

Letter from the President	2-3
Admission Report	4-5
Thrive Campaign	6-7
High-Impact Experiences	8-9
Outdoor Adventure Program	10-11
Greek Life Update	12-13
Athletics Update	14-15
Rankings and Recognition	16
Faculty Successes	17
Capital Projects Update	
Alumni Updates	20-21
Philanthropic Support	22-23

### Dear friends of Southwestern,

As I enter my "senior" year here at Southwestern University, I am in awe at everything we have gone through together over the past three years. My first year was marked by chaos and uncertainty; my second, by recovery and rebuilding. The 2022-2023 academic year, I am pleased to say, was a year of hope, optimism, and undeniable success.

At the top of our list of achievements is the progress we made throughout the second year of the Tactical Plan. Although the plan was designed to be a five-year effort, we are on track to complete its goals and objectives a full year early. A core theme-and the highest priority—of the Tactical Plan is Diversity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Equity (DIBE). We are currently conducting a nationwide search for a new senior staff member who will expand and lead our efforts to increase recruitment and retention of students, faculty, and staff from underrepresented communities. These efforts received a big boost in July when we received designation as a Hispanic-Serving Institution from the U.S. Department of Education. As such, we are eligible for grant funding to strengthen institutional programs, facilities, and services that expand the educational opportunities for Hispanic Americans and other underrepresented populations. Southwestern is the only top 100 liberal arts university in the U.S. News & World Report rankings to achieve this status.

Speaking of rankings, Georgetown is once again the fastest-growing city in the U.S., with a 14.4% growth rate. Like the city we call home, Southwestern is in an era of rejuvenation and renewal, with renovations and expansions (Mood-Bridwell Hall, the McCombs Campus Center, and the Corbin J. Robertson Center) occurring alongside new construction (two mixed-use residence halls, a welcome center, and an athletic complex). We continue to explore options for the undeveloped 500 acres east of campus and have selected a development partner who will help us build a community dedicated to and defined by the liberal arts. Georgetown, and thereby Southwestern, was built on the traditional, ancestral, and contemporary lands of Indigenous peoples, and this new community will honor the land and the people who came before us.

As we embark on these ambitious initiatives, we are committed to maintaining our strong financial position. We ended the year with a surplus, enhanced the endowment, issued debt at a reasonable rate, and diversified our revenue streams. We had a successful year in fundraising, with generous bequests coming as well as new gifts and significant pledges. We had a successful public launch of the Thrive campaign, which has raised \$122 million of its \$150 million goal.



In the following pages, you can read about these and other accomplishments from the past year. I thank each and every one of you for your generous support and encouragement. Together, we can ensure that Southwestern not only remains committed to the traditional residential liberal arts experience, but serves as a shining example of its power.

Warmly,

**Xauna Mandua Thombley** President Laura Skandera Trombley



## The Most Selective Class in History

After another year of record-breaking application numbers, Southwestern's acceptance rate dropped to 39% for the 2023–2024 academic year. A total of 6,585 students applied to join the class of 2027, making it the most selective class in the University's history. Southwestern continues to attract a diverse and accomplished group of students, with the members of the incoming class hailing from across the country and around the globe and representing a variety of backgrounds, perspectives, and interests.



6,585

**First-Year Applications** 

403 **First-Year Students** 

7%

**Black or African** American



11%

Outside of Texas from

21 States & 9 Countries



First Generation





38% Underrepresented

20%

First Generation



Female

6%

**Black or African** American

45%

Male



Latina/Latino or Hispanic

14%

Outside of Texas from 37 states and 22 countries



THRIVE

THRIVE

## Time to Thrive

In April, Southwestern launched its comprehensive campaign, Thrive: The Campaign for Southwestern University. With a goal of raising \$150 million to elevate the University, this multi-year campaign will create a campus experience for Southwestern students, faculty, and staff like no other.

Fostering a liberal arts community whose values and actions encourage contributions toward the well-being of humanity has been the core purpose of Southwestern for nearly two centuries. The founders of Southwestern's four root institutions understood the importance of higher education in enriching the lives of Texans both culturally and economically. They knew that the development of citizens and future leaders on a new frontier must be rooted in the wisdom of the ages while being nourished with new ideas.

Thanks to the many years of support from alumni and friends, today's Southwestern students are making impacts at home and abroad that would be unimaginable to the University's founders. Through this campaign, Southwestern will build on that rich history as beloved landmarks receive new life and new places are made to live, learn and discover.

