

THE GERALD AND GAIL TURNER SCHOLARS PROGRAM

SUMMER 2025

# The Scholar Scoop

WELCOME TO SMU, CLASS OF 2029!



## THE SCHOLAR SCOOP

# — Welcome to the Hilltop!



Dear Class of 2029 Turner Scholars,

Welcome to the Hilltop, and the next big step in your life's journey! We are so excited to welcome you to Southern Methodist University and the SMU Gerald and Gail Turner Scholars Program, the "most radically caring program on campus."

The Turner Scholars Program is dedicated to uplifting and enriching students' personal and professional lives by connecting them to their peers, university resources, and a one-of-a-kind community that helps them make the most of their time on SMU's campus.

Throughout your time on the Hilltop, the Turner Scholars Program will offer support, help you build your personal and professional leadership skills, empower you to become the best version of yourself, and prepare you for a successful post-college life.

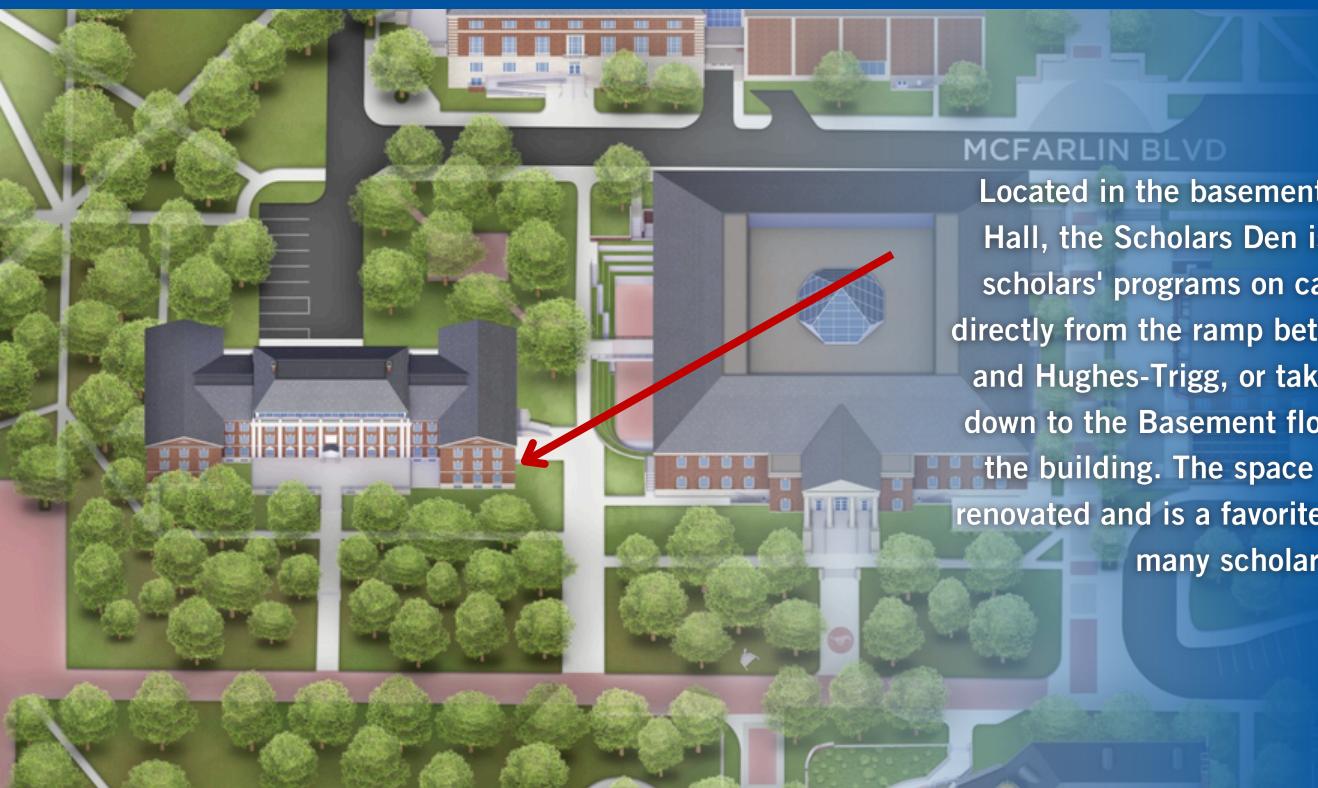
Again, welcome to SMU and the Turner Scholars Program. We are overjoyed to have you join us and cannot wait to see how you make your mark on the Hilltop!

# Where are we located?

We are primarily located in the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) and the Scholars Den.



Located in front of Arnold Dining Commons, the ACE is on the first floor of Armstrong Commons. The entrance is along the alleyway between Armstrong and Kathy Crow Commons, where the staircase is indicated.



Located in the basement of Clements Hall, the Scholars Den is home to all scholars' programs on campus. Enter directly from the ramp between Clements and Hughes-Trigg, or take the elevator down to the Basement floor from inside the building. The space was recently renovated and is a favorite study spot for many scholars!

TURNER SCHOLARS PROGRAM

# Director

# Nikole MELGAREJO JUAREZ



B.A. Political Science



M.Ed Counseling-Student Affairs



Nikole hugging Academic Success Counselor Dr. Sue Bierman, at the 2023 Rotunda Gala



**Nikole Melgarejo Juarez, M.Ed.**, is the Director for The Turner Scholars Program. A native of Southern California, Nikole earned her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from San Diego State University and her Master of Education in Counseling-Student Affairs from Texas Christian University.

Before joining SMU and the Turner Scholars Program in July 2019, she worked as a counseling intern for Texas Christian University's TRIO, Student Support Services, working primarily with at-risk and underrepresented students. She also served as the graduate assistant for TCU's Undergraduate Academic Initiatives, helping first-year students transition to college life.

Nikole enjoys being outdoors, traveling, and experiencing new cultures. She is the proud mom to two young children and is excited to see you grow in your first year as a Mustang!

Contact Nikole at [nmelgarejo@smu.edu](mailto:nmelgarejo@smu.edu)

TURNER SCHOLARS PROGRAM

## ***Senior Academic Counselor***

# **Keuna "Ke"**

WEBSTER



B.A. Political Science

Minor in Diversity Studies



M.Ed Student Affairs in Higher Education



Ke with Bri and Nikole at the 2025 Rotunda Gala



**Keuna "Ke" Webster, M.Ed.**, is the Senior Academic Success Counselor for the Turner Scholars Program. A native Texan, Ke is a two-time first-gen alumna from Texas State University (Go Bobcats!) with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, a minor in Diversity Studies, and a Master of Education in Student Affairs in Higher Education.

After graduating with her Master's degree in 2022, Ke relocated to Dallas from Austin to work at Dallas College as the Lead Career and Transfer Skills Development Specialist, where she helped students transition straight into the workforce or 4-year institutions. After a year and a half, she transferred to Multicultural Affairs, serving as the Coordinator of Multicultural Affairs, building community and planning signature events around the Dallas community.

