

THE GERALD AND GAIL TURNER SCHOLARS PROGRAM

SUMMER 2026

# The Scholar Scoop

WELCOME TO SMU, CLASS OF 2030!





# — Welcome to the Hilltop!



Dear Class of 2030 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**  
JUAREZ



B.A. Political Science



M.Ed Counseling-Student Affairs



Nikole speaking at the 2026 Annual Turner Scholars Gala



**Nikole 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 our former Turner Fellow



**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. She was also recently accepted into the Cox School of Business Professional MBA Class of 2028!

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 Ke at the Annual Turner Gala



**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)



TURNER SCHOLARS PROGRAM

**Program  
Coordinator**  
**Afroz**  
HASAN



B.S. Public Health  
Minor: Information Management and Health  
Informatics



[Afroz Hassan](#), is the Program Coordinator for the Turner Scholars Program. Originally from Plano, Texas, Afroz earned her Bachelor of Science in Public Health with a minor in Information Management and Health Informatics from the University of North Texas.

Before joining Turner Scholars, Afroz worked with an Aviation Academy, where she discovered a passion for supporting students and helping them succeed. That experience inspired her to pursue a career in higher education, and she is excited to bring her enthusiasm for student-centered support to the Turner team.

In her free time, she enjoys photography, trying new matcha and coffee spots, and traveling. She is also always looking for new places to explore around Dallas!

Contact Afroz at [afrozhasan@smu.edu](mailto:afrozhasan@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*** —

JA'NIAH  
COOPER



Ja'niah received the Evolve Award at the Gala for all her amazing work as Comms. Director

**Ja'niah Cooper** is our Turner Scholars Program Fellow for this academic year. A senior from Chattanooga, Tennessee, Ja'niah is pursuing degrees in Psychology and International Studies with a concentration in Africa and the Middle East through Dedman College.

She is no stranger to the Turner Scholars Program, as she joined our student leadership team last year as the Communications Director. Now returning as our Turner Fellow, Ja'niah is excited to continue supporting the program and helping scholars build meaningful connections throughout the year.

Outside of Turner, Ja'niah is involved with the Association of Black Students, the Dedman College Scholars Program, and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Kappa Mu Chapter. She also gained professional experience as an Executive Director Intern with Empowering the Masses, where she developed her passion for leadership and community impact.

In her free time, Ja'niah enjoys reading, writing, going to the gym, listening to music, and spending time with friends.

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

# Turner Student Leadership

The Student Leadership Team is composed of the Turner Fellow, Graduate Assistant, Communications Director, and two Coordinators.

Led by Turner Fellow Ja'niah Cooper, the Turner Student Leadership Team comprises five students who focus on different aspects of the Turner Model to assist Peer Counselors (PCs), Peer Upperclassmen Liaisons (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 2026-27 Academic Year below:



# 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)



Graduate Assistant



Communications Director

# Fatima Saad

Fatima Saad is the Communications Director for the Turner Scholars Program. A senior from Dallas, Texas, she is pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing with a specialization in Management Consulting through the Cox School of Business. After serving as a Peer Counselor last year, she is excited to return to the Turner leadership team and use her role to strengthen the Turner community through creative storytelling and engaging content.

Outside of Turner, Fatima is a Caswell Fellow and the founder of Mini Moguls, a youth entrepreneurship program that teaches leadership, marketing, and financial literacy to young students. She also owns a photography business specializing in portraits. When she's not behind the camera or creating content, you can usually find her reading, trying a new restaurant, or spending time with family and friends.

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

# Madelyn Fields

Madelyn Fields is one of this year's Turner Scholars Coordinators. A senior from Frisco, Texas, Madelyn is pursuing degrees in Music Education and Viola Performance through the Meadows School of the Arts. She is excited to join Turner staff for the first time and looks forward to helping create a welcoming and engaging experience for scholars.