To date, the University has raised over \$122 million. All gifts and pledges received by June 30, 2025, will be included in the campaign totals. All estate gifts documented by individuals who will be 60 by June 30, 2025, will also be included in the campaign totals.



Supporting Student Success Southwestern prides itself on a unique liberal arts and sciences education with distinctive curricular and co-curricular programs that prepare its students for global opportunities. Campaign gifts will allow students to learn from award-winning professors, participate in high-impact, transformative experiences, and excel in a challenging but engaging environment.

#### Academic Excellence

Advancing the work of Southwestern's world-class faculty and academic departments is a cornerstone of the University. With support from campaign gifts, Southwestern will attract and retain the best teacherscholars in the world, provide them with the resources required to advance their fields of study and equip students with an exceptional education.

#### **Building for Tomorrow**

There is an unmistakable feeling of momentum at Southwestern. Campaign gifts will fund the numerous projects in the works that lay out the University's vision for a more sustainable, accessible, and inclusive environment that will foster teaching and learning while preserving the historical integrity of the campus.

Annual and Ongoing Support

All gifts, large and small, contribute to the continued success of the University. Annual or recurring gifts allow donors to support the initiatives that align with the things they value most. Each investment in Southwestern strengthens name recognition, impacts visibility, and adds value to every graduate's degree.

To learn more about Thrive: The Campaign for Southwestern University go to:

thrive.southwestern.edu

# **High-Impact Experiences**

All of the experiences mentioned in this section were funded through donations to the High-Impact Experience Fund and King Creativity Fund at Southwestern University.

### **Building High-Powered Rockets**

Physics major Noah Pyles '23 hopes to enter the aerospace industry-a competitive and challenging field. He realized he could bolster his resume by gaining some valuable hands-on experience through a King Creativity project. Pyles began brainstorming ideas and ultimately developed a plan to assemble, test, and launch multiple high-powered rockets.

Pyles recruited three fellow physics majors-Braden Anderson'24, Angel Rodriguez '24, and Nina Woodward '24-to assist with the project. The team divided into pairs and built a total of four rockets from a kit in less than two months. The rocket that Anderson and Pyles built together was a success, to say the least. It didn't just go straight up 2,000 feet into the air; it came practically straight down, landing only about 20 feet from the launch site ("That's basically unheard of," Pyles says). The two students earned level 1 highpowered rocketry certification from the National Association of Rocketry.

"There was a lot of preparation. We had to build the rockets and run the simulations. We scheduled and rescheduled the launch multiple times," Pyles

says. "But it was an awesome experience. It is very rewarding to see something you made out of nothing be a success."

### Living in the Moment

For Ella Stewart '24, the SU Buenos Aires program was a perfect fit. Stewart, who has a paired major in Spanish and Latin America and Border Studies, knew she wanted to study abroad in a Spanishspeaking country so she could immerse herself in the culture and language, and the fact that the six-week, eight-credit program was led by Southwestern Professor of Spanish Katy Ross and designed for Southwestern students made it a no-brainer. "I wanted to create meaningful bonds with both my Southwestern peers and local Argentines while experiencing another culture and exiting my comfort zone," Stewart says.



Stewart took two advanced Spanish courses during her time in Buenos Aires and experienced Argentine culture by visiting museums, going on a city bike tour, learning to tango, and taking cooking classes. She and her classmates also went on several adventures outside the city, including a two-day excursion to Iguazú Falls. "Argentines believe in living in the moment and enjoying life authentically. I realized that this perspective is often overlooked in the United States, where productivity and monetary success are frequently prioritized," she says. "This has had an impact on my own perspective, and I have continued to embrace it rather than stress about the future.'



### A Cutting-Edge Experience

Not many students can say they spent their summer watching live operations, but Jake Clemons '23 can. As an intern at Stanford Medical School, Clemons shadowed doctors from various specialties and observed a number of different surgeries.

"I got to sit in on a brain surgery where they drilled a hole in the patient's skull and placed a shunt from the brain to the stomach to drain excess cerebrospinal fluid," Clemons says. "It was amazing." The kinesiology major also worked on several research projects, including a qualitative study on a new prehabilitation program, a microbiome study on patients having surgery, and a systematic study on quality measures in orthopedic surgery. He says the internship was invaluable in preparing him for future career success.

