their needs." Armando even received an award for his fellowship, the Brad Chotiner Spirit Award. He would love to see other AnBryce Scholars and Notre Dame students experience life at Camp Dogwood. "It will be very challenging, but extremely rewarding as well. You will experience physical and mental fortitude."

Back on campus, Armando hopes to raise awareness and conversation about diversity. From his work this summer, he sees how important dialogue is to solving problems and building relationships. "I feel that we are too inclined to say "we're working on it" with slim improvement. I want to have those who come after me to never have to sit in a lecture hall and be one of the only minorities."



Armando Sanchez '20



## Quite the socially-conscious scholar.

Jenna Kwak '19, is quite the socially-conscious scholar. From Seattle, WA and majoring in Political Science, with a minor in Japanese, she is continually seeking out opportunities to connect with others.

This summer she lived and worked at Hope Ministries in South Bend. "I thought I was more than equipped to serve the homeless population. I overestimated my readiness because I thought that I had some familiarity with poverty. However, I quickly came to realize that this work was going to challenge me emotionally, physically and intellectually." She learned over the summer that it took more than empathy to make a difference in the community. When she could not relate to the decisions the residents were making she could nevertheless "never stop being encouraging to them to achieve their goals." She continues to volunteer at Hope and arranged for her dorm-mates to serve and organize a garage sale this month.

Not only does she reach out to others in her dorm and in the greater South Bend community, she also builds community within AnBryce. "When I first met my cohort, I thought that these people will be like home—someone I can always go to when Notre Dame gets difficult." As she has grown with her cohort, she also values the professional resources of older scholars, faculty mentors, speakers and our involved donors. "They have done and led incredible life endeavors that I know I can learn from them and network with them."

To others interested in service, Jenna shares, "I recommend to go full out. That starts with choosing a service that you know will be challenging for you. Also I would not be scared to go to a location that you are not familiar with or is out of your comfort zone. I truly think that it is precisely in the areas that you would rather not go, where your service is most needed."



Jenna Kwak '19



## Making friends and making a difference in the lives of others joining AnBryce.

This summer found Shamar Cousin '21 coaching 6th graders in AAU basketball. He is nothing if not honest about the experience. "The role model aspect of being around so many adolescents was what made coaching a struggle at times. I had to be the leader of the Philadelphia Bulldogs both on and off the court." Shamar felt an extra burden of often being the first role-model the players had had. He did not want to disappoint them. "The majority of my players are from intercity Philadelphia, they play so that they can 'make it out of the hood'. [I wanted] to show that you can become successful through academics, and that basketball or other sports are not the only options to conquer poverty."

A prime example of using academics to land a spot at a top university, he is also very honest about his first impressions of AnBryce. "My initial reaction was one of annoyance—I was not too happy about having to leave for school early." This is a sentiment shared by many first year students when they hear AnBryce has a 4-day orientation. Orientation includes visits to the library and learning resource center and meetings with the writing and rhetoric professor, First Year Studies advisors, Financial Aid and others who appear often during their time at Notre Dame. Shamar is quick, though, follow up that assessment, "Coming here early for AnBryce has honestly been the highlight of my Notre Dame experience."

Shamar realized the other perk of being on campus early, "One of my biggest fears about coming to ND was no longer having my friend group from back home and not being able to make new friends when I got here. Being a part of AnBryce gifted me with seven new friends upon arrival and even more friends after meeting AnBryce Scholars from previous cohorts."

Shamar looks forward to seeing his cohort grow and develop in the next four years. AnBryce also plans to have him do outreach to next year's first year students to share how awesome orientation is!



Shamar Cousin '21



# NAVIGATING THE MARGINS: DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

The biennial AnBryce Forum will once again encourage conversation and debate on the campus of the University of Notre Dame this fall. Since 2013, the AnBryce program has supported first-generation, low-income students whose high school successes, personal fortitude and drive in the face of economic hardships and adversity indicate their potential leadership on a larger stage. The Forum is an outgrowth of the mission and values of the AnBryce Scholars Initiative. We often talk about our mission as one that is meant to foster the whole person as he/she grows as a leader and that includes strategic opposition to strengthen views and beliefs. Differing views are presented and encouraged and solutions and approaches to understanding are welcomed.

A very significant way in which we do this is the cultivation of community through monthly "talk back" sessions and social events, where AnBryce students can be themselves and talk about the challenges of navigating Notre Dame, whether those challenges are academic, social or personal. We see these sessions as critical because the scholars are forced to reflect on their time at school and make connections to life here and elsewhere. There are opportunities for them to offer suggestions and pathways to successfully navigate their time at the university; and, often, these strategies benefit them in internships and future careers. Race, class, privilege, economic hardship and adversity are topics that frequently emerge in these discussions. These conversations are honest and thoughtful meditations on what it means to be a first-generation, low-income student at an elite institution in the 21st Century. They know through conversations with friends at other schools that these observations are not unique, nor are

they insurmountable and void of solutions.