Outside of Turner, Madelyn serves in leadership with InterVarsity Campus Ministry and is involved with the Association of Black Students and the Black Business Organization. She has also gained professional experience through internships with the City of Dallas Office of Arts and Culture and Orchestra of New Spain. In her free time, Madelyn enjoys reading, journaling, playing volleyball, watching movies, and creating arts and crafts. She looks forward to supporting scholars and helping build a strong Turner community throughout the year.

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



Coordinator



Coordinator

# Li Duong

Li Duong is one of this year's Turner Scholars Coordinators. A junior from Frisco, Texas, Li is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts with minors in Advertising and Business. Returning for her second year on Turner staff, Li previously served as a Peer Counselor and is excited to continue giving back to a program that has played such an important role in her college experience.

Outside of Turner, Li is involved with Epic, Performer's Collective, and Boaz Commons, where she enjoys collaborating with fellow students and bringing creative ideas to life. When she's not planning events or working on creative projects, you can usually find her scrapbooking, crocheting, painting, reading, or searching for her next thrift store find. Li looks forward to creating memorable experiences and helping scholars build meaningful connections throughout the year.

[Get in touch with Li at ljduong@smu.edu](mailto:ljduong@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 orientation offers scholars the opportunity to connect with their peers before school starts, 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.

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.



The background of the entire page is a stylized, blue-toned map of the Southern Methodist University (SMU) campus. The map shows various buildings, green spaces, and roads. Labels like 'UNIVERSITY BLVD', 'HUGHES TRIGG BLVD', and 'MC FARLIN BLVD' are visible. The map is semi-transparent, allowing the text to be clearly read over it.

# 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 Liaisons (PULS)

Peer Upperclassmen Liaisons (PULs) are upperclassmen Turner Scholars who serve as critical links for the Program. They are here to support scholars in their second year 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 Liaisons 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 Liaisons for the 2026-27  
Academic Year below:



# Chris Ageh

*Lyle School of Engineering*

Chris Ageh is a senior from Katy, Texas, pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Electrical and Computer Engineering through the Lyle School of Engineering. He will be serving his 3rd year on the Turner staff and is excited to continue mentoring our scholars! Outside of Turner, Chris is involved with the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), InterVarsity, the CIO Student Advisory Board, and the Association of Black Students. He has also completed internships with Texas Instruments and HP, gaining experience in semiconductor engineering and artificial intelligence. He looks forward to helping scholars make the most of their time at SMU.

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



# Malak Mohammed

*Dedman College of Humanities and Science*

Malak Mohammed is a senior from Fort Worth, Texas pursuing degrees in Chemistry and Health & Society on the pre-medical track through Dedman College. Returning for her second year on Turner staff, Malak is excited to continue supporting scholars as they navigate academics, leadership, and life beyond the classroom. Outside of Turner, Malak is actively involved with the Minority Association of Pre-Health Students (MAPS) and the Muslim Student Association. She enjoys advocating for students, building meaningful relationships, and encouraging others to seek opportunities that help them grow.

When she's not studying, Malak enjoys painting, baking, and spending time with friends. She looks forward to serving as a resource and mentor for Turner upperclassmen this year.

[Get in touch with Malak at malakm@smu.edu](mailto:malakm@smu.edu)





## Amy Sanchez Ramirez

*Cox School of Business*

Amy Sanchez Ramirez is a junior from Dallas, Texas, pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting through the Cox School of Business and is excited to join Turner staff.

Outside of Turner, Amy is involved with the Future Accounting Leaders Society and serves in leadership roles with LULAC and Fundsy. She has also completed internships with Children's Health, the Dallas Police Department, and a local law office, developing a passion for leadership, service, and professional growth.

In her free time, Amy enjoys exploring Dallas coffee shops and restaurants, trying new recipes, and expressing her creativity through crafts. She is excited to mentor returning scholars and help them make the most of their college experience.

