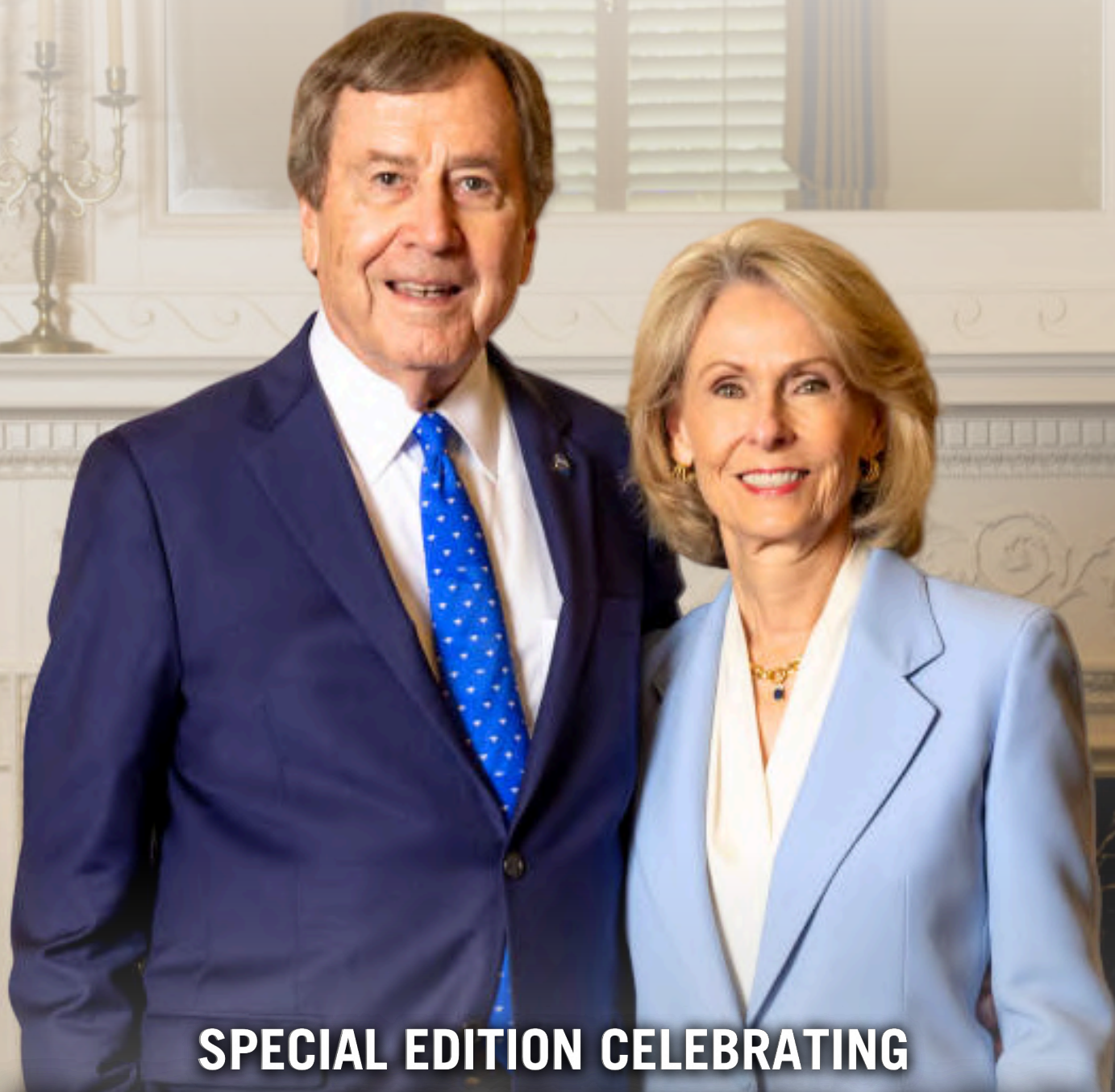


THE GERALD AND GAIL TURNER SCHOLARS PROGRAM

SPRING 2025

THE SCHOLAR SCOOP



SPECIAL EDITION CELEBRATING TURNER SCHOLARS

REFLECTING ON THE ROTUNDA SCHOLARS PROGRAM
AND THE BOLD FUTURE AHEAD, WHILE CONTINUING
THE LEGACY OF SMU'S 10TH PRESIDENT & FIRST LADY.

In honor of their service, dedication, and stewardship to the University, the Board of Trustees renamed The Rotunda Scholars Academic Program in honor of the legacy and vision of SMU's 10th President, Dr. R. Gerald Turner, and First Lady Gail Turner.

This Special Edition of The Scholar Scoop reflects on the achievements of Rotunda Scholars over the last fifteen years and in the Spring 2025 Semester, and the exciting future ahead.

We are excited to continue supporting scholars and World Changers at SMU, and invite you all to join us in this next chapter as a scholar, alumnus, supporter or more. Pony Up!

Nikole Juarez, Director

SMU **Gerald and Gail Turner
Scholars Program**

THANK YOU TO OUR 2024-2025 ROTUNDA SCHOLARS PROGRAM STAFF FOR THEIR DEDICATION, MENTORSHIP, AND SERVICE TO OUR SCHOLARS THIS SEMESTER.



