Imagine your daughter working alongside a researcher testing novel therapies for cancer treatment. Or imagine your son traveling to Uganda for the summer to work on a clean water project for a small village. Perhaps another student has the opportunity to study and perform with a world-class symphony. While some undergraduates are already pursuing these types of immersion projects, the university is preparing to launch a formal Immersion Vanderbilt program—one of the major initiatives to arise from the ten-year Academic Strategic Plan.

**Immersion Vanderbilt** calls for all university undergraduates to immerse themselves in creative independent projects that give them the opportunity to engage, question and forge change. This experience is designed to be transformative, defining students’ time at Vanderbilt and ensuring that the university is educating the whole person.

“Not only was I able to immerse myself in science during this trip, I was able to immerse myself in the culture,” says Miller, a student in the School of Engineering. “I learned that education can be about so much more than remembering things. When you immerse yourself in an experience, it becomes about exploration, about friends, about adventure. It becomes a part of your life.”

**Immersion Vanderbilt Creates Endless Possibilities Outside of the Classroom**

Graduation and give them a competitive edge in pursuing exciting and satisfying careers.”

The parameters of Immersion Vanderbilt are to be kept broad and flexible, so students have the opportunity to work with a faculty mentor to identify a project that has the capacity to shape them for the rest of their lives.

Cynthia Cyrus, vice provost for learning and residential affairs, explains that Immersion Vanderbilt will enable students to pursue a passion, hone skills and make meaningful differences. “The benefit of immersion in new and different contexts, whether on campus or across the world, is that students—people!—learn most when they are actively engaged in generating new knowledge and making meaning of the world around them. Immersion puts the students in charge of shaping their college experiences around the things that matter most.” Cyrus co-chairs the faculty committee planning Immersion Vanderbilt.

Interested in learning more about Immersion Vanderbilt? Watch a video at vu.edu/immersionvideo to see what undergraduates are doing outside of the classroom.
Parent Spotlight: Louise and Bobby Reed

Louise and Bobby Reed are the kind of people every volunteer-driven organization loves—they’re friendly, enthusiastic and willing to do whatever it takes to fulfill a need. They’ve been helping out at Vanderbilt since their son Andrew, Class of 2016, was a first year student.

“We have always felt it was important to be involved in our children’s schools, starting when they were in kindergarten,” says Louise. “I think it’s important for parents to be present and let their kids know they are always there for them.”

Move-in Day is one of the Reeds’ favorite times to help out—especially when it comes to comforting new parents.

“We love doing Move-in Day—we reassure all the parents that we move 1,600 students in four hours.” says Bobby. “Plus, it’s so well organized and orchestrated—we move 1,600 students in four hours.”

Louise adds that she remembers what it felt like to be a new family and be welcomed by Move-in Day volunteers. “New families always have questions, and we just help them connect with the right people.”

The Reeds also volunteer at Family Weekend and have signed up to host international students over the holidays. They appreciate the varied volunteer opportunities offered to Vanderbilt parents.

“Vanderbilt makes it so easy to be involved, whether it’s just a couple of hours or something longer,” says Bobby. “You don’t need any special skills, you just need to be friendly.”

With one child just starting college and another still in high school, the Reeds have plenty of volunteering in their future—and some schools will be very lucky to have them as parents!

Student Spotlight: Annika Nilsen

Vanderbilt’s outstanding academics and its focus on community and well-being made it the perfect choice for Annika Nilsen, the 2015–2016 recipient of the Barbara B. and J. Lawrence Wilson Scholarship. “I wanted to attend a university that not only developed my mind, but also developed a community of people who make a difference in each other’s lives and the world,” she said.

Annika has made the most of her Vanderbilt experience by participating in myriad activities such as researching cognitive deficits of schizophrenia in the Park Clinical Neuroscience lab, dancing in the South Asian Cultural Exchange’s Diwali Showcase, and participating in Active Minds—an organization that works to combat mental health stigma on college campuses. She has also served as a senator for the College of Arts and Science and a cabinet member of Vanderbilt Student Government, been an active member of the Vanderbilt Programming Board, volunteered at elementary schools through Vanderbilt Student Volunteers for Science, and spent time at the Vanderbilt University Medical Center shadowing physicians and volunteering with patients.

