

SOUTHWESTERN  
ANNUAL REPORT

2024

BUILDING A  
BETTER TOMORROW







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*Dear friends of Southwestern,*

The Southwestern University campus is always bustling with activity, but this year it's also alive with the sounds of construction. Our investments in our facilities are coming to fruition with several projects underway. The renovation of Mood-Bridwell Hall and the construction of a new Welcome Center, first-year residence hall, and second-year residence hall are all scheduled to be completed by next fall. We're also making headway on the much-anticipated multi-purpose sports complex thanks to a \$3 million challenge gift from the Cullen Trust for Higher Education (CTHE). That project is still in the planning stages, but our generous donors are moving it closer to reality.

We recently finished several other projects, including the new Professor John Score II Learning Commons, the library releveling, and new decor for The Cove and The Commons. If you need to stock up on Pirate gear, I encourage you to stop by the new and improved Campus Book Store, which recently moved to a remodeled space on the first floor of the McCombs Campus Center.

In this report, you can read about these and other activities from the past year that were made possible thanks to your generous support. From funding for high-impact experiences to an anonymous \$5 million estate commitment to *Thrive: The Campaign for Southwestern*, each and every one of you stepped up to support our students and our school.

On behalf of the entire Southwestern community, thank you for another extraordinary year. Your generosity and commitment to the University continues to inspire me, and I am honored to work alongside you as we build a better tomorrow.

Warmly,

*Laura Skandera Trombley*

President Laura Skandera Trombley



# Year in Review — Philanthropic Report

## Southwestern Annual Fund

Donors contributed more to the Southwestern Annual Fund during 2023–2024 than any previous year in the University’s history. Gifts totaled more than \$4.7 million, compared to last year’s previous record of \$3.5 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 \$1,500 or more in fiscal year 2023–2024 as members of the President’s Council. The giving threshold to qualify for membership increased this year from \$1,000 to \$1,500. Each President’s Council member is vital to the University's success and enriches the *Southwestern Experience* for students.

KEY PRIORITIES THAT PRESIDENT’S COUNCIL MEMBERS SUPPORTED INCLUDE:

- **Southwestern Annual Fund:** Over \$4.4 million went toward the University’s greatest needs and to support new initiatives to enhance the *Southwestern Experience*.
- **Capital Improvement Projects:** More than \$4.1 million was given in support of capital improvement projects, including the renovation of Mood-Bridwell Hall and the creation of the Professor John Score II Learning Commons.
- **Current Restricted Funds:** Approximately \$2.8 million went toward high-impact experiences, advising and retention initiatives, Pirate Athletics, academic departments, the SU Emergency Fund, the fine arts, Greek life initiatives, and student scholarships.
- **Endowment:** Over \$1.5 million was donated to the endowment to support a variety of initiatives, including student scholarships, undergraduate research, and high-impact experiences.

	TOTAL DOLLARS RECEIVED	TOTAL NEW GIFTS & PLEDGES
2023–2024	<b>\$13.83 million</b>	<b>\$21.08 million</b>
2022–2023	<b>\$18.75 million</b>	<b>\$18.19 million</b>
2021–2022	<b>\$9.14 million</b>	<b>\$15.76 million</b>
2020–2021	<b>\$12.11 million</b>	<b>\$12.76 million</b>
2019–2020	<b>\$8.54 million</b>	<b>\$15.92 million</b>
2018–2019	<b>\$10.71 million</b>	<b>\$13.30 million</b>

# THRIVE

THE CAMPAIGN FOR  
SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Thanks to the many years of support from alumni, parents, and friends, today’s students are making impacts at home and abroad that would be unimaginable to our founders.

## Campaign Impact

### Student Success

- \$27.7 million for scholarships
- \$5.7 million for high-impact experiences (internships, study abroad, student/faculty research, experiential learning)
- \$2 million for the Center for Career & Professional Development
- \$2.5 million for advising and retention initiatives
- \$10.3 million for other Student Life programs and initiatives

### Transforming Campus

- \$10.6 million for academic facilities
- \$4.6 million for the Welcome Center and other Student Life facilities
- \$3 million for athletic facilities