"It not only exponentially improved my chances of getting accepted into a top medical school, but also allowed me to work and rub shoulders with some of the best physicians in their fields," says Clemons, who plans on becoming an orthopedic surgeon. "I also was able to see the entire research process, from conducting the research to submitting it for publication. This was important because it is something I will be doing my whole career."

### **Growing Globally**

Through internships, students gain real-world experience that helps prepare them for personal and professional success. This summer, two Southwestern students headed south of the border to grow their skills through internships in Mexico City.

Nathan Abrego '24 interned in the fraud department at Ferrer y Asociados, part of Grupo Salinas. His work involved conducting risk assessments and developing comprehensive plans to mitigate fraud risks. The business major, who is considering pursuing a master's degree in data analytics, was offered a job with the company after graduation.

"The most rewarding part of this internship was learning that I am capable of greatness," Abrego says. "Successfully finishing not just one, but two projects showed me that I can advance in whatever field I go into." Santiago Cuevas '26 also completed an internship with Grupo Salinas. Cuevas, a business major and economics minor, worked in the finance and administration department of the corporate conglomerate. As a member of the Southwestern men's golf team, he was especially excited to work on a project related to the company's golf course. "I made a lot of connections and learned a lot of new things, from financial analysis to contract review," Cuevas says. "It was an amazing experience."





# An Adventurous Spirit

As the leader of Southwestern's new Outdoor Adventure program, Branndon Bargo shows students the ropes—literally. In the past year, he has taught students how to rappel down a cliff, belay a climbing partner up a rock wall, and safely enjoy a variety of other activities, from hiking and camping to kayaking and paddleboarding.

The executive producer and co-host of PBS's *The Highpointers* with his brother, Greg, Bargo has traveled across the country to climb the highest point in all 50 states. He also has led large and difficult expeditions to more than 60 countries and competes in some of the world's most challenging endurance events to stay in shape.





**Branndon Bargo** Assistant Director of Outdoor Adventure

Bargo earned his bachelor's degree in broadcast journalism from Texas State University. He received an Emmy nomination for his work on the PBS show *The Daytripper* and is the producer of two Discovery Channel documentaries, *To Live or Die on Everest* and *Everest's Greatest Mystery*.

The new Outdoor Adventure program provides students with opportunities to explore nature and develop outdoor skills in a fun and safe environment. The program offers excursions and workshops throughout the year for both the enthusiastic beginner and the experienced outdoors person. Students learn essential skills that help them develop confidence, discipline, and perseverance and discover a healthy way to deal with stress that will benefit them throughout their lives.



# Exploring the Great Outdoors

Southwestern's Class of 2023 embarked on a thrilling adventure and took on the challenges of kayaking and rappelling at scenic Lake Georgetown. Led by Assistant Director of Outdoor Adventure Branndon Bargo, the trip provided seniors with one last unforgettable experience before graduation.





# Strengthening Support for Greek Life



This fall, Southwestern will welcome a new professional dedicated to the advancement and enhancement of the fraternity and sorority experience on campus. This new staff member will provide support, advice, and advocacy to Southwestern's Greek community on matters related to housing, risk management, member engagement, and leadership development.

Greek life has long been part of the student experience at Southwestern. The University's first fraternity, the Xi Chapter of the Kappa Alpha Order, was established on campus on November 28, 1883, only a decade after Southwestern's founding. Today, Southwestern is home to six national sororities and four national fraternities. Almost 30% of students are fraternity and sorority members, and they all play a vital role in the campus community.

"We're hoping that by adding this full-time position, we'll be able to give those fraternities and sororities the support they need to thrive and grow," says Associate Director of Development, President's Council and Greek Life Matthew Cragg.

The associate director of fraternity and sorority life will not only support the success of students already engaged with a fraternity or sorority, but also actively and intentionally work with the student leaders of those organizations to recruit future new members. Additional duties include developing programming to support the benefits of Greek life, advising the chapters on community service and philanthropic opportunities available on campus or in the surrounding community, and acting as a liaison with the regional and/or national offices associated with each chapter.









# Southwestern Joins Southern Athletic Association

Southwestern will become a full member of the Southern Athletic Association (SAA) beginning with the 2025–2026 academic year. All 20 men's and women's varsity sports will be making the conference change, with the Pirate football team making an early switch to the SAA in fall 2023.