Contact Ke at [keuna@smu.edu](mailto:keuna@smu.edu)

TURNER SCHOLARS PROGRAM

## ***Academic Success Counselor***

# **Briana MORALES**



B.A. Psychology



M.Sc Counseling



Briana in front of Dallas Hall with Pax, following her 2025 Graduation Ceremony.



**Briana Morales, M.Sc.,** is the Academic Success Counselor for the Turner Scholars Program. A native Texan, Briana earned both her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Master of Science in Counseling from SMU.

Before joining the Turner Scholars Program in 2023, Briana served as the graduate assistant for SMU's First-Generation Initiative program, where she fiercely advocated for first-generation students like herself on the Hilltop.

Briana's passion for student-centered support and advocacy is a cornerstone for her career at SMU. She is elated to work one-on-one with our first-year students during their monthly Academic Success Meetings.

Contact Briana at [bmorales@smu.edu](mailto:bmorales@smu.edu)

TURNER SCHOLARS PROGRAM

# ***Academic Success Counselor***

# **Sue BIERMAN**



B.S. Psychology



M.S. Student Counseling & Personnel Services



Ph.D. Higher Education & Higher Ed. Admin



Sue with Dr. Sheri Kunovich and Dr. David Doyle at a Rotunda Scholars Event



**Dr. Sue Bierman, Ph.D.**, is an Academic Success Counselor for the Turner Scholars Program. She received her B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. from Texas A&M University. She has worked with student-athletes at Texas A&M, Sam Houston State University, and Butler University. Since arriving at SMU in 2007, Sue has worked with student-athletes in football, men's/women's basketball, men's/women's swimming and diving, and volleyball.

She was also the Executive Director of the Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center at SMU until her retirement in the Summer 2024. In Fall 2024, she joined our program as an Academic Success Counselor. Sue also works part-time with SMU Taos and would love to see Turner Scholars in this beautiful location!

In her free time, Sue enjoys watching the Mustangs, playing tennis, and rescuing dachshunds.

[Contact Sue at sbierman@smu.edu](mailto:sbierman@smu.edu)

**E-CUBED:**

**explore**

**empower**

**evolve**

E-Cubed is the core of the Turner Scholars Program. We believe in the transformative power of **exploration**, encouraging scholars to embrace the vast opportunities available at SMU and discover their passions and potential. Through **empowerment**, the program aims to equip scholars with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to advocate for themselves and others, fostering leadership and personal excellence. Finally, the mission statement emphasizes the importance of **evolution**, inspiring scholars to continuously grow, adapt, and become catalysts for positive change during their time at SMU and beyond.



STUDENT

# Fellow —

## ANEIRY RESENDIZ



Aneiry having a laugh with Jacob Garza ('25) at the 2025 Rotunda Gala

**Aneiry Resendiz** is our Turner Scholars Program Fellow for this academic year. A senior and Dallas native, Aneiry is pursuing her Bachelor's of Business Administration in Marketing with a minor in Spanish. This summer, Aneiry has kept busy with her Marketing and Sales and Content Innovation intern role for Lingro Learning.

She is no stranger to the Turner Scholars Program, as she began her student leadership experience as a Peer Counselor during the 2023-2024 academic year, and most recently served as one of the Program Coordinators from 2024-2025.

In her rare moments of free time, Aneiry enjoys cooking, podcasting, and spending time with friends. She's also well-acquainted with nature, as she's nearly lost a finger to a camel!

For many of our Turner Scholars and staff alike, Aneiry is a favorite person on campus, and we are excited to have her serve as our Turner Fellow this year.

[Get in touch with Aneiry at aresendiz@smu.edu](mailto:aresendiz@smu.edu)

# Turner Student Leadership

The Student Leadership Team is composed of the Turner Fellow, Graduate Assistant, Communications Director, Upperclassmen Coordinator, and two First-Year Coordinators.

Led by Turner Fellow Aneiry Resendiz, the Turner Student Leadership Team comprises six students who focus on different aspects of the Turner Model to assist Peer Counselors (PCs), Peer Upperclassman Liasons (PULs), Scholars, and Professional Staff in driving success and engagement throughout the year. They work alongside one another and Turner Student Staff, building a sense of community and culture driven by Turner Scholars and academic excellence.

Turner Student Leaders are chosen through an extensive interview and application process after the Spring semester and come from across the country, majors, and backgrounds to assist Staff, welcome, and mentor returning Turner Scholars.

Meet your Student Leadership Team for the 2025-26 Academic Year below:



Maria Rios is our Graduate Assistant, and a proud SMU Alumna and MSc student on the Hilltop. Her role serves as a pillar of the Program by cultivating positive relationships within and outside of the program, working closely with professional staff to address programmatic needs, and coordinating efforts that support student development during their time at SMU.



Ja'niah is the Communications Director for the Program (and the person who made this, yippee!). She monitors our social media and communication channels, highlighting student success in the program. She is also responsible for external communications related to programming and collaborating with this team to connect with scholars across campus.



Megan is the program's Upperclassmen Coordinator. She is responsible for supporting Peer Upperclassman Liaison (PUL) events and programming, fostering a sense of community, and guiding upperclassmen students, and serves as a critical link between upperclassmen scholars, PULs, and Turner Staff.



Erica and Max are the program's Underclassmen Coordinators. They are responsible for planning and executing Community Dinners, supporting PCs in their job functions, and serving as an integral part of the Turner Scholars student leadership team.

# Turner Student Leadership Team



Graduate Assistant

## Maria Rios

Maria Rios is the Graduate Assistant for the Turner Scholars Program. Maria is from Dallas, Texas, and graduated from SMU in May 2023 with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Spanish with a minor in Philosophy. She is entering her third year pursuing a Master of Science in Counseling at SMU. Maria previously served as a Peer Counselor with the Turner Scholars Program during her undergraduate career and is thrilled to return as the program's Graduate Assistant for the third year in a row.

Maria is known as one of the kindest, funniest, and friendliest faces on campus and a gourmet self-taught baker (be on the lookout throughout the year in GroupMe for her occasional drops in the ACE!). She is a member of Kappa Delta Chi Sorority, Inc. and was involved with the Hispanic or Latino Association (HOLA) during her undergraduate career.

Get in touch with Maria at [mmrios@smu.edu](mailto:mmrios@smu.edu)

## Ja'niah Cooper

Ja'niah Cooper is the Communications Director for the Turner Scholars Program. A junior from Chattanooga, Tennessee, Ja'niah is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies, specializing in Africa & the Middle East. This is her first year in the role, and she could not be more excited for her opportunity to give back to a program that has poured so much into her.