### Annual and Ongoing Support

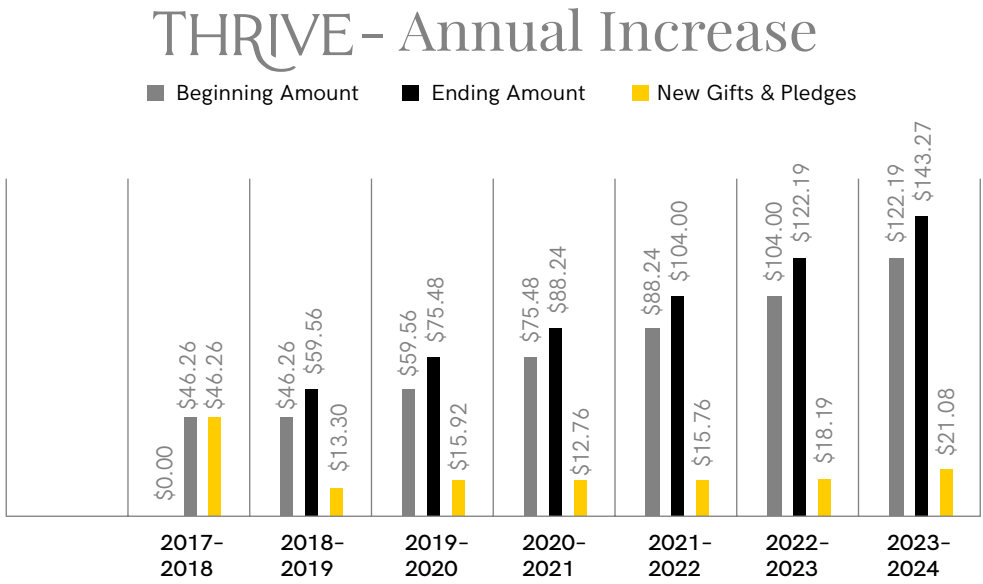
- \$17 million for the Southwestern Annual Fund
- \$7.5 million for current restricted gifts

### Academic Excellence

- \$4.1 million for faculty excellence (faculty positions, scholarship, and research)
- \$3.6 million for other academic infrastructure

### Additions to the Planned Gift Pipeline

- \$45.1 million in newly documented planned gifts



*Thrive: The Campaign for Southwestern* is a comprehensive fundraising campaign with \$143.27 million received toward the goal of \$150 million to support students, promote academic excellence, enhance the campus infrastructure, and secure the annual and ongoing support necessary to operate the University with a focus on enhancing the students’ experience.

With \$45.1 million of the campaign total in the form of new planned gifts, the University has need for additional outright support for students, academic initiatives, capital projects, and ongoing annual support.



# Capital Improvement Projects

*Southwestern is grateful for the alumni and friends who have chosen to generously support our capital improvement projects.*

## Frontier Bank of Texas Supports Future Business Leaders

As a locally owned community bank, Frontier Bank of Texas is always looking for ways to support the communities it serves. With the opening of a new branch in Georgetown this fall, the bank was eager to develop a partnership with the alma mater of its president and CEO, Patrick Johnson '98.

"It's really important to us that we invest in future bankers, entrepreneurs, and business owners," says Chief Operating Officer Evelyn Franco. "We always find ways to pair our philanthropic efforts with universities and schools, so it made sense that we would support not only Southwestern, but also its students."

Frontier Bank is supporting the University in a number of ways. The bank generously named a faculty office in Mood-Bridwell Hall within the Economics and Business Department. It also plans to fund two scholarships during the 2024–2025 academic year and offer internship opportunities to students.

"We are really proud to be able to help in any way we can," Franco says. "We don't see this as a one-time thing. We see this as a partnership where we continue to provide the support that's needed, whether that's financial scholarships, learning experiences, or other opportunities. It's a great thing for both organizations."

## Mood-Bridwell Renovation Continues

Construction is officially underway at Mood-Bridwell Hall. The historic building is undergoing an extensive renovation that blends 21st-century technology with the building's deep history. The renovated Mood-Bridwell will include spaces for gatherings and performances, new classrooms, and a coffeehouse. The south-facing upper terrace will also be reopened for outdoor classroom use and social gatherings.

In recent months, interior insulation and drywall installation began in levels one and two, and mechanical, electrical, and plumbing rough-in work began throughout all levels. Foundation piers and caps have been poured for the annex addition, and structural steel columns, beams, and decking have been erected. Several gifts have been received to name rooms within the building, while other spaces remain unnamed. The project is on track for a spring 2025 completion.