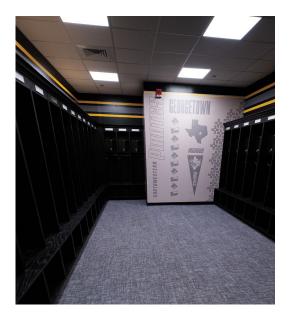
Southwestern's move to the SAA will be made jointly with Trinity University in San Antonio. Both schools currently are members of the Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference (SCAC) with the exception of football. Southwestern has been a member of SCAC since 1994, but its football team has competed in the American Southwest Conference since 2017.

"We are grateful for the invitation to join the SAA. With a well-earned reputation for athletic and academic excellence, the member schools of the SAA represent the best of Division III sports," Director of Intercollegiate Athletics Ken Ralph says. "This move also allows us to have all 20 sports under the same conference umbrella, providing a level of consistency and equity we have not enjoyed in some time."

The SAA's core members include Berry College, Birmingham-Southern College, Centre College, Hendrix College, Millsaps College, Oglethorpe University, Rhodes College, and the University of the South.

# Women's Locker Room Updated ど Upgraded

As part of Southwestern's ongoing commitment to gender equity in athletics, the women's locker room in the Corbin J. Robertson Center was transformed over the summer. In addition to new lockers, sinks, mirrors, carpet, and lighting, the University installed new individual showers to increase privacy. Each athletics team now has a designated and defined space within the locker room complex complete with Pirate Athletics branding.





# New Meeting Room Adds Multifunctional Space

Southwestern unveiled a new team meeting room in the Corbin J. Robertson Center this fall that enhances the student-athlete experience. The room includes tiered seating for 42 players and two 80-inch screens in front as well as a folding whiteboard. With state-of-the-art equipment and a sleek, modern look featuring the Pirates Athletics branding, the meeting room provides the perfect space for teams to gather and review film.

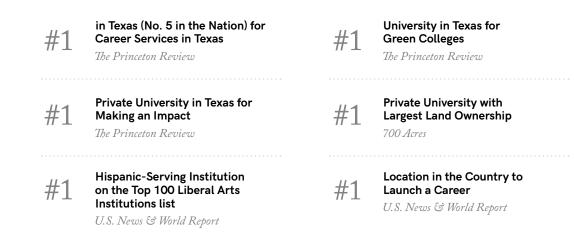
A new lounge and content production lab went in next to the meeting room. The lounge provides a space for student-athletes to relax, while the lab offers a dedicated room for capturing videos and photos that can be shared across social media to promote the Pirate athletics teams. The lab has everything needed to produce exceptional content, from a variety of backdrops and specialized lighting to multiple cameras and the most advanced equipment. It will also be available for individual student use.

# Baseball Stadium Gets New Seating

Thanks to a generous donor, the seating at Southwestern's Rockwell Family Baseball Field got much more comfortable. The University replaced the bleacher seats with chairback seats, adding a modern look and feel to the storied field.



# **Rankings and Recognition**



#### SIXTEEN FACULTY RECEIVE SAM TAYLOR FELLOWSHIPS

Every year, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry awards faculty members at United Methodist-affiliated universities in Texas with research grants made possible through the Sam Taylor Fellowship Fund. The grants allow faculty to pursue graduate study or postgraduate research. This year, the following 16 Southwestern faculty members received one of the competitive grants:

Noelia Cigarroa-Cooke (Photograph Unavailable) María de los Ángeles Rodriguez Cadena (Photograph Unavailable)

Fay Guarraci

Psychology



German



Erika Berroth **Physics** 



Kimberly McArthur Biology



Katy Ross Spanish



Religion

Ken Mello

Education





Raquel Sáenz Ortiz **Rico Self** Communications



Karen Lara Psychology



**Gabriel Peña** Theatre

Laura Hobgood

Religion



Jennifer Stokes Kinesiology















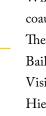












## **Faculty Successes**

Professor and Garey Chair of Mathematics Alison Marr received the 2023 Ron Barnes Distinguished Service to Students Award at the 2023 Annual Meeting of the Texas Section of the Mathematical Association of America. Marr also supervised four student talks presented by eight current students and one recent graduate at the meeting.

Dean of the Faculty and Corbin Robertson, Jr. Endowed Professor of Theatre Sergio Costola took seven students to Scotland to perform G.H.O.S.T. Unit: The Live Event at the world-renowned Edinburgh Festival Fringe in August 2022. Costola also coauthored an article with students on the devised theater project.