[Get in touch with Amy at asanchezramirez@smu.edu](mailto:asanchezramirez@smu.edu)

## Angela Escobedo

*Dedman College of Humanities and Science*

Angela Escobedo is a junior from Irving, Texas, pursuing degrees in Biological Sciences and Spanish through Dedman College. She is excited to be returning to the Turner staff but as a PUL this year and she looks forward to supporting returning scholars throughout their SMU journey.

Outside of Turner, Angela serves as a Resident Assistant, PREP Advisory Board member, and executive board member for the Minority Association of Pre-Health Students (MAPS). She is also involved with RLSH Ambassadors and Mustang Mentors. In her free time, Angela enjoys listening to music, journaling, writing, and taking road trips. She is excited to encourage upperclassmen as they continue growing academically, professionally, and personally.

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





# Fisher Wade

*Dedman College of Humanities and Science*

Fisher Wade is a junior from Ozark, Missouri, pursuing degrees in English with a concentration in Creative Writing and Psychology while following the pre-law track through Dedman College. Fisher is excited to join Turner staff for the first time this year.

Outside of Turner, Fisher is involved with the Honors Program, Young Life, Phi Alpha Delta, and several campus organizations. He also completed a corporate law internship, further strengthening his interest in the legal profession. In his free time, Fisher enjoys reading, cooking, nutrition, kickboxing, and spending time with friends. He looks forward to supporting fellow scholars as they prepare for life after SMU.

[Get in touch with Fisher at fwade@smu.edu](mailto:fwade@smu.edu)



# Jazzmin Torres

*Meadows School of the Arts*

Jazzmin Torres is a junior from Edinburg, Texas, pursuing degrees in Bassoon Performance and Journalism through the Meadows School of the Arts and is excited to join Turner staff this year. Jazzmin is an active member of Mustang Band and recently spent the summer performing at the Eastern Festival of Music. Outside of music, she enjoys running, reading, drawing, and spending time with friends.

Although she admits she's terrified of rollercoasters, she's always eager to challenge herself in new ways. Jazzmin looks forward to helping upperclassmen feel connected, supported, and encouraged throughout the academic year.

[Get in touch with Jazzmin at jazzmint@smu.edu](mailto:jazzmint@smu.edu)



## Christian Luna

*Cox School of Business*

Christian Luna is a junior from Houston, Texas, pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting through the Cox School of Business. He is excited to return to Turner staff and looks forward to supporting scholars as they prepare for success beyond their first year.

Outside of Turner, Christian is involved with the Association of Latino Professionals for America (ALPFA), Alpha Kappa Psi, and the Maguire Energy Institute. He has also completed internships with Deloitte, gaining experience in accounting and financial audit. In his free time, Christian enjoys reading, staying active, playing video games, and spending time outdoors. He is excited to serve as a mentor and resource for Turner upperclassmen this year.

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

## Salma El Wakil

*Dedman College of Humanities and Science*

Salma El Wakil is a senior from Garland, Texas, pursuing degrees in Statistics and Data Science through Dedman College. She is excited to begin mentoring scholars and helping them make the most of their college experience.

Outside of Turner, Salma has gained valuable professional experience through internships with JPMorgan Chase and Accenture, where she developed interests in strategy, analytics, and consulting.

In her free time, she enjoys practicing yoga, embroidery, and reading. She looks forward to helping Turner scholars pursue new opportunities while building confidence both inside and outside the classroom.

[Get in touch with Salma at selwakil@smu.edu](mailto:selwakil@smu.edu)





The Instagram logo, which consists of a white camera outline inside a white circle, set against a dark blue background.

# 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 13 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 2026-27 Academic Year Below:



# Jason Cardenas

Jason Cardenas is a sophomore from Mission, Texas. He is pursuing degrees in Music Performance (Tuba) and Music Education through the Meadows School of the Arts and is excited to join Turner staff for the first time. Jason is actively involved in Mustang Band, Meadows Ensembles, and the Meadows Box Office.

Known for his patience, creativity, and welcoming personality, he enjoys helping others feel included and supported. Outside of academics, Jason enjoys fitness, spending time with friends, and, of course, playing the tuba. He looks forward to building lasting relationships with his mentees and helping first-year scholars feel at home on the Hilltop.