Annika is currently applying to medical school. She dreams of one day opening a free clinic for underserved populations, being an active community leader and having a family.

Faculty Spotlight: Tiffiny Tung

For someone who studies mummies and skeletons and writes about dismemberment and trophy heads, Tiffiny Tung sounds surprisingly normal. Digging into the past is just part of her job as an associate professor of anthropology and director of graduate studies at the College of Arts and Science.

“I took an Andean archaeology course (at U.C. Santa Barbara) and I was hooked,” she says. “I thought it was fascinating how you could try to understand ancient cultures with no written records.”

Tung’s work focuses on the Wari Empire that inhabited the Peruvian Andes more than a thousand years ago. As it turns out, studying the distant past tells us a lot about our world today.

“It’s helping the students expand their worldview—recognizing that there are different ways of living and being in the world,” she says. “We want them to be engaged, well-educated American citizens, but we want also want them to be good global citizens and anthropology has a way of doing that.”

Analyzing human bones is the starting point that bioarchaeologists like Tung use to recreate the past. There are also modern technologies, like stable isotope analysis to reconstruct diets and nutrition and even help determine migration patterns. Extracting and studying ancient DNA can also show how diseases—particularly tuberculosis—have evolved over the years. Tung has students from varied academic backgrounds helping out in this bioarchaeological research.

“I find the students here to be very creative and curious, which as a professor are key characteristics that you want to see in students,” she says. “I take 10 students a year with me to Peru; as you can imagine, it’s a very immersive experience for them, both academically and culturally. They help our team excavate and analyze these thousand-year-old skeletons, while they’re also experiencing life in rural Peru.”

Tung acknowledges that not everyone who majors in anthropology will actually go on to have a career digging up and analyzing ancient bodies. However, she sees a big picture value in the degree.

“The key thing to remember is that anthropology trains students to closely observe their world and be very analytical, and that’s broadly applicable in a variety of careers,” she says. “I can see that the parents have planted this seed of curiosity in their kids. My job as a professor is to help that seed grow.”
VUPD launches SafeVU app

The Vanderbilt University Police Department has launched SafeVU, a free mobile safety application for iPhones and Android smartphones. With SafeVU, users can contact VUPD for emergency services with two taps to their phone’s screen. Some important features include the submission of non-emergency reports via text and the submission of photos and videos. Users have the option to submit information anonymously.

“SafeVU is a personalized communication platform that links the Vanderbilt community to the VUPD communications center in the event they need either emergency or non-emergency assistance,” says Johnny Vanderpool, emergency preparedness manager.

Another goal is making the Study Abroad process easier for parent and students—any parents with helpful information are encouraged to work with the Global Education Office.

“Volunteering and being engaged just make me feel like I’m a part of the Vanderbilt family,” says Teresa. “After attending the Conversation with the Chancellor during Family Weekend, a lot of parents realized it wasn’t just their students learning—they were learning too!”

Jim and Teresa Hillsman named PAFA board chairs

Jim and Teresa Hillsman are embracing their roles as chairs of the Parents and Family Association board and have a clear vision of what they would like to accomplish in the next two years.

“We’re trying to get even more parents engaged in the life of the university,” says Jim, BA’79. “They’re already going to be involved with their students, but when you’re really engaged with the university and learn more about it, it’s a much richer experience.”

The Hillsmans are particularly interested in helping first-generation students and parents make the most of their Vanderbilt experience. The first-generation student population is growing—a change brought on in part by the need-blind admissions policy and Opportunity Vanderbilt scholarship support.

“We have a committee to explore the challenges a first generation family faces,” says Jim. “We want to help acclimate them—as well as transfer students—and make transitioning to the Vanderbilt community a bit easier.”