GRACIE HOLDER
LEAD PEER UPPERCLASSMEN LIAISON
ROTUNDA SCHOLARS PROGRAM
CLASS OF 2024



KENNEDY PHILLIPS
PEER UPPERCLASSMEN LIAISON
CLASS OF 2025



MADISON MCNEELY
PEER UPPERCLASSMEN LIAISON
ROTUNDA SCHOLARS PROGRAM
CLASS OF 2025



DYLAN HUDSON
ROTUNDA FELLOW
CLASS OF 2025



NIKOLE JUAREZ
PROGRAM DIRECTOR
ROTUNDA SCHOLARS PROGRAM



MARIA RIOS
GRADUATE ASSISTANT
ACADEMIC COUNSELOR



MIRIAM MORALES
PEER UPPERCLASSMEN LIAISON
ROTUNDA SCHOLARS PROGRAM
CLASS OF 2025



REECE SMITH
PEER UPPERCLASSMEN LIAISON
CLASS OF 2025



HABBULLA EBADULLA
PEER UPPERCLASSMEN LIAISON
ROTUNDA SCHOLARS PROGRAM
CLASS OF 2025



JACOB GARZA
LEAD PEER COUNSELOR
CLASS OF 2025



HAVEN DONACIO
PEER COUNSELOR
CLASS OF 2025



ADOLFO FRIAS JR.
PEER COUNSELOR
CLASS OF 2025



DR. SUE BIERMAN
ACADEMIC SUCCESS COUNSELOR



KEUNA WEBSTER
SR. ACADEMIC SUCCESS COUNSELOR



BRIANA MORALES
ACADEMIC SUCCESS COUNSELOR



PETER HARRIS
PEER COUNSELOR
CLASS OF 2025



ERIKA PUENTE LOPEZ
PEER COUNSELOR
CLASS OF 2025



PAX
DOC-18 RESIDENCE
PART-TIME PEER COUNSELOR



ANDREW BRISEÑO
PEER COUNSELOR
CLASS OF 2025



BREANA HIRA
PEER COUNSELOR
CLASS OF 2027



LENA REMBERT
PEER COUNSELOR
CLASS OF 2027



AILEEN SANCHEZ
ROTUNDA COORDINATOR
CLASS OF 2026



TULSI RAM LOHANI
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR
CLASS OF 2025



ANEIRY RESENDIZ
ROTUNDA COORDINATOR
CLASS OF 2026



RYAN RESENDIZ
PEER COUNSELOR
CLASS OF 2027



BRIAN CONTRERAS
PEER COUNSELOR
CLASS OF 2027



CAROLINE MADRID
PEER COUNSELOR
CLASS OF 2027



CHRIS AGEH
PEER COUNSELOR
CLASS OF 2027



HANNAH CHOI
PEER COUNSELOR
CLASS OF 2027



ISABELLA BLANCHARD
PEER COUNSELOR
CLASS OF 2027



XITLALI LOPEZ
PEER COUNSELOR
CLASS OF 2027



DONOVAN DE JESUS
PEER COUNSELOR
CLASS OF 2027



KAILA BELT
PEER COUNSELOR
CLASS OF 2027



MALAK MOHAMMED
PEER COUNSELOR
CLASS OF 2027



MAX ENGELBRECHT
PEER COUNSELOR
CLASS OF 2027

EXPLORE. EMPOWER. EVOLVE.

ON THE COVERS

PRESIDENT DR. R. GERALD TURNER AND
FIRST LADY MRS. GAIL TURNER POSE FOR
AN IMAGE CELEBRATING THIRTY YEARS.

IMAGE COURTESY OF
SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY



PRESIDENT TURNER TAKING A SELFIE
WITH CHRIS AGEH AND GRACE BURNO,
ALUMS MIMI MORALES AND JACOB GARZA.

ARMSTRONG FIELDHOUSE
SMU PHOTOGRAPHY

SPRING 2025 ROTUNDA SCHOLARS LEADERSHIP

DYLAN ANTHONY HUDSON '25
PROGRAM FELLOW

TULSI RAM LOHANI '25
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

AILEEN SANCHEZ '26
COORDINATOR

ANEIRY RESENDIZ '26
COORDINATOR

MARIA RIOS '23 '27
GRADUATE ASSISTANT

2025-26 TURNER SCHOLARS LEADERSHIP

ANEIRY RESENDIZ '26
PROGRAM FELLOW

JA'NIAH COOPER '27
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

MEGAN RUTH MANNING '26
COORDINATOR, UPPERCLASSMEN

ERIKA PUENTE LOPEZ '26
COORDINATOR, FIRST-YEARS

MAX ENGELBRECHT '27
COORDINATOR, FIRST-YEARS

MARIA RIOS '23 '27
GRADUATE ASSISTANT



SMU'S 10TH PRESIDENT, DR. R. GERALD TURNER, WELCOMED THE INAUGURAL COHORT OF MUSTANG ACADEMIC BRIDGE PROGRAM STUDENTS IN FALL 2010. THESE SCHOLARS WERE THE FIRST TO ENROLL IN THE PROGRAM NOW NAMED THE GERALD AND GAIL TURNER SCHOLARS PROGRAM.

Behind the Scenes of the historic decision to rename The Gerald and Gail Turner Scholars Program

FROM SMU ASSOCIATE PROVOST DR. SHERI KUNOVICH

Prior to the formal announcement of the renaming of The Gerald and Gail Turner Scholars Program, Associate Provost for Student Academic Engagement and Success Dr. Sheri Kunovich shared the news, as well as the history of President Turner and the Rotunda Scholars Program, with attendees of the 2025 Rotunda Gala. Adapted from her remarks, this is the story behind the historic decision.