Christine Robertson Morenz Endowed Professor of Sociology Maria Lowe and ThuyMi Phung '24 presented their faculty-student collaborative research project titled "Because History Has Been Whitewashed for Decades': Predictors of Attitudes about Critical Race Theory" at the 2023 Southern Sociological Society Annual Conference. Katherine Holcomb'24 was a coauthor on this project.

Wilhelmina Cullen Robertson Endowed Professor of Spanish Katy Ross coauthored two articles with Southwestern students. "Las NO-madres: The Commercialization and Medicalization of Infertility" was written with Bailey Barlow '23, and "Populism and Surrogacy in Spain" was written with Visiting Assistant Professor of Political Science Katie Aha and Catherine Hiebel'22.

Professor and Karen and Rex Preis Chair of Biology Maria Todd and Professor and Garey Chair of Biology Maria Cuevas recently published a paper titled "Microarray Analysis Reveals Overexpression of Both Integral Membrane and Cytosolic Tight Junction Genes in Endometrial Cancer Cell Lines" in the Journal of Cancer. Chance P. Winters '21 coauthored the paper.



## Mood-Bridwell Renovation Begins

Changes are coming to the historic Mood-Bridwell Hall. Home to the Brown College of Arts and Sciences, the iconic campus landmark is being completely renovated inside and out. The interior will be reconfigured to include new community gathering and performance spaces, classrooms, and a coffeehouse, while exterior improvements include the reopening of the upper terrace for outdoor classroom use and social events. Construction began in May.

"We are taking the historic core and adapting it to truly reflect the Paideia philosophy of making connections with collaborative spaces for students and faculty across the humanities and social sciences," says Vice President for Academic Affairs Alisa Gaunder. "The atrium, in particular, is a treasured feature that will be enhanced to facilitate such endeavors, whether it be capstone presentations, invited lectures, or student organization or department activities."

Every space of the building will be built with adaptability, technology, ergonomics and sustainability in mind to ensure it effectively meets the needs of 21st-century students. Significant upgrades to the building, including indoor air improvements and increased access to natural light via a state-of-the-art glass roof, will support a more efficient layout that is designed to naturally enhance learning and interactions between students, faculty, and staff.

Originally constructed in 1908 as a men's dormitory, Mood-Bridwell Hall has also served as a women's residence hall and military barracks for students in Army and Navy training programs during World War II. In 1975, it was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

# New Residence Halls Underway

Design and permitting began this spring for two new mixed-use residence halls on the Southwestern campus. One of the new residence halls will house second-year students and be located north of the Red & Charline McCombs Campus Center, while the other will house first-year students and be located near a new campus entrance on the east side of campus. Both halls are scheduled to open in fall 2025.



Designed to LEED Gold standards that make buildings more sustainable for people and the environment, the new residence halls will enhance the student experience and support students physical and mental well-being. They will include lounges, workout rooms, and other gathering spaces to help students stay healthy and active while making connections and building friendships. Each hall will have a coffee and sandwich cafe and mini-market where students can grab a quick bite to eat. They also will feature classrooms and study rooms to integrate living and learning.

A new welcome center next to the first-year residence hall will house the Admission and Financial Aid offices as well as a bookstore and an art gallery. This proximity will help visiting students and their families get a feel for residential campus life and be convenient for new students as they navigate their first year of college. "Learning will be magnified both academically and socially... We are doing all we can to help students come together, live together and learn together."

#### BRIT KATZ

Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students



## Southwestern Graduate Awarded Boren Fellowship

Danyale Kellogg '19 was selected as a 2023–2024 Boren Fellowship recipient and will spend a year studying Mandarin at the National Taiwan Normal University. The Boren Fellowship is a prestigious government-funded fellowship that financially supports graduate students interested in studying languages and cultures critical to U.S. national security.

A history major and German and international studies minor at Southwestern, Kellogg spent a semester at Ewha Womans University in South Korea, where she studied Korean, international law and relations, nuclear policy, and security studies. Kellogg furthered her interest in international affairs as an intern with the U.S. House of Representatives, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and a small security and defense consulting firm in Washington, D.C.

"I became really interested in foreign affairs, specifically in Asia, when I interned on Capitol Hill," Kellogg recalls. "This internship sparked my interest in national security and, given that it happened during the 2015–2016 Zika fever epidemic, it also fostered my interest in biodefense and global health security."