In an emergency, tapping the app’s “GET HELP” icon will give the users the options of calling VUPD, texting VUPD or calling 911.

Calling 911 routes the call to the nearest 911 call center. Choosing the option to call or text VUPD notifies the VUPD Communications Center, where communications officers will see the user’s profile information and GPS location. This will allow VUPD officers to respond even if the caller is unable to give his or her location.

SafeVU is free and available to all students, faculty and staff. It’s available through both the Apple Store and the Google Play store—search for “SafeVU,” all one word.

Q&A with BRENT TENER, Director of the Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships

What are the main functions of your office?
The main function of our office is to make a Vanderbilt education possible without regard to a student’s family financial circumstances through the Opportunity Vanderbilt program. To quote Chancellor Zeppos: “We enrich Vanderbilt’s unique learning community and make it a more dynamic environment for everyone when we open our doors to highly talented and qualified students of all economic, cultural and geographical backgrounds.”

How do the financial aid officers work with families?
Each student is assigned to a financial aid officer who is available to individually work with each student and their family. Financial aid officers individually review each financial aid application along with any other materials submitted by the family.

Why must our family reapply for aid each academic year?
Students receiving need-based financial assistance must reapply each year, as the student and family financial circumstances can change. Our experience is that the financial aid awards for most families remain consistent from year to year. Students receiving merit-based assistance typically do not need to reapply.

If our financial circumstances change, can we expect our aid package to change?
Yes, since we evaluate need-based aid eligibility each and every year, the award can change based upon changes in the family’s financial circumstances.

Are there merit scholarship opportunities available for upper-class students?
Upper-class students can apply for the Ingram Scholarship, which is based upon demonstrated community service. In addition, there are a small number of engineering scholarships awarded to returning students.

Join the thousands of parents and alumni who are committed to growing our undergraduate scholarship endowment. Learn more about Opportunity Vanderbilt at vu.edu/oppvu.

Vanderbilt University Police Department (VUPD) launches SafeVU, a free mobile safety application for iPhones and Android smartphones. Featuring easy access to emergency services, non-emergency reports, and the submission of photos and videos, SafeVU is designed to enhance safety and communication for students, faculty, and staff. With just two taps, users can reach VUPD or 911 directly from their phone’s screen. Important features include:

- **Safety Assistance**: Access to emergency services with taps to the screen.
- **Non-Emergency Reporting**: Submit reports via text or by uploading photos and videos.
- **Anonymous Submission**: Option to submit information without revealing personal details.

**Challenges and Benefits**

- **Improved Safety**: Enhanced safety for users with quick access to help.
- **Resource Utilization**: Efficient use of resources by allowing non-emergency requests.
- **Community Engagement**: Encourages engagement within the Vanderbilt community.

**Strategic Focus**

- **First-Generation Students**: Special attention to the needs of first-generation students and their families.
- **Study Abroad**: Making the Study Abroad process easier for parents and students.
- **Ingram Scholarship**: Accessible to upper-class students for financial assistance.

**Getting Started**

With SafeVU, users can contact VUPD for emergency services or submit non-emergency reports. Available through the Apple Store and Google Play, the app guarantees the continuity of Vanderbilt’s unique learning community and the dynamic environment it fosters.
For your convenience, Vanderbilt provides a number of ways for parents, grandparents, alumni and friends to make gifts. Specific information is available online at giving.vanderbilt.edu.

Ways to give

- Gifts, pledges and pledge payments may be mailed to Vanderbilt Parents Campaign, Gift and Donor Services, PMB 407727, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, TN 37240-7727.
- Credit card gifts may be made on our secure website at vanderbilt.edu/giveonline.
- Instructions and authorization forms for making a gift of stock to Vanderbilt can be found at giving.vanderbilt.edu/givingstocks.php. For questions, please call (615) 875-1155 or email stockgifts@vanderbilt.edu.
- To make an anonymous gift, tell the Parents Campaign Office of your request—(615) 343-3121—and it will be processed accordingly.
- If you’re considering a planned gift such as a charitable gift annuity or bequest, please contact Anthony Barclay in the Office of Planned Giving at (615) 343-3113.