In 2010, President Turner welcomed the first group of students into the Mustang Academic Bridge Program. With his support, SMU Bridge consisted of an early move-in experience, monthly community dinners, and peer-to-peer support. To your left, you can see the image of President Turner welcoming these students on campus in Fall 2010.

The three program goals were:

1. To create a community among students coming to SMU from a wide range of backgrounds and personal experiences.
2. To connect students with faculty and staff from across campus so that they thrive as members of our community.
3. To make sure you meet your personal goals along your path to graduation.

These experiences and goals have remained critical to who we are and what we do for the last 15 years. During its first five years, the program supported about 75 students during their first year at SMU.

Many of the original faculty and staff are still committed to our community, engaging in our programming and teaching your classes. Some of these faculty and staff still engage with the program. In these first few years, students in the program could take advantage of opportunities like the Civil Rights Pilgrimage, engage in undergraduate research, and become student leaders on campus. However, we knew that we wanted the program to evolve into something more.



In 2015, the program changed its name to the Rotunda Scholars Academic Program. The word Rotunda was carefully chosen because of its association with two of our most important academic traditions on campus. Walking through the Dallas Hall Rotunda before opening convocation at the start of your academic journey and back through the Rotunda before you graduate. For the next five years, Rotunda Scholars began to develop a four-year program and saw several changes to the full-time staff. Despite all the changes, academic and student affairs remained committed to supporting the program under President Turner's leadership and guidance.

Beginning in 2020, SMU increased its commitment to admitting students from a wider variety of backgrounds who brought different experiences and strengths to our campus. At the same time, we increased opportunities for students to receive financial support from the university so that cost was less of a barrier to attendance.

A photograph of Dr. Sheri Kunovich, a woman with shoulder-length brown hair, smiling and speaking into a microphone at a podium. She is wearing a dark blue blazer. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

2024-25 ABOVE AND BEYOND HONOREE

Dr. Sheri Kunovich

**ASSOCIATE PROVOST FOR STUDENT ACADEMIC
ENGAGEMENT AND SUCCESS**



As a result of these changes, more students wanted to join the Rotunda Scholars Program. With support from President Turner and commitments from Dr. Mmeje, Dr. Loba, and Dr. Waggoner, we opened the Academic Center for Excellence (the ACE), increased the Rotunda professional staff to three amazing people, and provided every student who joined the community with a laptop and an iPad. We now select 150 students to join our community each year. 93% of you return to SMU after your first year, and your graduation rates outpace your peers on campus. The average GPA of the senior class is an extraordinary 3.4.

Based on Rotunda Scholars' achievements and engagement with the campus, we have been able to raise awareness about the unique contribution the Rotunda Scholars make to our campus. The commitment made by the Student Senate in 2022 is one example of how other student leaders also began to support the program, and the annual gifts we receive from donors and alumni have expanded how we can uplift each scholar.

The Board of Trustees has voted to rename our program the Gerald and Gail Turner Scholars Program to honor President and Mrs. Turner's 30 years of work supporting students in academic programs like the Rotunda Scholars.



SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

THE SMU BOARD OF TRUSTEES
RESOLVES TO RENAME

THE UNIVERSITY'S LARGEST UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM,
WHICH PROVIDES FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
TO HUNDREDS OF STUDENTS EACH YEAR THE

Gerald and Gail Turner Scholars Program

IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR 30 YEARS OF SERVICE, DEDICATION AND STEWARDSHIP
AS THE 10TH PRESIDENT AND FIRST LADY OF SMU
PRESENTED WITH GRATITUDE IN MAY OF TWO THOUSAND AND TWENTY-FIVE

DAVID B. MILLER '72, '73
Chair, SMU Board of Trustees

RICHARD K. TEMPLETON
Vice Chair, SMU Board of Trustees

SMU

KELLY HOGGUND COMPTON '79
Secretary, SMU Board of Trustees

**THE OFFICIAL PROCLAMATION MADE BY THE
SMU BOARD OF TRUSTEES TO RENAME THE
GERALD AND GAIL TURNER SCHOLARS PROGRAM**

Many of you have probably heard President Turner say that investing in our students is what we are truly all about. While it's easy to celebrate when we see a new building or athletic facility, President Turner's true measure of success has always been a commitment to increasing access to SMU. Under his leadership, we have focused on admitting students like yourselves who want a challenging course of study and a rich student experience. With the Board's proclamation, we can now have confidence that his 30-year commitment to ensuring that SMU is a place where all students can achieve personal and academic success will remain.

Working with President and Mrs. Turner, we are excited to find ways through programming and curriculum to ensure that your degree's value persists throughout your transitions after graduation. This evolution of our community to the Turner Scholars Program provides us with an excellent opportunity to remain committed to our original goals, which align with the mission and values of SMU while identifying new and additional ways to support each of you. Moving forward, the Turner Scholars Program will create opportunities to further engage with a strong and vibrant group of SMU alumni and to build legacies honoring a strong tradition of inclusive academic excellence. As always, we will invite students to share your ideas for new programming.

We thank the SMU Board of Trustees for their faith in our leadership and impact on creating World Changers at SMU. We are honored to continue and evolve under the tremendous legacy of SMU's 10th President and First Lady, and we look forward to working with them and other campus partners to achieve our goals in the years to come.

Thank you to our additional campus partners who made this incredible decision possible. We are deeply grateful for your service and the championship of our program and scholars.