On campus, she is also involved with the Association of Black Students, the Dedman College Scholars Program, and is a proud member of the Kappa Mu chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated. You can often find Ja'niah at random campus events with friends, studying in one of the libraries, or playing The Sims 4 and Roblox in the Scholar's Den when she should be focusing.

[Get in touch with Ja'niah at jlcooper@smu.edu](mailto:jlcooper@smu.edu)



Communications Director



Upperclassmen Coordinator

## Megan Manning

Megan Manning is a junior pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, a Bachelor of Arts in Corporate Communication and Public Affairs with a specialization in Political Communication, and a minor in Spanish.

On campus, Megan serves as the President of the Kappa Mu Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, and Events Chair for the Alexander Hamilton Society. Megan is also an active member of the Student Foundation and the Association of Black Students.

In her free time, Megan loves listening to Ariana Grande and drinking iced coffee on the Katy Trail near campus!

[Get in touch with Megan at meganruthm@smu.edu](mailto:meganruthm@smu.edu)

# Max Engelbrecht

Max Engelbrecht is a junior pursuing three degrees: a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, a Bachelor of Arts in Markets and Culture, and a Bachelor of Science in Sociology, with a minor in Business.

Over the past two years, Max has served as a Resident Assistant (RA) for Boaz Commons, a member of the RA Advisory Board, a member of Program Council, and a contributor to the Boulevard Bulletin. Last year, he also served as a Peer Leader in the Office of Wellbeing Education and as a Peer Counselor on Turner staff.

Max is looking forward to all the adventures and excitement that the Turner Scholars Program holds this fall!

[Get in touch with Max at mengelbrecht@smu.edu](mailto:mengelbrecht@smu.edu)



First-Year Coordinator



First-Year Coordinator

# Erika Puente-Lopez

Erika Puente-Lopez is a senior pursuing two degrees: a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and a Bachelor of Science in Data Science.

Apart from being a first-year co-coordinator for the Turner Scholars program, she serves as a Spiritual Life Mentor for the Office of the Chaplain and Religious Life and RLSH. She is also an active member of Wesley House, through which she has been able to do what she loves the most: give back to the community by building houses with Habitat for Humanity. For Erika, it's one of the best experiences she's had at the Hilltop.

In her free time, she enjoys running and trying out new coffee shops. Her favorite shop close to campus is White Rock Coffee!

[Get in touch with Erika at epuentelopez@smu.edu](mailto:epuentelopez@smu.edu)

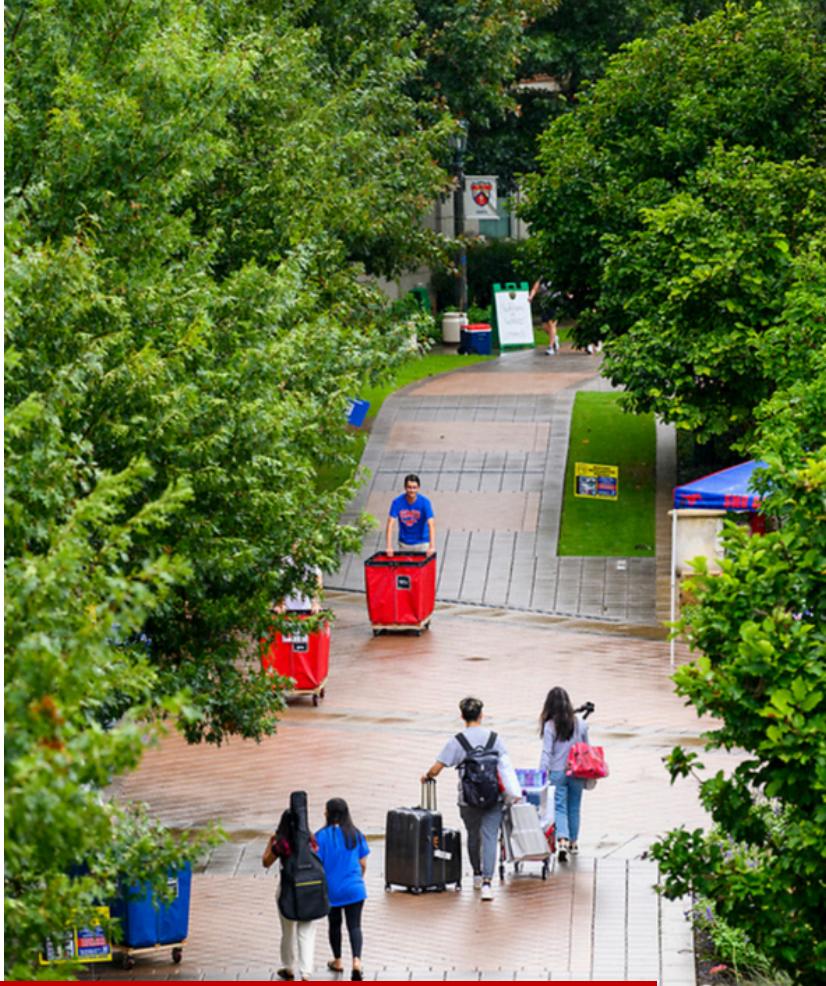
# RISE Institute

During the week before the start of classes, incoming Turner Scholars are invited to participate in the highly anticipated RISE Institute (Readiness, Interdependence, Success, and Excellence). This exclusive multi-day program offers scholars the unique opportunity to move in early, become acquainted with SMU's campus and the Dallas area, and learn what it means to be a part of the Turner family.



At the RISE Institute, through a carefully curated program, scholars engage in purposeful activities, forming connections with fellow participants, essential campus resources, and influential faculty, staff, and alumni. This immersive experience sets the stage for a successful academic journey by providing a supportive and empowering environment from the very beginning. Workshops, seminars, and interactive sessions focus on readiness, cultivating interdependence, fostering success, and striving for excellence in all aspects of life.

The RISE Institute empowers scholars to form lasting friendships, build supportive networks, and explore the wealth of opportunities available at SMU. By connecting with key individuals and resources, scholars gain a deeper understanding of the campus community and the tools necessary to navigate their academic and personal journeys effectively.



## Move-in Information

The Residential Life and Student Housing (RLSH) Department oversees move-in and addresses residential commons questions on campus. **As Turner Scholars, you are eligible for early move-in for RISE.**

Preparing for university life can be overwhelming, especially when it comes to packing. However, there's no need to worry because we've got you covered. Take a look at our informative packing guides, which provide suggestions on what to bring and what items are supplied by SMU. Additionally, SMU has policies in place regarding specific items like coffee makers, which you can find on our housing policies webpage and fire safety page.

While we want you to be comfortable in SMU's housing, it's important to pack appropriately and safely. We advise against bringing a U-Haul to campus due to limited parking availability and space in student rooms. To simplify things, you can send up to 10 packages to SMU before Move-In, and you'll receive an email with your PO Box information. More details can be found on the SMU Postal Services website. If you're concerned about unpacking, you can bring up to four guests to help you on Move-In Days.