Want to motivate and inspire others? Tell us why you give back to Vanderbilt—we’d love to hear your story. Please share it at vu.edu/whyigive.

As a Vanderbilt parent, your annual gift of any amount helps fuel the positive momentum Vanderbilt is experiencing. Thanks to these gifts, we are:

- creating world-class research facilities such as the Engineering and Science Building
- providing innovative living and learning communities to enhance the undergraduate residential experience
- assisting with student financial aid, helping maintain Vanderbilt’s need-blind admissions policy and ongoing commitment to meet 100 percent of a family’s demonstrated need
- securing funds that can be used immediately toward laboratory and classroom equipment, library acquisitions, renowned guest lectures, special programs and seminars

You help Vanderbilt provide excellence in every aspect of your student’s experience. Thank you for extending your investment in your child’s education by making an annual gift.

To give online, please go to vanderbilt.edu/supportvu.

Thank you!

Kelly and Steven Madden

MADDENS SUPPORT VANDERBILT’S ‘GREATER GOOD’ PHILOSOPHY

Kelly and Steven (BS’91) Madden strongly believe that a better Vanderbilt equals a better world. It is with this thought that they serve as co-chairs for the Parents Leadership Committee.

“We absolutely believe in Vanderbilt’s mission,” states Kelly. “The staff, facilities and programs all add to the development and depth of tomorrow’s leaders. Vanderbilt Commodores can be a significant force in elevating our world.”

As a parent of Holt, Class of 2018, and as an alumnus, Steven has a unique perspective on Vanderbilt’s past and present.

“Vanderbilt has always set expectation high, and the Commodores have consistently risen to every challenge. When you expect the best, and work for it, you will get the best,” says Steven. “I am fortunate to have been a part of the transformation that occurs at Vanderbilt, and am proud of the reputation our school has of turning students into leaders. I am encouraged as I see our son and his classmates develop, and I am confident that we are giving the future a brighter path because of them. The young men and woman at Vanderbilt have unlimited potential, as long as we give them the environment and resources to realize it.”

The Maddens realize that it takes a village to raise the funds necessary to fuel Vanderbilt’s positive momentum. That’s why they’re talking to parents about joining the committee.

“I’m not a salesperson, but it’s very easy for me to talk about Vanderbilt and about supporting Vanderbilt,” Kelly says. “There’s such a ‘greater good’ philosophy that encompasses this work. The Parents Leadership Committee, like Vanderbilt itself, asks the most and best of us, and that’s what helps us make our university better.”

“As Vanderbilt parents, we’ve all seen the changes in our children—the transformation and self-actualization,” Steven says. “It motivates us to pay it forward, because at the end of the day it’s about giving back and presenting deserving students with one of the most complete educational experiences available.”

The need-blind admissions policy is another reason the Maddens are passionate about Vanderbilt.

“No child is denied access to Vanderbilt because of their inability to pay, and that’s a great way to give the most qualified students an opportunity,” says Kelly. “It’s heartwarming to see these young people react with such excitement. They love Vanderbilt as much as we do, and we are often fulfilling life long dreams.”

If you’re interested in learning more about the Parent Leadership Committee, please contact Amy Jarvis at (615) 343-3121 or at amy.jarvis@vanderbilt.edu.

WHAT IS THE PLC?

The Parents Leadership Committee (PLC) is composed of parent donors who provide important support to parent fundraising efforts. Committee members act as advocates for Vanderbilt University in their home communities, as mentors and connectors to other parents, and as generous donors by making leadership annual gifts to the university in the following ranges:

- Cornelius Vanderbilt—gifts of $25,000 or more
- Dean’s List—gifts of $10,000 to $24,999
- Benefactor—gifts of $5,000 to $9,999

We remain grateful for the vital support the Parents Leadership Committee, which is currently 225 families strong, continues to grow. As well, any gift to Vanderbilt—whether unrestricted or endowed—is counted in our overall parent giving program.
Every student at Vanderbilt benefits from the enthusiastic support of our parent volunteers. You offer guidance and support to new parents at Move-in Day. During Family Weekend, you share your career advice and expertise with our students. You welcome the newest members of the Vanderbilt family into your home at Summer Send-off Parties. Throughout the year, you make our university better.