2024-25 ABOVE AND BEYOND HONOREE

Dr. Wes Waggoner

**VICE PROVOST FOR ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT
AND CHIEF ENROLLMENT OFFICER**



WHERE IT *Started*





WHERE IT WILL *Continue*





SMU Gerald and Gail Turner Scholars Program



TOP: TURNER SCHOLARS WITH PRESIDENT AND MRS. TURNER AT THE TURNER CELEBRATION EVENT.

BELOW: PEER COUNSELOR ANDREW BRISEÑO, PEER UPPERCLASSMAN LIAISON MADISON MCNEELY, AND ROTUNDA FELLOW DYLAN ANTHONY HUDSON AT THE TURNER ANNOUCEMENT CELEBRATION.

A photograph of four women standing in front of a wall covered in a mosaic of small, reflective tiles in various colors. Above them are several large balloons in red, blue, and purple. The women are smiling and dressed in formal attire. From left to right: a woman in a purple blazer, a woman in a blue dress, a woman in a green dress, and a woman in a blue dress.

THANK YOU *to our incredible Leaders*

NIKOLE JUAREZ
DIRECTOR, TURNER SCHOLARS PROGRAM

KEUNA WEBSTER
SENIOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS COUNSELOR

BRIANA MORALES
ACADEMIC SUCCESS COUNSELOR

DR. SUE BIERMAN
ACADEMIC SUCCESS COUNSELOR

AND AN EXTENDED THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS IN HONORS AND SCHOLARS, THE DIVISION OF STUDENT ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT AND SUCCESS, RESIDENCE LIFE AND STUDENT HOUSING, THE DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS, THE UNIVERSITY ADVISING CENTER, AND MORE FOR MAKING OUR WORK POSSIBLE.



"This experience had tremendous insights; it is the single best event I've ever been to at SMU. During this event, I learned the importance of a win-win-win mentality, what a good brand is, how businesses and capitalism provide benefits to everyone, not just the owners.... John Mackey's perspective on business was incredible! I will always remember when he said, "Life is an adventure, and there's no better adventure than starting your own business!"

VALERIO ZIVEC

at Whole Foods Story: A Conversation with John Mackey



"I am from New Orleans, so Krew Du Ware was a really cool event for me. I really enjoyed the food and seeing a bunch of elements of my culture brought to Dallas. I would 100% attend again."

ATTICUS PIANO

at Ware Commons Annual Krewe de Ware



"Attending RC10 Fest was a great way to celebrate the impact of the Residential Commons Model over the past decade. It was amazing to see the community come together, reflecting on how the Commons system has shaped connections and student life."

The event highlighted the importance of tradition, belonging, and the continued growth of our campus community."

AMY SANCHEZ RAMIREZ

at RC10 Fest: Celebrating SMU's Residential Commons

SCHOLARS AT JANUARY AND FEBRUARY EVENTS



"I really liked this Lunar New Year festival! It was fun to experience my culture at SMU and eat all the good food!"

I was with my friend Jude and it was a fun experience for all of us.

It was really nice and rewarding after a hard Chemistry Exam!"

ALEX SREANG

at Asian Council Lunar New Year



"I absolutely loved RC10Fest, I did the human claw machine which was fun & nice. I also got to spend time with friends and catchup while still at the event 😊. I would 100% go again & I went with Tessa, Chloe, and a couple of Tessa's friends."

MIA ZAVALA

at RC10 Fest: Celebrating SMU's Residential Commons



"Love ME was very fun because you walked into Crum and there was donuts for you and music! There was also a choice to make yourself a valentines card. I thought this event was very cute and fun."

MARIA HYLAND

at Love Me!



"With the club fair, I was able to see more clubs that may align with my goals and values. This helped me get insight from the people involved in the club about what opportunities it brings."

VICTOR CELIS-SHUGRUE

at the Spring Club Fair



Congratulations GRADUATES!



**Congratulations to the following Scholars
who graduated with their **Master's Degrees**.**

DANIEL MERCADO, ACCOUNTING - MSA

JABARI FORD, MBA

ROSS ELLIOTT, ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING - MSEE

SARAH BRAY, MANAGEMENT - MSMGT

**Congratulations to the following Scholars who
graduated with their **Undergraduate Degrees**.**

ABIGAIL JASSO, SPANISH - BA, ACCOUNTING - BBA

ALICIA RIVERA, POLITICAL SCIENCE - BA, PSYCHOLOGY - BS

ALIYAH SAID, ENGLISH - BA

ALYSSA BAEZ, ACCOUNTING - BBA, LAW & LEGAL REASONING - MN

ARIAN SHAMAEI, ELECTRICAL & COMPUTER ENGINEERING - BSECE

BRIANNA FRESHWATER, ANTHROPOLOGY - BS, SOCIOLOGY - BS

CATESBY SUTTON, SPORT MANAGEMENT - BS

DAMONDRE LYNN, MATHEMATICS - BA

DARIUS KAISER, PSYCHOLOGY - BS, DANCE PERFORMANCE - BFA

DYLAN ANTHONY HUDSON, THEATRE - BFA

ELISE RAMIREZ, MUSIC EDUCATION - BM, VOICE PERFORMANCE - BM

EMMA HERNANDEZ, ACCOUNTING - BBA

GABRIELLA DOAN, ELECTRICAL & COMPUTER ENGINEERING - BSECE

RED DENOTES A CURRENT OR FORMER STUDENT STAFF MEMBER - CONGRATULATIONS!