If you'd like to understand your future residence, we recommend checking out the 360 videos, photos, and floor plans available for your Residential Commons or Upper Division Housing. We also organize Instagram Live Sessions for each Commons in July, where you can learn more, see the Commons, and ask any questions you may have.

# map.smu.edu

SMU is a large campus, and we know that navigating a new place can be confusing. Use this tool, made by SMU, to find paths between buildings, parking locations, and more throughout the year.

We recommend using this Map to find where your classes will be before the semester begins. It is also useful for locating key spots on campus, like the Hughes-Trigg Student Center, Fondren Library, the Scholars Den, Dedman Gym, Umphrey Lee and Arnold Dining Commons, the Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center (A-LEC), and, of course, the ACE, to name a few.

# **Peer Upperclassmen Liasons (PULS)**

Peer Upperclassmen Liasons (PULs) are upperclassmen Turner Scholars who serve as critical links for the Program. They are here to support scholars in their second years and beyond by providing career, academic, and personal support based on their experiences within their respective schools.

The role of a PUL is to serve as a resource and role model, helping students navigate the challenges and opportunities they encounter throughout their time at SMU, and especially while planning for life beyond the Hilltop.

Peer Upperclassmen Liasons are chosen through an extensive interview and application process after the Spring semester and come from across the country, majors, and backgrounds to welcome and mentor returning Turner Scholars.

Meet your Peer Upperclassmen Liasons for the 2025-26 Academic Year below:

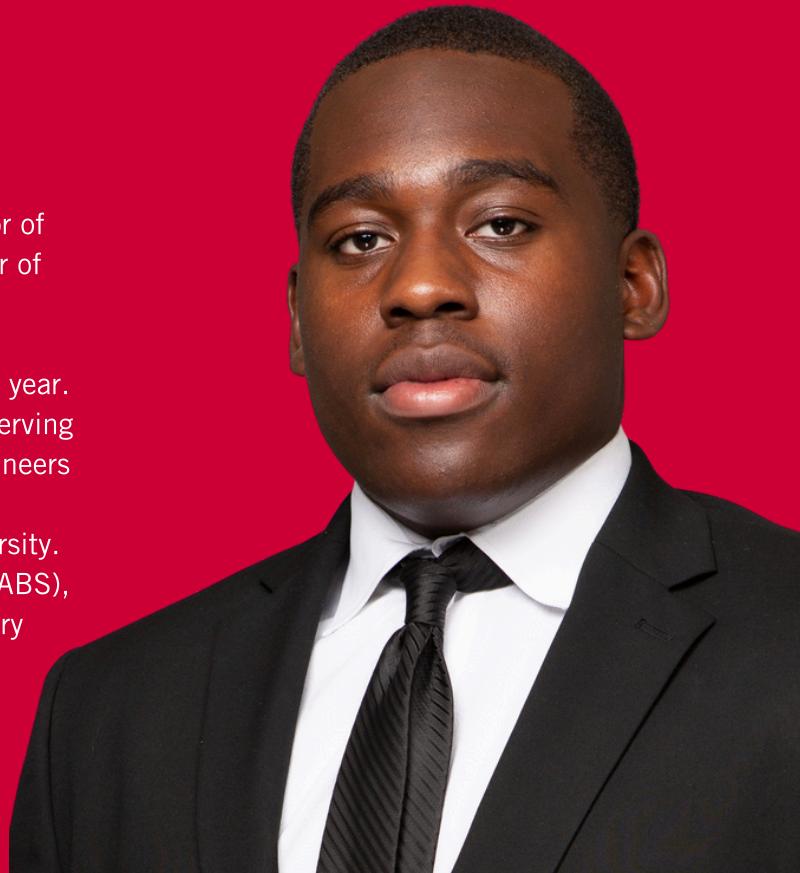
# Chris Ageh

*Lyle School of Engineering*

Chris Ageh is a junior from Katy, Texas, pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Electrical and Computer Engineering, a Bachelor of Science in Data Science, and a minor in Mathematics.

Chris is returning to the Turner Scholar Staff for his second year. Outside of the Turner Program, he stays busy on campus, serving as the Vice President for the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), a mentor for the Thrive Scholars Program and the Connect program, and a ministry co-leader for SMU Intervarsity. He is also a member of the Association of Black Students (ABS), the African Students Association (ASA), and the CIO Advisory Board.

[Get in touch with Chris at cageh@smu.edu](mailto:cageh@smu.edu)



# Kaila Belt

*Simmons School of Education and Human Development*

Kaila Belt is a junior pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and a Bachelor of Science in Applied Physiology and Health Management.

Outside of the Turner Program, she is a member of FOCUS (Fellowship of Christian University Students), Program Council, and the Association of Black Students. In addition to these organizations, she is the Vice President of Sisters Supporting Sisters, as well as a mentor in the Connect Program run by the Social Change and Intercultural Engagement (SCIE) office.

In her free time, Kaila enjoys spending time with friends and family, working out at the Dedman Recreation Center, and coming up with new coffee creations! She's so happy to be here and can't wait to get to know all of you this year!

[Get in touch with Kaila at kibelt@smu.edu](mailto:kibelt@smu.edu)



## Habibulla Ebadulla-Olgly

*Dedman College of Humanities and Science*

Habibulla Ebadulla-Olgly is a Texas native from Garland. He is on the Pre-Medical track pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Biology, a Bachelor of Science in Health and Society, and a minor in Business.

This will be Habibulla's third year returning to the Turner Program Staff! Outside of the Turner Program, Habibulla is involved with SMU's Muslim Student Association (MSA) and the Minority Association of Pre-Health Students (MAPS).

[Get in touch with Habibulla at hebadullaogly@smu.edu](mailto:hebadullaogly@smu.edu)

## Donovan De Jesus

*Meadows School of the Arts*

Donovan De Jesus is a Texas native from Mesquite. He is a junior pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Music Education.

When not working or studying, Donovan enjoys attending concerts and exploring new coffee shops around town. He's so excited to meet this new cohort and is confident that we are going to have an amazing year!

P.S. If you're ever in the mood to hear some live music, find Donovan, as he plays the viola!

[Get in touch with Donovan at ddejesus@smu.edu](mailto:ddejesus@smu.edu)



# Caroline Madrid

*Dedman College of Humanities and Science*

Caroline Madrid is a senior and a Texas native from Fort Worth. She is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Psychology, with minors in Political Science and Law & Legal Reasoning.

In her role as a PUL, Caroline will support pre-law students with academic planning and law school preparation. On campus, she is the Secretary of the First-Generation Initiative Executive Board and a Community Ambassador, mentoring students from underrepresented backgrounds and giving campus tours.