*Photo: L to R: Evelyn Franco, Abigail Richard, Rana Barghouty, Marcos Gonzalez, Patrick Johnson '98, Marie Mubvic, Vice President for University Relations, Kent Huntsman Associate Vice President for Development*



## Professor John Score II Learning Commons Supports Academic Success

The new Professor John Score II Learning Commons opened its doors this fall. Located on the first floor of the A. Frank Smith, Jr. Library Center, the Learning Commons houses the Debby Ellis Writing Center as well as the Tutoring Center. It provides students with a space to find the individualized support and attention they need to be successful in their coursework and beyond.

The launch of the Learning Commons comes after years of research and preparation by a working group tasked with enhancing Southwestern's tutoring services. The Learning Commons model was adopted and eventually became a reality thanks to a major financial contribution by an anonymous donor.

The donor requested that the Learning Commons be named after former professor John N. R. Score II '45. The son of former Southwestern President John Nelson Russell Score, Score taught in the Department of Religion and Philosophy for over 40 years.

Through the generous contribution, renovations were made to the first floor of the Library Center. Several classrooms that were being used for storage were converted into the dynamic Learning Commons space, which now includes a multipurpose room, a lounge space, offices, and a renovated classroom that will be used for tutoring outside of normal class hours.



## Construction Begins on Welcome Center and First-Year Residence Hall

On the east side of campus, construction began in 2024 on a first-year, mixed-use residence hall and new welcome center. The Welcome Center will be the new home of the Office of Admission and Financial Aid and will also include an art gallery, cafe, theater, and meeting spaces. Construction on a new second-year residence hall is scheduled to begin this fall. A naming gift has been received for the gallery in the Welcome Center, and other naming opportunities are available for each project.





# Endowed Gifts

*Endowments provide perpetual support and financial stability for Southwestern students, faculty, programs, and services.*

## Trustee Establishes Scholarship to Honor Family Sacrifices



*Photo: Bill and Pat Starodub, Kristin Starodub '99*

Kristin Starodub '99 fell in love with Southwestern the minute she visited the campus.

“I immediately knew it was the right school for me, but I also recognized that the financial investment for my family was going to be more than we could afford without support,” Starodub says. “I was fortunate to receive both merit scholarships and need-based aid throughout my journey at Southwestern.”

That need-based aid included a work-study position that changed the trajectory of her career. A biology major, Starodub originally intended to go to medical school. Her work in the Office of Admission and the relationships she built with the staff opened her eyes to other career paths.

“I started exploring different job opportunities and found my way into consulting,” says Starodub, who is a principal with Deloitte. “I feel that the liberal arts education I received at Southwestern is the reason why I was offered that job before I even graduated. You have to constantly stay involved, informed and educated to be a consultant, and that’s something I definitely learned at Southwestern.”

Starodub, who joined the Board of Trustees in July, has given back to the University in several ways over the years. In 2024 she established the Starodub Family Endowed Scholarship to support students with similar backgrounds as her own while recognizing the sacrifices her family had made.

“I wanted to make a lasting impact and give back in the way I was given,” she says. “Southwestern is a unique institution, and it impacts you at such a personal level.”

## Alumni Couple Establish New Scholarship for Rural Students

Tyler Mercer '93 and Stephanie Takas-Mercer '94 are big believers in the value of a Southwestern education. While they have given back to the University over the years, it wasn't until they learned that fellow liberal arts university Birmingham-Southern College was closing its doors after 168 years that they decided it was time to make a more impactful gift.

“That really brought it home for us,” Mercer says. “Southwestern is in a strong position, but we realized it was time to stop sitting on the sidelines and do something.”

After considering several ways their gift could be used, the couple chose to endow a new scholarship for students from communities with less than 15,000 residents. In doing so, their gift will continue to grow and support students for years to come.

“Kids from small towns often don't have the same resources and exposure to opportunities,” says Mercer, who grew up in Luling, Texas, a town of about 5,000 people. “We wanted to help give other kids from small towns the chance to experience Southwestern.”

The Mercers credit Southwestern for helping them get to where they are today. Tyler is senior managing counsel for Valero Energy Corporation in San Antonio, and Stephanie works in admissions at a private high school.

“Southwestern provided a very nurturing environment where we were exposed to a lot of new ideas, discussions, and people from a variety of backgrounds,” Mercer says. “I think it’s a special environment. I really do.”