GABRIEL MONGARAS, DATA SCIENCE - BS, MATHEMATICS - BA, STATISTICAL SCIENCE - BS,
COMPUTER SCIENCE - BS

HANEEN AMARNEH, BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES - BA, CHEMISTRY - BS

HECTOR AGUILAR, CIVIL ENGINEERING - BSCE

HUMBERTO OCHOA, BUSINESS ANALYTICS SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT - BBA

ISABELLA WELLS, SPORT MANAGEMENT - BS

JACOB GARZA, ECONOMICS - BA, POLITICAL SCIENCE - BA, PUBLIC POLICY - BA

JACOB SANCHEZ, PHILOSOPHY - BA

JACQUELINE GONZALEZ, ECONOMICS - BA, PUBLIC POLICY - BA

JAISAN AVERY, CREATIVE COMPUTING, FILM & MEDIA ARTS - BA

JEFFREY DIAZ, POLITICAL SCIENCE - BA

JESSIAH RUIZ, HUMAN RIGHTS - BA, POLITICAL SCIENCE - BA

JESUS ZEPEDA, SPORT MANAGEMENT - BS

JONATHAN RIVERA, FINANCE - BBA

JUAN DAVALOS, CREATIVE COMPUTING - BA, FILM & MEDIA ARTS - BFA

KATIE PHAM-HUA, REAL ESTATE - BBA

KAYLA SPEARS, COMPUTER SCIENCE - BS

KAYLEE DOROUGH, GENERAL BUSINESS - BBA

KENNEDY PHILLIPS, FINANCE - BBA

KIRK OGUNRINDE, JOURNALISM - BA, COMPUTER SCIENCE - BA

KYNDALL JOHNSON, DANCE PERFORMANCE - BFA, MARKETING - BBA

LEILANI GUZMAN, MATHEMATICS - BA, COMPUTER SCIENCE - BS, COMPUTER SCIENCE - BS

LESLIE CASTRO, BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES - BS, ECONOMICS - BA

LITZY HERRERA, FASHION MEDIA - BA, JOURNALISM - BA

LUCY WILSON, MECHANICAL ENGINEERING - BS, MECHANICAL ENGINEERING - BSME

LUIS SOLORZANO TREJO, ECONOMICS W/ FINANCIAL APPLICATIONS - BS, FINANCE - BBA

MAISOON ZAZAY, HEALTH AND SOCIETY - BS

MELANIE CLOUD, COMPUTER SCIENCE - BA



RED DENOTES A CURRENT OR FORMER STUDENT STAFF MEMBER - CONGRATULATIONS!



MEG CASTELLANOS, ART - BFA

MELANY MATUTE, PUBLIC RELATIONS AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS - BA

MIKAILA NEVERSON, JOURNALISM - BA

MIRIAM MORALES, PUBLIC RELATIONS AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS - BA

PAULINA ESPARZA, SPANISH - BA, ADVERTISING - BA

ROSA OLIVO, PSYCHOLOGY - BA

ROSE GREZE, BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES - BA, ECONOMICS - BA

SAMANTHA GONZALEZ, SOCIOLOGY - BA

SANA OMAR, DATA SCIENCE - BS, PSYCHOLOGY - BS

TULSI LOHANI, POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLIC AFFAIRS - BA, JOURNALISM - BA,

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS - BA

TYNEESIA RODGERS, REAL ESTATE - BBA

VALERIE IPERTI, SPORT MANAGEMENT - BS

VICTORIA WELLS, SPORT MANAGEMENT - BS

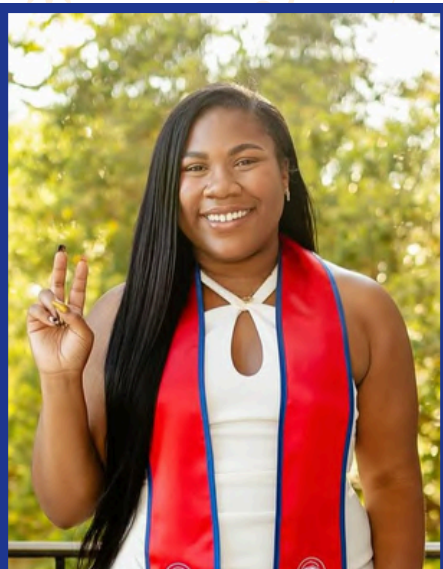
ZEPEDA JESUS, SPORT MANAGEMENT - BS

RED DENOTES A CURRENT OR FORMER STUDENT STAFF MEMBER - CONGRATULATIONS!



Stay in Touch with our
LinkedIn Alumni Group
EMAIL NIKOLE JUAREZ TO JOIN

THANK YOU SENIORS *on Rotunda Staff*



PEER UPPERCLASSMAN LIAISON, COX
KENNEDY PHILLIPS '25
PHOTO TAKEN BY RYAH MCDONALD

We would like to thank the Seniors on our Rotunda Staff, especially all who have served on our staff for the last three years. Not only did they lead in our community as **exemplar scholars**, but dedicated their time on the Hilltop to giving back our scholars and community year after year.

In our Class of 2025 Graduate List, the Programs for our Graduating Current and Former Senior Student Staffers are in red.