Get in touch with Jason at [jdcardenas@smu.edu](mailto:jdcardenas@smu.edu)



# Javier Garcia

Javier Garcia is a sophomore from Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico, who now calls Dallas home. He is pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance with a specialization in Real Estate through the Cox School of Business. Javier is excited to join Turner staff for the first time this year.

Outside of Turner, Javier is involved with the Folsom Institute, ALPFA, HOLA, and the Sales Club. He enjoys hiking, skiing, working out, playing video games, and taking on new adventures. Javier is excited to help incoming scholars build confidence, create meaningful friendships, and make the most of their first year at SMU.

Get in touch with Javier at [javiorgarcia@smu.edu](mailto:javiorgarcia@smu.edu)



# Lillian "Lilly" Holzrichter

Lilly Holzrichter is a junior from St. Louis, Missouri, pursuing degrees in Economics and Public Policy through Dedman College and is excited to join Turner staff for the first time.

Lilly is involved with SMU Speech & Debate and Wesley House, where she enjoys connecting with students across campus. She is known for her positive attitude, enthusiasm, and ability to bring people together. Outside of class, Lilly enjoys baking, shopping, watching sports, and competing in fantasy football leagues. She looks forward to helping first-year scholars build friendships, discover campus resources, and feel at home in the Turner community.

Get in touch with Lilly at [lholtzrichter@smu.edu](mailto:lholtzrichter@smu.edu)





## Jeremiah Lynn

Jeremiah Lynn is a sophomore from Dallas, Texas. He is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering through the Lyle School of Engineering and is excited to join Turner staff for the first time.

Jeremiah is involved with the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) and the Thrive Scholars Program. He enjoys drawing, reading, gaming, working out, and spending time with friends. A talented artist who also enjoys singing and dancing, Jeremiah is passionate about creating welcoming spaces where others feel comfortable being themselves. He is excited to mentor incoming scholars as they begin their journey at SMU.

[Get in touch with Jeremiah at jklynn@smu.edu](mailto:jklynn@smu.edu)

## Jesus Ramirez

Jesus Ramirez is a sophomore from Garland, Texas. He is pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting through the Cox School of Business and is excited to serve on Turner staff for the first time.

Outside of Turner, Jesus is involved with ALPFA, FOCUS, and the First-Generation Association. He enjoys learning about history, cooking, exploring new places, and spending time with family. Known for his empathy and thoughtful leadership, Jesus hopes to build meaningful relationships with incoming scholars while helping them feel confident, connected, and supported throughout their first year at SMU.

[Get in touch with Jesus at jesusr@smu.edu](mailto:jesusr@smu.edu)



## Mackenzie Brady

Kenzie Brady is from Goshen, New York. She is pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance in the Cox School of Business and is excited to join Turner staff for the first time.

Outside of Turner, Kenzie is a member of SMU Cheer and Delta Gamma and has gained professional experience through a finance internship with Orange County Government. She enjoys sewing, baking, staying active, and spending time with friends. A fun fact about Kenzie is that she can do a backflip! She looks forward to helping first-year scholars find their place at SMU and creating a supportive community throughout the year.

[Get in touch with Kenzie at mcbrady@smu.edu](mailto:mcbrady@smu.edu)



# Lesley Salmeron

Lesley Salmeron is a junior from Garland, Texas, pursuing degrees in Political Science and Public Policy on the pre-law track through Dedman College and is excited to join Turner staff for the first time.

Outside of Turner, Lesley is involved with Phi Alpha Delta and serves as a Connect Mentor. She has also worked as a legal secretary and paralegal in immigration law, strengthening her passion for advocacy and service. Outside of school, Lesley enjoys volleyball, baking, movie nights with friends, and trying new recipes. A fun fact about Lesley is that she attended culinary school while in high school. She looks forward to helping incoming scholars feel welcomed, supported, and prepared for success at SMU.