## New Endowments

*SOUTHWESTERN IS GRATEFUL FOR THE FOLLOWING ENDOWMENTS ESTABLISHED IN 2023–2024:*

***Starodub Family Endowed Scholarship***

***Pirate Men's Soccer Endowment***

***Ellen and Hank Bachmann Endowed Scholarship***

***Harriett Flinn Craig Endowed Scholarship Fund***

***Keith Rook Endowed Fund for JEDI Center***

***The Hansen Family Endowed High Impact Experiences Fund***

***Janis S. Love & Dan G. Burdette Endowed Scholarship***

***Tyler and Stephanie Mercer Endowed Scholarship***

***The Karen Sherwood Cory Endowed Scholarship***

***Janis Payne McCullough Endowed Scholarship***



*Photo: Tyler Mercer '93 & Stephanie Takas-Mercer '94*



# Parent Giving

Parent support is crucial in helping Southwestern provide a transformational undergraduate experience.

## Parent Leadership Council Keeps Families Connected



Photo: Karen Hrdlicka Cangas '92, P'26 and Jaime Cangas P'26 (Parents of Mitchell, Class of 2026)

The Parent Leadership Council (PLC) plays an important role in supporting Southwestern’s mission of engaging minds and transforming lives. Parents and guardians of current students are eligible to join the PLC by making an annual gift of \$3,000 or more to support the Parent Fund and other University priorities.

Members of the PLC mentor incoming families and engage with University leadership, including the president, at twice-a-year in-person meetings held during Homecoming and in the spring semester. These meetings and other regional opportunities offer an insider’s glimpse into life at Southwestern and showcase the University’s unique curricular and co-curricular offerings. Many members also serve the University in ways that are meaningful to them, such as contacting incoming families, writing notes to prospective families, and connecting students with internship opportunities.

## Parent Leadership Council Membership

*Note: The giving threshold to qualify for membership increased from \$2,500 to \$3,000 in 2024.*

Fiscal Year	Membership	Dollars Contributed
2024	56	\$264,640
2023	65	\$538,896
2022	56	\$708,001
2021	51	\$438,145
2020	55	\$520,803
2019	45	\$329,146
2018	41	\$171,424
2017	26	\$112,913
2016	23	\$96,629



Photo: Cesar Meono-Monsivais '26, Jeanine Piskurich P'23, Nick Piskurich P'23, Alexandra F. C. Anderson, Senior Associate Director, Center for Career and Professional Development

## Parents Establish Career Closet to Help Students Dress for Success

When Jeanine Piskurich P’23 retired as vice president from BP America Production Company in 2020, she had a closet full of business attire that would have limited future use. She decided to donate the clothing to the Career Closet at her alma mater, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, to help students who need professional attire for job interviews, conferences, and other events. She also reached out to Southwestern, where her daughter, Caroline Piskurich ’23, was studying business, to see if they needed donations to their career closet.

When she learned that Southwestern didn’t have a career closet, Piskurich and her husband, Nick Piskurich P’23, decided to change that.

“We felt strongly that this was a way that we could help students better access employment opportunities,” Jeanine Piskurich says. “I have interviewed hundreds of people, and positive first impressions matter. Being professionally dressed builds your confidence and allows future employers to see you in their desired role.”

Investing in professional attire can be a challenge for many students. Through the Career Closet within the Center for Career and Professional Development, students may select and keep new or gently used professional attire for professional events and programs at no charge.

In addition to establishing the Career Closet, the Piskuriches have supported Southwestern in a variety of ways. They served on the Parent Leadership Council for four years and are current members of the Board of Visitors. They also established the Piskurich Family Endowed Scholarship Fund in 2019 and have supported several other initiatives.



# Foundation Giving

*Southwestern could not meet its mission without its valuable partnerships with local, regional, and national foundations.*

## Welch Foundation Expands Funding for Student Researchers

The Welch Foundation has a long history of supporting Southwestern’s Chemistry and Biochemistry Department. One of the nation’s largest private funding sources for chemical research at Texas universities, the foundation first awarded Southwestern a research grant in the 1960s. In 1985, the University was the fifth school to receive a departmental grant, which provides stipends and funding for project supplies for chemistry and biochemistry students conducting collaborative research with faculty.



“Southwestern has had a consistent departmental grant with us ever since,” says Carla Atmar, director of grant programs. “They have done an exceptional job of involving students and nurturing them through the research process.”