PEER UPPERCLASSMAN LIAISON, SIMMONS
MIMI MORALES '25
PHOTO TAKEN BY CHASE HALL



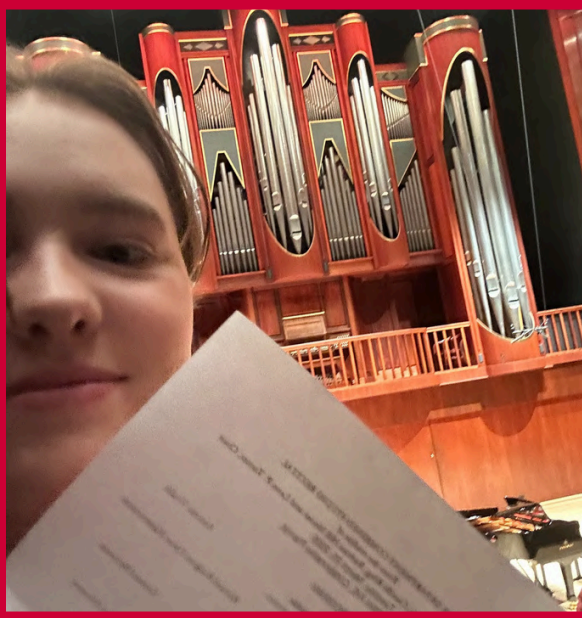
LEAD PEER COUNSELOR
JACOB GARZA '25
PHOTO TAKEN BY RYAH MCDONALD



PROGRAM FELLOW
DYLAN ANTHONY HUDSON '25
PHOTO TAKEN BY TULSI RAM LOHANI



COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR
TULSI RAM LOHANI '25
PHOTO TAKEN BY FATIMA SAAD





"I really liked the Mustang Market Spring Market! I was with my friend Jude and we had a great time going around and looking at all of the markets and enjoying the weather! I learned that I really like lemonade cause I kept getting more!"

ALEX SREANG

at Mustang Spring Market



"This was a really fun event there was live music.

I saw a lot of people I know there was food and I saw a monkey!!"

NATALIE LOPEZ

at Kathy Crow Commons' Crowchella



"This event allowed me to better know Filipino culture as well as participate with the organization in an enjoyable setting. With FSA I had the opportunity to participate as the relay race coach, lead training sessions as well as lead us to place 4th against all the other Texas schools."

TAI TRAN

at Filipino Student Association's Goodphil Event



"This concert was another really fun one for me. It was super exciting getting to play and be conducted by a really well-known composer."

JAZZMIN TORRES

at Meadows Wind Ensemble Concert

SCHOLARS AT MARCH EVENTS



"I had a great time at the Giving Day event on Dallas Hall Lawn, where I participated in events to help different organizations fundraise!"

I went at the time of the sororities and I learned about some of the cultural ones at SMU. It was very informative and lots of fun doing the activities.

I am looking forward to this event next year and hope to be free during the time of the other student organizations!"

FATIMA SAAD

at SMU's Annual Giving Day on Dallas Hall Lawn



"The March Community Dinner was a fun way to collaborate with other Rotunda Scholars on team games, while offering food and drinks. Although our team (Peruna Lovers) didn't win, we still enjoyed the event and will definitely attend the next community dinner."