Danyale Kellogg '19 2023-2024 Boren Fellowship Recipient

After graduating from Southwestern, Kellogg attended Texas A&M University, earning a master's degree in international affairs in the national security and diplomacy track. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in biodefense with a specialization in international security at George Mason University.

# Two Alumnae Receive Fulbright Grants

Amiel Padayhag '20 and Lauren Gillespie '19 are Southwestern's newest Fulbright award recipients. Padayhag, who was a feminist studies and anthropology double major, will work on an independent research project related to traditional healing in the Philippines. Gillespie, who was a computer science and chemistry double major, will head to Brazil to continue her Ph.D. research on using machine learning to enhance biodiversity monitoring.



Padayhag, originally from the Philippines, moved to the U.S. when she was six. She looks forward to researching the role of traditional healing within the Filipino medical community and learning Tagalog, the most widely spoken language in the Philippines.

"I read this book about a Hmong family from Laos who clashes with the American medical system. It really changed my worldview," Padayhag says. "Reading that book sparked my interest in holistic medicine. That, along with my desire to return to the Philippines and learn the language, led me to pursue this research." Gillespie is enrolled in the computer science Ph.D. program at Stanford University. Her Fulbright research project will focus on creating a comprehensive map of keystone plants by identifying large trees and linking them to smaller species that may not be easily detected by satellite imagery.

"It would be remarkable if we could then estimate the number of trees lost over the last three decades," Gillespie explains. "This could offer essential information to NGOs and governments in understanding the industries or factors most responsible for ecosystem degradation."

# Philanthropic Support

#### Southwestern Annual Fund

Donors contributed more to the Southwestern Annual Fund during 2022–2023 than during any other academic year in the University's history. Gifts totaled more than \$3.5 million, compared to the previous record of \$1.96 million.

Gifts to the Southwestern Annual Fund support the areas of greatest need in the most responsive way possible. These unrestricted gifts allow the University to address changing priorities and new initiatives as they arise. These funds may be used to support students' curricular and co-curricular experiences, faculty research and creative works, and other institutional objectives.

### **President's Council**

Southwestern recognizes donors who gave \$1,000 or more in fiscal year 2022–2023 as members of the President's Council. Each President's Council member is vital to the success of the University and enriches the Southwestern Experience for students.

KEY PROJECTS FUNDED BY PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL MEMBERS:

#### OUTDOOR ADVENTURE PROGRAM

Over \$400,000 was given to help establish and launch the Outdoor Adventure program. In its first year, the program has been wildly successful at bringing Southwestern students out of their residence halls and into a thriving campus community.

#### ENDOWMENT

Over \$10 million was donated to the endowment to support a variety of initiatives, including student scholarships, undergraduate research and other high-impact experiences, and the Center for Career and Professional Development.

#### PIRATE ATHLETICS

Over \$720,000 was committed to Pirate Athletics to support the teams' operational budgets as well as facility upgrades.

#### HISPANIC STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER

\$200,000 was received to fund the addition of a new staff member in the Center for Student Success. The Hispanic student success coordinator will design, implement, and evaluate academic success programs, workshops, presentations, and other innovative activities that provide academic and retention support for Hispanic students.

#### SU EMERGENCY FUND

More than \$50,000 was received from alumni, parents, and friends of Southwestern to support students with emergency requests for assistance with groceries, rent, utilities, travel home, and technology needs.



PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL

MEMBERS GROWTH:

### **Parent Leadership Council**

Members of the Parent Leadership Council (PLC) contribute their time, talents, and \$2,500 or more to promote the Southwestern Experience. Their support is crucial in helping the University provide a transformational undergraduate experience.

Membership in the PLC grew from 56 members in 2021-2022 to 65 members in 2022-2023.



#### TOTAL DOLLARS RECEIVED

\$18,75	2022-2023
\$9,13	2021-2022
\$12,11	2020-2021
<b>\$8,5</b> 4	2019-2020
\$10,70	2018-2019
\$22,03	2017-2018
<b>\$6,3</b> 4	2016-2017
\$7,38	2015-2016
\$13,91	2014–2015

TOTAL DOLLARS CONTRIBUTED		
\$538,896	2023	
\$708,001	2022	
\$438,145	2021	
\$520,803	2020	
\$329,146	2019	
\$171,424	2018	
\$112,913	2017	
\$96,629	2016	

50,000 38,418 13,000 44,000

09,000 31,000 42,000

89,000 11.000



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## SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

GEORGETOWN, TEXAS