This summer, she's had the opportunity to intern with both the Fort Worth Mayor's Office and the City Attorney's Office, gaining hands-on experience in municipal government, legal research, and public policy. A fun fact about Caroline is that she's currently part of an undergraduate research program focused on preserving historical artifacts. She remarked, "While it's not directly related to my major or career goals, it's been such a fun and rewarding experience to explore something completely outside of my field and learn in a whole new way."

Get in touch with Caroline at [crmadridd@smu.edu](mailto:crmadridd@smu.edu)



# Madison McNeely

*Meadows School of the Arts*

Madison McNeely is a senior pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting and a minor in English.

Going into her third year on staff, Madison is so excited to welcome the Class of 2029! Outside of the Turner Scholars Program, Madison is also on the board for SMU Student Theatre, where she's responsible for helping students by providing them with resources to produce their own projects (be sure to check them out [@smustagram\\_](#)!).

Madison's time at SMU has been life-changing, and she's ready to tackle her last year, with a reminder to pony up always! :)

Get in touch with Madison at [mmmcneely@smu.edu](mailto:mmmcneely@smu.edu)





# **Yuritxi Rodriguez**

*Cox School of Business*

Yuritxi Rodriguez is a senior pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting, an Entrepreneurship Specialization, and a minor in Spanish.

If there's one thing Yuritxi can never pass up, it's good food and spontaneous adventures. On campus, you'll catch her at just about any event serving good food, because, in her own words, "Let's be real, I'm a proud foodie first, scholar second." Outside of the hustle of day-to-day life, she loves exploring new restaurants and trying dishes that "Make her wallet cry but her soul sing."

Whether she's hunting down the best ramen or chasing down a midnight craving, Yuritxi thrives on the thrill of the unexpected. She brings a curious energy to everything she does, and she's always up for sharing a laugh, a meal, or a random story from the previous night's campus wandering. She loves going on spontaneous late-night adventures around campus, even if it means sacrificing a little sleep for unforgettable memories. Whether you're chatting about the best tacos in the city or something completely different, Yuritxi is always down for a good conversation, and bonus points if snacks are involved!

[Get in touch with Yuritxi at ycrodriguez@smu.edu](mailto:ycrodriguez@smu.edu)

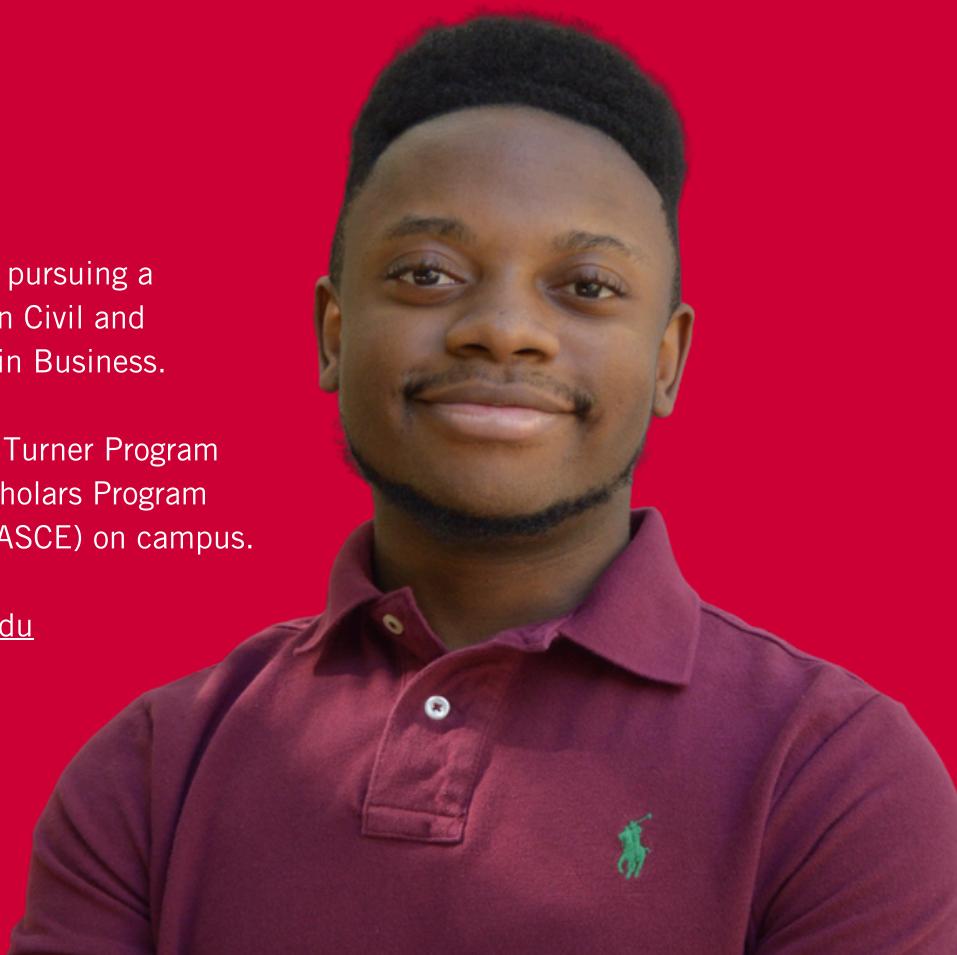
# **Reece Smith**

*Lyle School of Engineering*

Reece Smith is a senior and Dallas native pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering in Civil and Environmental Engineering, with a minor in Business.

Reece is a returning staff member for the Turner Program and also stays involved with the Thrive Scholars Program and American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) on campus.

[Get in touch with Reece at reeces@smu.edu](mailto:reeces@smu.edu)



