Mallory Isburg graduated in 2017 with a B.A. in anthropology and distinction in her major, an achievement celebrated by her parents, who traveled from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, for commencement.

Of Dakota Sioux heritage, Mallory was raised in Chamberlain, South Dakota, a town of just over 2,000 people. In summer 2013, she came to campus with the inaugural cohort of Freshman Scholars at Yale, or FSY (since renamed First-Year Scholars at Yale). The five-week program gave her more than a jump start on coursework and an introduction to college life; she credits FSY with shaping her entire Yale experience.

"You can never be completely ready for any major life transition, but FSY brought me as close as I could ever imagine. Coming into the school year with a family of thirty-two other first-years, when before I had known absolutely no one, was indispensable. In addition, we became informal guides for our peers—when the semester started, we already knew logistical information like building codes or how to use the printers, and more substantive knowledge like how to communicate with professors."

Mallory returned to FSY as a counselor following her sophomore year, and as a senior, she joined the newly founded FSY Council, group of representatives from each class that keeps the FSY community engaged. “FSY-ers are so grateful for the experience and eager to help pave the way for future students,” she said.

Mallory remains on campus for 2017–2018 as a Woodbridge Fellow in the University Chaplain’s office. She also serves as a resident fellow in Benjamin Franklin College. Looking forward, she plans to pursue professional experience at the intersection of education, law, and social work.

A robust financial aid program brings exceptional students like Mallory to Yale, regardless of their financial circumstances. Programs like First-Year Scholars at Yale help them thrive. To learn more about ways to support these students, please visit giving.yale.edu or call 800.395.7646.

"FSY facilitated a much easier transition, showed me the wealth of opportunities and resources on campus, and introduced me to lifelong friends."

—Mallory Isburg ’17

First-Year Scholar to Yale Graduate