Get in touch with Lesley at [lsalmeron@smu.edu](mailto:lsalmeron@smu.edu)



# Archana Shrestha

Archana Shrestha is a sophomore from Houston, Texas, and is pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting with a specialization in Real Estate through the Cox School of Business. She is excited to join Turner staff for the first time as a 2nd year and looks forward to welcoming the newest class of Turner Scholars.

Outside of Turner, Archana is involved with the Future Accounting Leaders Society, the South Asian Student Association, and SMU FEM. She has also completed operations and human resources internships with Global One Bank, where she gained valuable professional experience in banking. In her free time, Archana enjoys reading and shopping. She looks forward to helping first-year scholars build meaningful connections and feel supported throughout their transition to SMU.

Get in touch with Archana at [archana@smu.edu](mailto:archana@smu.edu)



# Mackie Terry

Mackie Terry is from Rochester, New York, and is pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance through the Cox School of Business. He is excited to join Turner staff and looks forward to helping first-year scholars adjust to college life. Outside of Turner, Mackie is involved with Delta Sigma Pi, Scholars of Finance, and the WBB Practice Team, where he also serves as the Delta Sigma Pi basketball captain.

In his free time, he enjoys basketball, golf, running, and spending time with friends. He is excited to build relationships with incoming scholars and help them find their place in the Turner community.

Get in touch with Mackie at [mmterry@smu.edu](mailto:mmterry@smu.edu)





## Nina Jones

Nina Jones is a rising sophomore from Plano, Texas, pursuing degrees in Theatre Studies and Corporate Communication and Public Affairs with specializations in Social Innovation, Creativity, and the Arts through Meadows School of the Arts. She is excited to join Turner staff for the first time and looks forward to mentoring the next class of Turner Scholars.

Outside of Turner, Nina serves as Sergeant-at-Arms for Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Kappa Mu Chapter, and as a Connect Mentor. She is also involved with the Association of Black Students, SMU Student Theatre, and the National Pan-Hellenic Council. In her free time, Nina enjoys baking, reading, drawing, watching movies, dancing, and spending time creating art. She is excited to help first-year scholars build confidence, community, and lasting friendships at SMU.

[Get in touch with Nina at nina@smu.edu](mailto:nina@smu.edu)

## Viviana Garcia

Viviana Garcia is a 2nd year student from Ferris, Texas, pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering with a biomedical concentration through the Lyle School of Engineering. She will be a new addition to the Turner Scholars Staff!

Outside of Turner, Viviana is involved with the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE), Women in Science and Engineering (WISE), the McNair Scholars Program, Thrive, and the Biomedical Engineering Society (BMES). She has also worked as a research assistant, gaining hands-on engineering experience. In her free time, Viviana enjoys yoga, journaling, baking, writing, and creating Pinterest boards. She looks forward to helping first-year scholars feel welcomed, encouraged, and connected throughout their first year at SMU.

[Get in touch with Viviana at vivianag@smu.edu](mailto:vivianag@smu.edu)





# Returning PCs!



## Hiram Tellez

Hiram Tellez is a Junior 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.

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

## Arianna Saravia

Arianna Saravia is a junior from Irving, Texas, serving as a returning Peer Counselor for the program. She is pursuing degrees in Biology and Health & Society on the pre-medical track through Dedman College. Arianna is excited to continue welcoming and mentoring the newest class of Turner Scholars.

Outside of Turner, Arianna serves as Vice President of the Minority Association of Pre-Health Students (MAPS) and is an Advisory Board Member for PREP while also participating in the McNair Scholars Program. She enjoys dancing, listening to podcasts, spending time outdoors, and trying new activities. Arianna is passionate about supporting students and helping them build confidence as they transition into college life!

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

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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 Juarez - [nme@garejo@smu.edu](mailto:nme@garejo@smu.edu)

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

Communications Director Fatima Saad- [fsaad@smu.edu](mailto:fsaad@smu.edu)





**RISE info Coming Soon!**

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