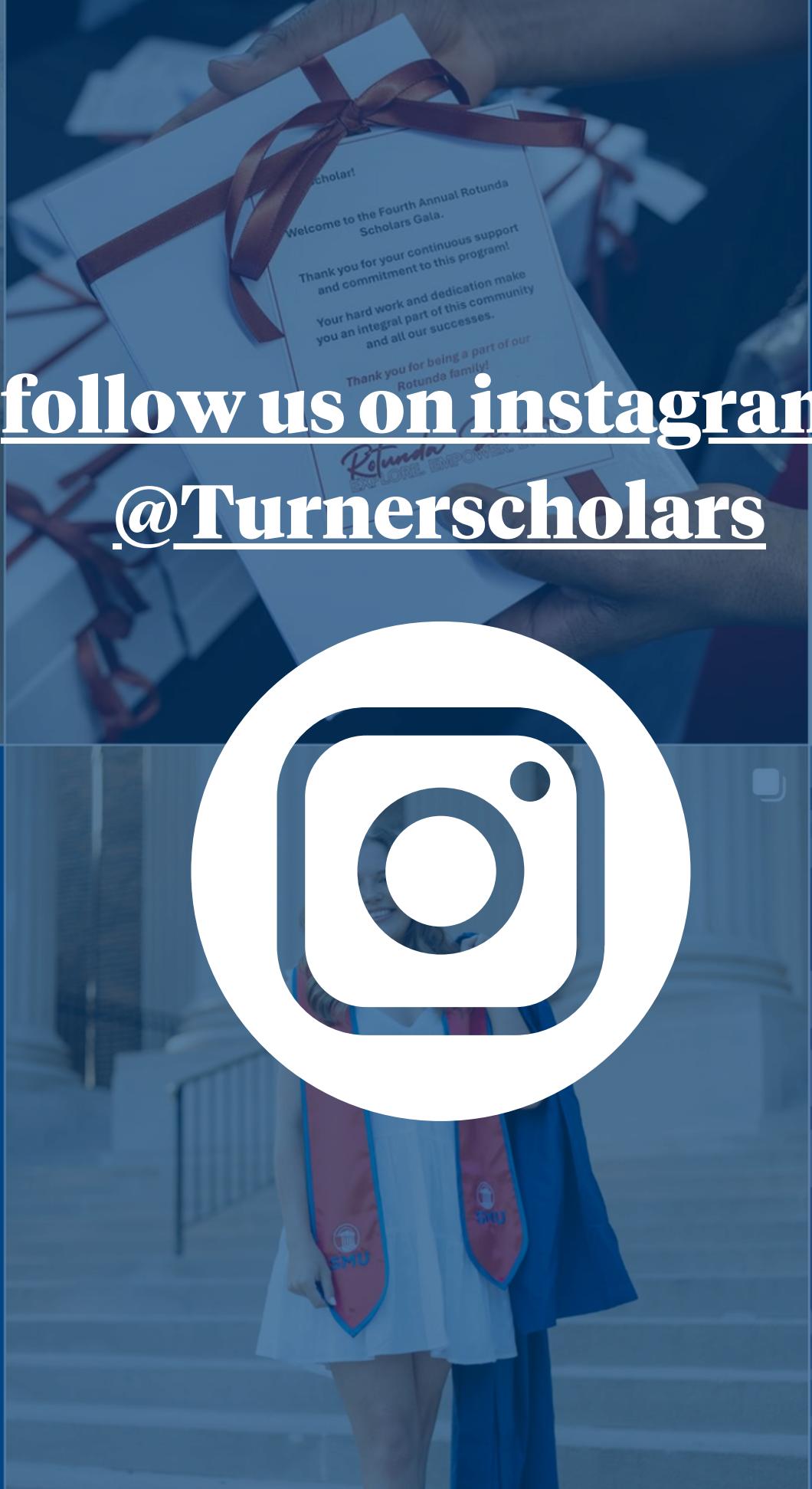
COOP

IG  
ARS

FF

ADERSHIP  
NS (PULs)

VER. EVOLVE



**follow us on instagram!**

**@Turnerscholars**



Dylan  
2024-25 ROTU  
2022-24 ROTU

# Peer Counselors

Peer Counselors (PCs) are Turner Scholars staff who are crucial to first-year success. They are here to work with first-year students during their personal and academic transition. As a Peer Counselor, they are assigned to a group of first-year students, to whom they provide guidance, mentorship, and educational support.

The role of a Peer Counselor is to serve as a resource and role model, helping students navigate the challenges and opportunities they encounter throughout their first year.

This year, we have 17 incredible peer counselors on staff who were selected for their roles after an extensive interview and application process during the Spring semester. Peer counselors come from across the country, with various majors and backgrounds, and always put their best foot forward to help our Scholars learn and grow.

Meet your Peer Counselors for the 2025-26 Academic Year Below:

# Isabella Blanchard

Isabella Blanchard is a junior from New Orleans, Louisiana. She is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Human Rights on the Public Policy track and a Bachelor of Arts in English with a Creative Writing Component.

Besides being a Peer Counselor for the Turner Scholars Program, Isabella is involved on campus as the President of the Nu Iota Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Treasurer of SMU's National Pan-Hellenic Council, and also serves as a Resident Assistant for Crum Commons!

Although her schedule can keep her busy, you will probably see her in the ACE yapping with Ke or Bri. In her free time, she enjoys hanging out with friends, reading, going on nature walks, and making origami crafts.

[Get in touch with Isabella at iblanchard@smu.edu](mailto:iblanchard@smu.edu)



# Andrew Briseño

Andrew Briseño is a junior at SMU pursuing his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre (with an Emphasis on Theatre Studies), as well as a minor in Business.

This is Andrew's second year as a Peer Counselor for the Turner Scholars Program, and he is also on the board for SMU Student Theatre. He loves films and video games, but during the fall, he is all about football, stating that "I love my Cowboys and my Mustangs, of course!"

[Get in touch with Andrew at abriseno@smu.edu](mailto:abriseno@smu.edu)



# Li Duong

Li is a sophomore and a Texas native from Frisco. She is pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration in Business Management, and a Bachelor of Arts in Art.

Beyond the Turner Scholars Program, Li is also one of the creative directors for Boaz Commons Council and a social media member for Performers Collective. She also works for SMU Hospitality as an advertising intern!

In her spare time, Li enjoys making bracelets and scrapbooking, as well as watching various shows. She enjoys listening to Conan Gray, Laufey, and different musicals, and also likes to learn K-pop dances every now and then.

[Get in touch with Li at ljduong@smu.edu](mailto:ljduong@smu.edu)





## Angela Escobedo

Angela Escobedo is a sophomore pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Biological Sciences, a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish, and a minor in Women's and Gender Studies. Angela was born and raised in a Hispanic household in Irving, TX, and has always been passionate about learning about science and its applications to the real world, as well as introducing medical care to Hispanic communities.

At SMU, she is involved with the Turner Scholars program, the Pre-Health Readiness Enrichment Program (PREP), the Minority Association of Pre-Health Students (MAPS), and First-Gen Initiative. She is excited to join the Turner Staff as a Peer Counselor for the first time this year, and hopes to grow in ways that allow her to continue supporting others while also reaching her full potential as she attends school and prepares for the outside world.

Outside of school, she enjoys spending quality time with her family, going on roadtrips, and playing video games to add a little fun to life.

[Get in touch with Angela at agescobedo@smu.edu](mailto:agescobedo@smu.edu)

## Madelyn Fields

Madelyn Fields is a junior pursuing two Bachelor of Music Degrees: one in Music Education and the other in Viola Performance.

She greatly enjoys being creative and finding new ways to express herself. Madelyn has spent most of her summer making music, journaling, creating arts and crafts, and reading. At SMU, she is involved with the Meadows Symphony Orchestra as well as the on-campus Fellowship of Christian University Students (FOCUS) ministry that allows her to grow in her faith and engage with the community.

[Get in touch with Madelyn at mgfields@smu.edu](mailto:mgfields@smu.edu)



## Langston Hampton

Langston Hampton is a sophomore and a Texas native from Plano. He is a sophomore pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration in Business Management and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science with a minor in Law and Legal Reasoning.