2015 Summer Send-off Party Hosts
Elizabeth and Bob Baker
Melissa and Braden Barnes
Amy and John Brown
Susan and Ronnie Brown
Jennie and Richard Carlson
Susan and Paul Chronister
Poppy and Rob Clements
Kris and Tim Donay
Jenny Elkins
Stephanie and Peter Fleming
Jillan and Frank Glass
Dawn and Chad Gnam
Elizabeth Goode
Moe and John Guerry
Teresa and Jim Hillman
Susan and Keith Hoogland
Janet and Ben Howe
Betsey and Bruce Keller
Amy and Robert Marran
Suzanne and Patrick McGee
Brenda and Herman Morris
Debbie and Larry Myers
Stephanie and Michael Podolak
Jennifer and Mark Rubin
Sara and Paul Russell
Mary Margaret and Lloyd Stamy
Nancy and Bruce Zimmerman

Move-in Day and Family Weekend Volunteers
Geri and Brian Allday
Diana and Vic Apple
Anna and Jim Alfieri
Elizabeth and Bob Baker
Aimee Ball
Jacqueline and John Bird
Shelly Blair
Cheri and Rich Bout
Lia and Jim Bayette
Karen and Michael Clavin
Kim and Rob Clutsam
Warner Cribb
Shirley and Michael Davis
Victoria and Scott Estes
Alison Faults
Barbara Gill
Sheryl Godvey
Ruthie and Rick Gomez
Debbie and Doug Grant
Michele Harbin
Karline and Kevin Harris
Teresa and Jim Hillman
Emily and Tam Hillsman
Libby Hinson
Kathy and Scott Hornaday
Barbara Huddleston
Wendy Jordan
Janet Kassauf and Larry Quan
Gary Kavulich
Erin and Mark Kilpatrick
Saralee Lasos
Horriette Wolford Lowenthal
Kiri and Marius Magdlin
William Matos
Shelly Miller
Amy Moore
Carlo Marrero and Maria de la Torre
Debra and Rich Palkoff
Carlo and Bruck Phillips
Cecile and Mike Puno
Louise and Bobby Reich
Barbara Rose
Colette and Jim Scott
Sharon and Mark Spears
Andrea and Scott Spear
Dawn and Brad Smith
Susan and Mitch Thompson
Sherry Tief
Audra and Karolyn Watkins
Gw Wiel
Kara Rose Winckel

Parent volunteer opportunities

- Career networking events for Vanderbilt students
  If you are interested in advising students, volunteer for the Soiree at Sarratt networking event during Family Weekend in the fall. There are also opportunities for your company to participate in recruiting events on campus and in your region.

- Global Education Office
  The Parent Ambassador Program was established to allow experienced parents of study abroad students to answer questions that parents of prospective study abroad students may have.

- Home for the Holidays
  Host Vanderbilt international students in your home during Thanksgiving and winter break.

- First-year parent outreach program
  Welcome the parents of new students to the Vanderbilt community.

- Regional care package party
  Welcome the parents of new students to the Vanderbilt community.

- On-campus events
  Welcome new Vanderbilt parents, answer questions, pass out brochures, and assist families of first-year students during Move-in Day or work the registration table during Family Weekend.

- Admissions volunteer opportunities
  Help Vanderbilt admissions counselors in your area at college fairs and programs, pass out brochures and materials, and assist prospective students and their families with questions.

- Alumni Relations volunteer opportunities
  Host or organize Summer Send-off Parties for new students and their parents or guardians in July and August.

How to volunteer
To keep a standing reservation for specific volunteer opportunities, please visit vanderbilt.edu/families, click “Volunteer” on the menu bar, and complete the online participation form.