ARIANNA SARAVIA

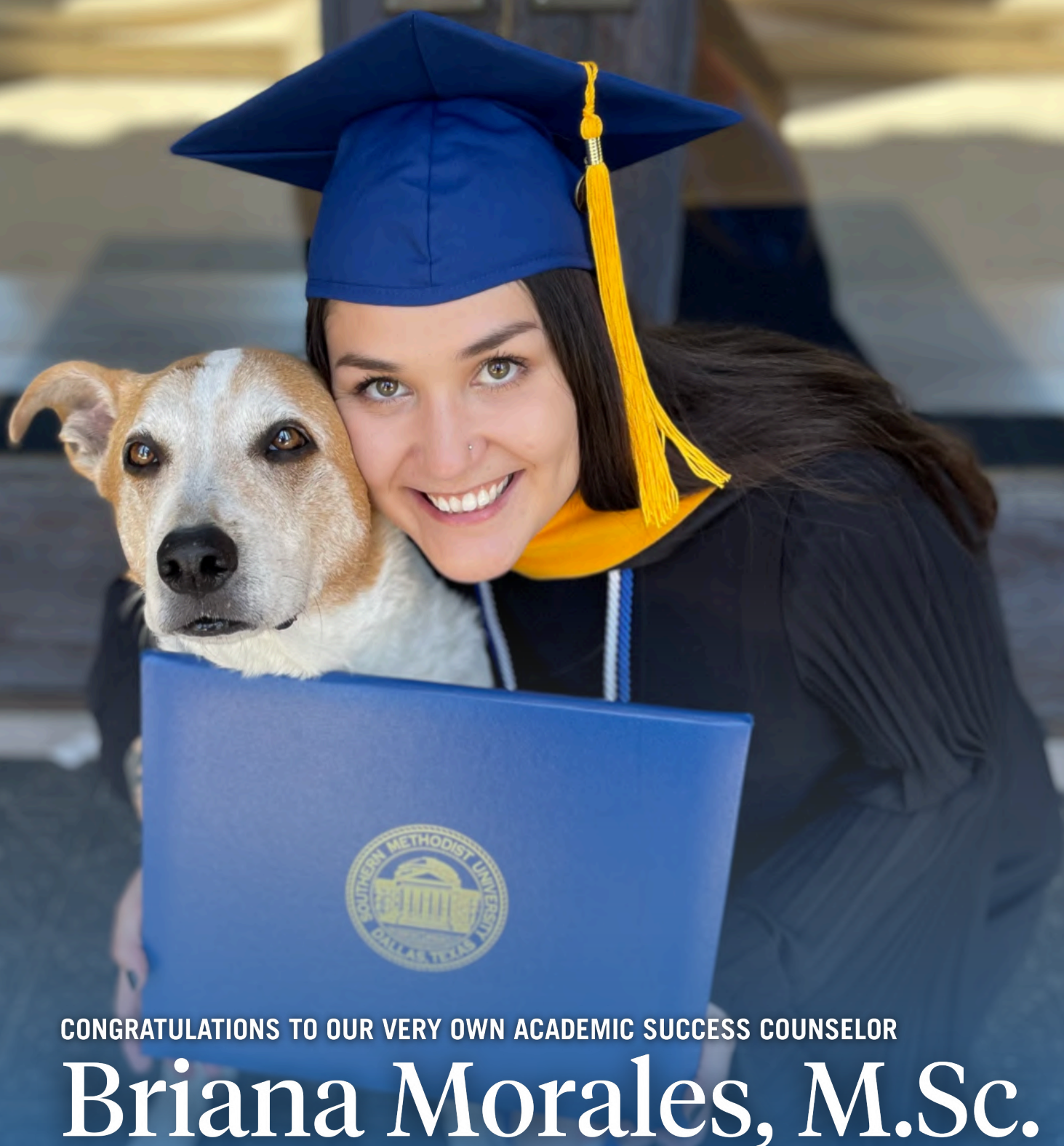
at our March Community Dinner



"I went to Holi with a friend and saw people wearing white. There was also food I wasn't accustomed to, but I tried them and I liked and enjoyed them. I also learned that Holi is also called the Festival of Colors because people wear white clothing and people throw colored powders and spray colored water on each other making the clothes colorful."

EDDY CARVAJAL

at SMU SASA's Annual Holi on Dallas Hall Lawn Event



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR VERY OWN ACADEMIC SUCCESS COUNSELOR

Briana Morales, M.Sc.

**MAY 2025 GRADUATE OF THE SMU SIMMONS
MASTERS IN COUNSELING PROGRAM.**

A portrait of Dr. Alyssa Reiman, a woman with blonde hair and glasses, smiling. She is wearing a blue top with a red floral pattern. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with greenery and a light-colored path.

2024-25 ABOVE AND BEYOND HONOREE

Dr. Alyssa Reiman
PRE-HEALTH ADVISOR AND SUCCESS COACH



"This was a fun event that got me out of the Scholars Den. I had a fun time because I got to go with Reese S. and hang out with him."

HIRAM TELLEZ

at McElvaney Commons' Camp McElvaney



"This was one of my favorite events so far, as it was very fun to see the whole production set up to celebrate Peruna. I loved the Le Bloom Flower truck as I built a bouquet to have in my room. It was a special celebration with all of the sweet treats, ice cream truck and more."

AVA ELLERAAS

at Student Foundation's PerunaPalooza Celebration



"In this event there was a lot of different little activities. There was a live band and music, I went with my friend and we had cookies and tried Peruna's birthday cake."

We also were able to take a picture with him which was really cute and overall was a nice event even though it was very hot outside."

FAY MARTINEZ

at Student Foundation's PerunaPalooza Celebration



"This was a really nice end to my freshman year. during this event my friend and i talked about all the good and bad from this year and what we want to go different next year. Overall it was a really good experience and allowed us to do a lot of reflecting."

BRIANNA MARTINEZ

at Program Council's Summer Send Off

SCHOLARS AT APRIL AND MAY EVENTS



"This experience was very fun. It brought me closer to my fellow Rotunda peers by competing against them."

I always enjoy a challenge, and in this case, the challenge was to find the eggs before the others!."

EDDIE LOMAS

at the Scholars' Den Egg Hunt



"I loved Viesta and the fiesta theme to it. It was engaging and the stuffed elephants and merch were amazing!!"

DANI LOPEZ BALDERAS

at Virginia-Snyder Commons' Viesta Festival



"This is a once-a-month mass given in Spanish. I really enjoy having the opportunity to go to mass in Spanish because it feels like home since I'm from Mexico. We also had the opportunity to eat a traditional Hispanic plate of Tacos, which gave us a chance to socialize."

SANTIAGO SANCHEZ

at the SMU Catholic Center's Misa y Comida Event



"It was an information session that went over things after 4 years of college. I learn that the first two years are more about preparing, meaning joining clubs and organization. While the 3rd and 4th years is more applying the skill in order to get a job, go to professional school, or grad school."

EDDIE CARVAJAL

at The Rotunda Career Workshop



REFLECTION

PEER COUNSELOR EVENTS



PETER, HANNAH, and BRIAN LOVE ME

PCs Peter, Hannah, and Brian held Love Me, a workshop on self-love, focused on shredding negative thoughts and creating circles of affirmation.

“This event was super fun because we got to eat donuts, and I was able to show myself some self-love! I wrote myself a long letter I’ll open later in my life, which I think is super fun.”

Quoted and Pictured: Star Serfontein

XITLALI, CAROLINE, and MALAK

PETALS OF SUPPORT

In collaboration with Engage Dallas, PCs Xitlali, Caroline, and Malak led a campaign to create beautiful bouquets to be delivered to Medical City Children’s Hospital Dallas & Senior Source.

Together, Rotunda Scholars made over 120 bouquets and over 50 cards, which PCs Xitlali and Caroline, along with Communications Director Tulsi, delivered to the joy of hundreds of young patients and Senior citizens!

Pictured: Xitlali and Caroline outside of a Senior Source Partner Home in South Dallas



THANK YOU TO OUR INCREDIBLE 2024-25

PEER COUNSELORS AND PEER UPPERCLASSMAN LIAISONS

FOR THEIR SERVICE THIS ACADEMIC YEAR.