On campus, he is a member of the Association of Black Students, the Black Business Organization, and the Turner Scholars Program. He is excited to join the Turner Scholars Staff this year and can't wait to meet everyone, get involved, and grow together. Langston is looking forward to a great year!

[Get in touch with Langston at llhampton@smu.edu](mailto:llhampton@smu.edu)



# Journee Jones

Journee Jones is a senior and a Texas native from Rowlett. She is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, a Bachelor of Arts in French, and a minor in Educational Studies.

Outside of the Turner Scholars Program, Journee is a leader for the French Club and Lavender Leaders programs on campus. When not busy with academics or her leadership roles, she enjoys reading, singing karaoke, and being in nature.

This is Journee's first year on Staff, and we could not be more excited to welcome her to the program!

[Get in touch with Journee at journeej@smu.edu](mailto:journeej@smu.edu)



## Xitlali Lopez

Xitlali Lopez (known by many in the Program as Lali) was born and raised in Dallas, Texas. She is currently a junior and is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Computer Science, a Bachelor of Arts in Creative Computing, and a minor in Graphic Design.

On campus, she is involved in several organizations, including Kappa Delta Chi Sorority, Incorporated, where she serves as an active member, and HOLA, where she holds the position of Graphic Design Chair. Additionally, she is the Co-Social Media Chair for the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE).

In her free time, Xitlali loves doing arts and crafts and going on hikes. A fun fact about her is that she loves mystery boxes!

[Get in touch with Xitlali at xalopez@smu.edu](mailto:xalopez@smu.edu)



# Christian Luna

Christian Luna is a Texas native from Houston, and a sophomore pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting, with a specialization in Energy Management.

Christian is the youngest child of two immigrants, to whom he, in his own words, "Owes everything". He is an ambitious and willing-to-learn person who thrives in fast-paced environments. On campus, he is a member of Alpha Kappa Psi (AKPsi) and SMU Club Soccer, and loves both of them because of the people he's met through them.

Some fun facts about Christian are that he likes to read, wanted to be a mechanical or petroleum engineer, and sometimes, when he's in the mood, will play Minecraft.

[Get in touch with Christian at caluna@smu.edu](mailto:caluna@smu.edu)





## Diana Maldonado

Diana Maldonado is a sophomore pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting and a Bachelor of Science in Sport Management with a minor in Spanish.

This summer, she worked for SMU's Office of Residence Life and Student Housing (RLSH) as a Conference Leader, supporting and managing summer housing operations and events. During the school year, she stays involved as the Secretary for the Hilltop League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), a Connect Mentor, and a Student Ambassador.

Outside of campus life, Diana greatly enjoys music and loves watching live theatre whenever she gets the chance. She's also an avid reader, enjoys traveling and photography, and is a major Formula 1 fan. One of her biggest goals is to work in the F1 industry in the future. Diana is always excited to meet new people and be a part of the welcoming community at SMU!

[Get in touch with Diana at maldonadod@smu.edu](mailto:maldonadod@smu.edu)

## Lily Miner

Lily Miner is a sophomore pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Psychology with minors in French and Women's and Gender Studies.

Lily finds life on the Hilltop exciting - and considers herself lucky to be a part of many organizations, including Turner Scholars, Women's Leadership Institute, Hegi Career Leaders, and smaller clubs like the SMU Cats Club and a book club. This year, she'll be a Peer Counselor for Turner and working in the Office of Wellbeing & Education.

Outside of academics, you can find her whipping up yummy pastries, snuggling her cat, connecting with nature, or daydreaming about the East Coast. Lily's favorite campus memory is when the Christmas tree lit up on Dallas Hall Lawn during the Celebration of Lights last year, and luckily, she gets to experience it a few more times. Speaking of memories, she adores making new ones, so she eagerly looks forward to the new school year at SMU! Pony Up, y'all!

[Get in touch with Lily at ljminer@smu.edu](mailto:ljminer@smu.edu)



## Ryan Resendiz

Ryan Resendiz is a junior pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, a Bachelor of Arts in Biology, and a minor in Health Sciences on the Pre-Med track.

This is Ryan's second year returning to staff as a Peer Counselor! Outside of the Turner Program, he is involved with the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE), League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), Biomedical Engineering Society (BMES), NextGen MD, and Thrive Scholars, where he is also a mentor.

Ryan enjoys spending his free time playing soccer with friends and playing League of Legends and Fortnite mobile. His favorite artist is Dominic Fike, but he listens to everything from KATSEYE to Alacranes Musical. Ryan is a firm believer in TJ Maxx and will gladly spend the day looking around for good deals.

[Get in touch with Ryan at rresendiz@smu.edu](mailto:rresendiz@smu.edu)



# Natalia Rojas-Ochoa

Natalia Rojas-Ochoa is a sophomore pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Economics with Finance Applications at the Cox School of Business. She is also a Texas native, originally from Brownsville, a vibrant border town known for its incredible Mexican food and close proximity to South Padre Island.

Natalia spent 10 years training in ballet, jazz, and tap, and has always loved expressing herself through the arts. These days, she enjoys cooking and baking for those close to her and also finds peace in a good book. Natalia is always eager to meet new people, share experiences, and create lasting memories. She is incredibly excited to serve as one of the Peer Counselors for the Turner Scholars Program for the 2025–2026 year and can't wait to help lead and support you all on your journey!

[Get in touch with Natalia at nrojasochoa@smu.edu](mailto:nrojasochoa@smu.edu)



## Fatima Saad

Fatima Saad is a sophomore pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration in Business Administration in the Cox School of Business.

Fatima loves meeting new people and trying new things, so she's excited to see how this semester will go! On campus, she's usually studying or hanging out with her friends in the Hughes Trigg Student Center (HT).

A fun fact about Fatima is that she started doing photography over a year ago, and her business is still going!

[Get in touch with Fatima at fsaad@smu.edu](mailto:fsaad@smu.edu)



# Arianna Saravia

Arianna Saravia is a sophomore and a Texas native from Irving. Arianna is on the Pre-Med track pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Biology and a Bachelor of Science in Health and Society with a minor in Business.

Outside of the Turner Scholars Program, Arianna is involved in the McNair Scholars Program, the Minority Association of Pre-Health Students (MAPS), the Pre-Health Readiness Enrichment Program (PREP), and Engage Dallas. Some fun facts about Arianna are that she loves to dance, watch kdramas, and is obsessed with playing The Sims!

[Get in touch with Arianna at asaravia@smu.edu](mailto:asaravia@smu.edu)





## Hiram Tellez

Hiram Tellez is a sophomore and a Texas native from Dallas. He is a commuter student, and is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science, a Bachelor of Science in Data Science, and a minor in Business.

Hiram is the oldest brother in his family, with a younger brother and two younger sisters. In his free time, he enjoys playing video games, hiking, camping, kayaking, and fishing.

He has gotten to travel and enjoy his summer, as he got to hike for a week in the New Mexico backcountry and go to Florida with his family!