We created the AnBryce Forum as a continuation and enlarging of these conversations, a campus-wide dialogue in which faculty, students, administrators and others meet to discuss the challenges that universities face in fulfilling their missions to make college campuses more inclusive, diverse and accessible. Based on the richness of the conversations that took place during various panels from the first AnBryce Forum in November 2015, we believe that the Forum is an important opportunity for the greater Notre Dame campus. Its goal is not only to inform and to spark discussion and debate, but to promote understanding and change in a deep, meaningful way.

Based on the lived, close-to-the ground quality of many of the panels and discussions, we believe it has the potential to impact the worldview of a wide range of actors, to shape the policies and agendas of University decision-makers and to influence the ethos of the University and the larger academy. We also believe the Forum is an opportunity for professional and personal development for our students, many of whom will participate on panels, and help staff advertise and manage events. We also will incorporate other Notre Dame students in our planning, making this a true campus event.

## ORIGINS

The first AnBryce Forum, Class, College and the American Dream, explored the ways that "class" shapes the college experience, and how in turn, college may be a means of social mobility. Panels included discussions of the impact of class differences on academic learning environments; the intersections of race and class in students' social experiences of Notre Dame in a range of environments (like residence halls and social events); and a discussion led by formerly poor and working-class Notre Dame faculty who discussed their own experiences of marginality while navigating college and their post-college careers. A keynote address, offered by provocateur Peter Sacks, explored how colleges and universities (often counter-intuitively) stand in the way of students ascending the class ladder. Student narratives on billboards that were placed outside of Forum meeting rooms talked in personal terms about the difficulties of navigating Notre Dame as first-generation, low-income and students of color.

## THIS YEAR'S FORUM

The 2017 AnBryce Forum will include a keynote address, panels, and draw from other "spin-off" events that are presently being planned by both the AnBryce Program and the Office of the Provost under Professor and Associate VP, Dr. Hugh Page, Jr.; these panels will incorporate Notre Dame administrators and faculty as well as administrators and faculty from other institutions, who will be on campus for a conference on first-generation students, expanding the discussion and the potential range of Forum events.

This year's Forum will examine how those who are on the University's "margins" – those who are often perceived to be, or perceive themselves to be, on the outside looking in – navigate the University life. Here, we use as our marginal "reference point" the experience and background of our own students, who are first-generation, low-income, and in many

cases, students of color. Our panels will include students, faculty, alumni and administrators, and guests from other Universities. When we shared the title of the Forum and the panels with the students at our first dinner, almost every hand raised to help with panels and events. Our students are eager to share their stories and their belief that there are so many ways to approach college in a rich and purposeful way. Stories are deeply important to AnBryce scholars and staff, because it is in stories where we see our similarities and gain greater empathy.

We will add specific information on our website, as it becomes available but wanted to share a selection of the panels we will offer:

- Unique Challenges Faced by First-Generation Students at 21st Century Colleges and Universities: A View from Administrators and Practitioners

Here we will explore how several national universities seek and integrate first-generation students. We'll discuss what initiatives are working and thriving and what initiatives need further developing. This panel will include administrators from schools attending our First Generation Conference.

- Standing Out and Fitting In: How Low-Income Students Navigate Campus Life at Wealthy Institutions

We welcome students from not only Notre Dame, but other leading institutions like Stanford and Georgetown to talk openly about their integration into college life. Students will be candid about ways they see the university fosters their integration and ways in which they have initiated their belonging and the inclusion of others.

- Why do all the "X" students sit together?: Thinking About Belonging and the Social Politics of Separation and Inclusion

Several AnBryce Scholars will join their Notre Dame peers to discuss why they gravitate towards similar social groups. They will reflect on the transition from often very cohesive friend groups at home and how they intentionally or unintentionally try to replicate those groups at school.

- Scholarship Athletes: Challenges, Pressures, Expectations

With support from the Notre Dame Athletics Program, recent alumni who were scholarship athletes dive into what it was like to live a sort of odd, exalted status on campus, while also having to blend-in in class and do solid work in the athletic arena. They will discuss stereotypes attached to athletes, parity, work/life balance and how many struggled to "do it all" and at what cost to their various areas of campus life.

- Just How Do We Diversify the Academy? University Inclusion and Diversity Officers and Faculty Discuss the Question

Led by Dr. Hugh Page, Jr, several administrators and professors from Notre Dame will come together to discuss efforts at the highest levels of the university to address concerns over inclusion and diversity and what that really means within the academy.

The excitement among students and administrators is high. We cannot wait to really explore what it is to live in the margins; and, how we might use these experiences to strengthen ourselves as leaders, problem solvers and facilitators.

For more information, please visit us online at [anbryce.nd.edu/forum](http://anbryce.nd.edu/forum).



## TAILGATING 2017