Peter Harris '26, Peer Counselor
Erika Puente Lopez '26, Peer Counselor
Haven Donacio '26, Peer Counselor
Adolfo Frias Jr. '26, Peer Counselor
Donovan De Jesus '27, Peer Counselor
Brian Contreras '27, Peer Counselor
Caroline Madrid '27, Peer Counselor
Kaila Belt '27, Peer Counselor
Malak Mohammed '27, Peer Counselor

Max Engelbrecht '27, Peer Counselor
Andrew Briseño '27, Peer Counselor
Breena Hira '27, Peer Counselor
Chris Ageh '27, Peer Counselor
Hannah Choi '27, Peer Counselor
Isabella Blanchard '27, Peer Counselor
Xitlali Lopez '27, Peer Counselor
Lena Rembert '27, Peer Counselor
Ryan Resendiz '27, Peer Counselor

Jacob Garza '25, Lead Peer Counselor



Kennedy Phillips '25, Cox PUL
Habibulla Ebadulla-Ogly '26, Dedman PUL
Reece Smith '26, Lyle Engineering PUL

Mimi Morales '25, Simmons PUL
Madison McNeely '26, Meadows PUL
Dylan Anthony Hudson '25, Fellow

Gracie Holder '24, Lead PUL



SMU®

TURNER
SCHOLARS



**TURNER SCHOLARS PROGRAM DIRECTOR
NIKOLE JUAREZ WITH PRESIDENT AND MRS.
TURNER AT THE 2025 ROTUNDA GALA**

To our incredible community of scholars and supporters, thank you for letting me do this incredible job for three years.

My time as the Director of Communications for the Rotunda Scholars Program has ended, and upon reflection on this journey, I am filled with immense gratitude for the opportunity to share and amplify the stories of leaders, innovators, scholars, and World Changers. I have had the privilege of being with you and my peers during my four years at SMU.

I remember RISE, my freshman year; to put it lightly, I needed it. After a tumultuous end of high school through the COVID pandemic and my fair share of insecurity and desire for friendship, Rotunda quickly became a home for me and many others. It is here where I have met so many people who have impacted my life in many ways, more than you'd expect.

While there are far too many individuals to name, I would be remiss not to acknowledge Abena Marfo, MPH, my first-year Fellow, who believed in my potential to continue the legacy set by my predecessor, Allysann Jackson. These incredible women, along with Peer Counselors Nancy Le, Giancarlos Dominguez, and Patty Ortiz during her 2023-24 Fellowship, made my transition to SMU deeply meaningful.

I am especially grateful for the friendships I forged in this program, including Maria Rios, Dylan Hudson, Miriam Morales, and Aileen Sanchez— each of whom impacted my journey.



One of my proudest accomplishments was launching The Scholar Scoop, a semesterly magazine highlighting our scholars' achievements and aspirations. When we underwent rebranding and reimagining our communication outreach, I knew we had an increasing number of talent in our community. I knew that using the natural power of storytelling in building community and strengthening our program's mission would make us unstoppable. You all did the hard work of achieving excellence, demanding integrity, and overcoming adversity, and your willingness to share that through many avenues and within these projects and the mentorship I received from incredible leaders within the program has left an unforgettable mark on me and our program.

Recently, it was announced that the program will be renamed The Gerald & Gail Turner Scholars Program, beginning this academic year, in honor of retiring SMU President Dr. R. Gerald Turner and First Lady Gail Turner. This renaming is a testament to the Turners' legacy of scholarship and student success and the commitment of countless mentors and leaders who have shaped the program over the years.



I want to express my deepest gratitude to our Director and my incredible boss, Nikole Melgarejo Juarez, for her unwavering dedication and advocacy, Dr. Sue Bierman for her invaluable mentorship and guidance, and Keuna Webster and Bri Morales for their leadership in cultivating scholar and staff excellence. Serving on the Rotunda Student Leadership Team for three years allowed me to witness our staff grow from a team of 12 to nearly 30, a testament to the strength and vision of our community.

As I move forward, I do so with confidence that the Gerald & Gail Turner Scholars Program will continue to thrive and inspire. I am proud to be part of its legacy and even prouder to witness its future as an alumnus. I challenge you to explore as many opportunities as possible (including Study Abroad), empower yourself to be a better scholar, friend, and person, and evolve during your four years here.

Ja'niah Cooper is about to begin the tremendous honor of continuing this act of amplifying our community. I ask you all to support and uplift her dreams of doing so.



Thank you from the bottom of my heart. A quote that has stayed with me since my first year at SMU was, "Grief is the price we pay for love." In many ways, I have loved and grieved the memories I've held here, and I know many of you have, too. But I loved far more than I have grieved because of this program and the people I met. I just know that greater things are on the horizon for the Turner Scholars Program, and I can't wait to see it and love it alongside you all.

As always, Pony Up!

TULSI RAM LOHANI '25

2022 - 2025 ROTUNDA COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR



4-YEAR-OLD TULSI'S FIRST DAY OF PRE-K AT CLIFTON ELEMENTARY IN IRVING ISD. :-)



IT'S A GREAT TIME TO BE A TURNER SCHOLAR!

Academic Center for Excellence
5809 Bush Ave #157
Dallas, TX 75275

+1 (214) 768-4031
@TurnerScholars
linktr.ee/SMUTurnerScholars

SMU **Gerald and Gail Turner**
Scholars Program