[Get in touch with Hiram at htellez@smu.edu](mailto:htellez@smu.edu)

## Quynh Tran

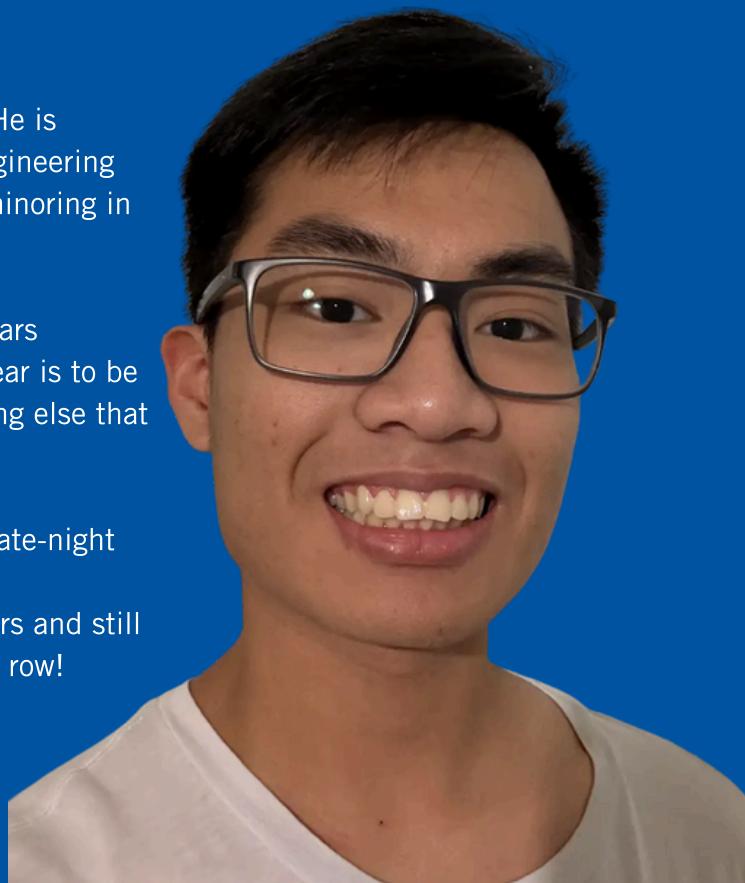
Quynh Tran is a sophomore and a native of Carrollton, TX. He is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering with a specialization in Dynamics and Controls while also minoring in Math and Computer Science.

On campus, he is a member of the Thrive and Turner Scholars programs, as well as AC (Asian Council). His goal for this year is to be more involved with the engineering clubs, as well as anything else that builds community and helps others grow.

During his free time, Quynh is always down for boba runs, late-night study sessions, or just relaxing or hanging out with friends.

Fun fact: In high school, he once volunteered for 500+ hours and still somehow had time to qualify for DECA State four years in a row!

[Get in touch with Quynh at trang@smu.edu](mailto:trang@smu.edu)





## Residential Commons

SMU's Residential Commons offers students the best of both worlds - the close-knit feel of a small school combined with the diverse resources of a large university. Implementing the residential college system is a distinctive feature of SMU, providing students with a comfortable living environment, personal interaction with faculty and administrators, and exciting opportunities for academic and extracurricular exploration.

The Residential Commons play a crucial role in fostering a sense of community, spirit, and belonging at SMU, with each Commons having its own unique identity, traditions, gatherings, and activities that strengthen the bonds among residents. Each Commons is guided by a dedicated team, including a Faculty-in-Residence (FiR), a Residential Community Director (RCD), and student leaders.

**learn more here**

# packing for SMU



## PACKING GUIDE

*for our residential commons*

### What to Bring

How to Make Your Residential Commons Home  
Residence Life & Student Housing Resources

We understand that packing for university can be overwhelming, and we want you to know that SMU empathizes with this challenge. To help you, SMU has provided informative packing guides to help you ease the process. Also, on the next page, you will find a list of nearby stores where you can easily purchase any forgotten or essential items.

We encourage you to pack light and bring storage bins that can be left in your room for convenient storage throughout the year. This will help maximize your space and keep your belongings organized. Remember, having a few essential items is always better than being burdened with excessive belongings.

Also, please keep in mind that SMU hosts numerous free events across campus where you can collect t-shirts and other promotional items. These events provide great opportunities to engage with the SMU community, make new connections, and expand your wardrobe.

As you prepare for your exciting journey at SMU, remember that the focus is on creating meaningful experiences, building relationships, and embracing the opportunities that await you. Happy packing, and we can't wait to welcome you to campus!

**SMU** **PACKING LIST**  
*Residential Commons*

[Click here to download the Official Packing List](#)

# Stores Nearby

We recommend purchasing items online and having them sent for store pick-up at any of these locations!\*

## Target

2417 N Haskell Ave., Dallas, TX 75204 - 2.5 miles south of campus

8335 Westchester Dr Ste 200, Dallas, TX 75225 - 2.5 miles north of campus

6419 Skillman St, Dallas, TX 75231 - 3 miles north of campus

9440 Marsh Ln, Dallas, TX 75220 - 5.5 miles west of campus, by Dallas Love Field

## Walmart

6185 Retail Rd, Dallas, TX 75231 - 3.5 miles east of campus

9410 Webb Chapel Rd, Dallas, TX 75220 - 5.8 miles west of campus

## HomeGoods

8188 Park Ln N, Dallas, TX 75231 - 3 miles north of campus

## Marshalls

11255 Garland Rd, Dallas, TX 75218 - 9.1 miles east of campus

## Ross: Dress for Less

2405 N Haskell Ave., Dallas, TX 75204 - 3.1 miles south of campus

## Costco

Business Costco - 8282 Park Ln, Dallas, TX 75231 - 3.2 miles north of campus

8055 Churchill Way, Dallas, TX 75251 - 6.3 miles north of campus

## Sam's Club

6185 Retail Rd, Dallas, TX 75231 - 2.8 miles east of campus

Sam's Club, 9461 Webb Chapel Rd, Dallas, TX 75220 - 5.1 miles west of campus, by Dallas Love Field

*\*Neither SMU nor the Turner Scholars Program are affiliated with, or sponsored by, any of these stores or their companies.*



Bringing a car? Buy a permit here!



Get some food! Buy a meal plan here!

# What should we include next?

Please let us know what information you would like us to include in our next outgoing communication by contacting one of the following individuals or direct messaging us on Instagram!

Director Nikole Melgarejo Juarez - [nmelgarejo@smu.edu](mailto:nmelgarejo@smu.edu)

Fellow Aneiry Resendiz - [aresendiz@smu.edu](mailto:aresendiz@smu.edu)

Communications Director Ja'niah Cooper- [jlcooper@smu.edu](mailto:jlcooper@smu.edu)



# RISE info Coming Soon!

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