In 2024, the foundation also awarded Southwestern an equipment grant, which the Chemistry Department used to purchase a Fourier transform infrared spectrometer, a flash chromatography system, and refrigerated shaker incubators. These grants are all part of The Welch Foundation’s efforts to build a pipeline of new scientists.

“We looked at the results a couple of years ago and found that places like Southwestern are unbelievably successful at recruiting people into basic research careers,” says Adam Kuspa, president of The Welch Foundation. “One-third of the students who enter Welch-funded summer research programs go on to graduate school or professional school. That is phenomenal.”

Kuspa notes that every way we interact with the physical world, from plastics to phones, happens through some advancement in chemistry. In many ways, developing students’ interest in a career in research is more important than ever.

“I want to thank Southwestern for helping us meet our mission,” Kuspa says. “We couldn’t do it without them, and we truly appreciate the partnership.”

## W.D. Kelley Foundation Helps Students Learn Outside the Classroom

For more than 25 years, the W.D. Kelley Foundation has been supporting education in Williamson County—both inside and outside the classroom. The foundation has awarded several grants to Southwestern that allow students to participate in high-impact experiences and community-engaged learning.

“When a student has the opportunity to serve as an intern or to conduct research in an area of their interest, it can not only further their education, but also direct them toward future goals,” says Executive Director Carl Illig.

The foundation has also funded events at Southwestern, including an exhibit by photographer Michael Nye, who combined portraits of homeless individuals with an audio tract so the viewer could listen to their story in their own words.

“These unique experiences provide students with opportunities they may not have found otherwise,” Illig says. “Southwestern is an amazing place, and these experiences make it that much better.”

Illig notes that the foundation has supported Southwestern in less conventional ways as well. “In 2013, we provided funding to have the Southwestern logo put on the water tower across from campus,” he says. “Every time I drive by, I feel a sense of pride that we were able to support that project. It’s a beautiful thing to see.”

## Mellon Grant Supports Humanities Project Focused on Social Justice

Southwestern was one of 10 liberal arts colleges selected to receive a grant from the Mellon Foundation’s Humanities for All Times initiative in 2024. The nation’s largest funder of the arts, culture, and humanities, the Mellon Foundation allocated over \$14 million to support innovative humanities curricula that address pressing social justice issues.

Southwestern will receive \$1,287,000 to fund the project Deepening the Heart of Texas: Public-Engaged Humanities for Social Justice. As the first college in Texas and a private Hispanic-Serving Institution, the University aims to work through the publicly engaged humanities (PEH) to confront racism and hate.

“The grant will allow us to strengthen course offerings, grow faculty-mentored research, and center social justice concerns that transcend discipline and SU by funding faculty development workshops, the initiatives that come out of those programs, short- and long-term collaboration with outside experts and community partners, visiting fellows as scholars/activists-in-residence, and so much more,” said Associate Dean of the Faculty and Associate Professor of History Jessica Hower, who co-wrote the grant proposal with Dean of the Faculty and Professor of Theatre Sergio Costola.

The grant will be used over three years to support the project and help students experience the applicability of humanities in real-world social justice objectives.



*As part of Southwestern University’s commitment to Community Engaged Learning, students from Georgetown ISD’s Annie Purl Elementary School were invited to campus to enjoy a tour and an afternoon with the Chemistry Department. The group conducted science experiments and learned from SU students and professors. We extend our gratitude to the W.D. Kelley Foundation for their generous support of this impactful initiative.*



# Planned Giving

*Naming Southwestern as a beneficiary in their will or other plan is a simple and lasting way for donors to acknowledge the University's role in their life.*

## Southwestern Couple Makes \$5 Million Estate Commitment

An alumni couple recently made a \$5 million estate commitment as part of *Thrive: The Campaign for Southwestern*. Along with the gift, the couple, who wish to remain anonymous, challenged fellow alumni and friends to match another \$5 million in estate commitments before the campaign ends on June 30, 2025.

When sharing the details of their gift, the couple said that they were motivated to support the University because they value and understand the importance of education, particularly the type of liberal arts education that students receive at Southwestern.

“It is not just the knowledge that one needs; it is the ability to think, adapt, and grab on to an idea and make it work for you,” they said. “That is what we learned at SU and that is what we hope will still be important. That is what inspires us to give back.”

*Thrive: The Campaign for Southwestern* is a comprehensive campaign that aims to raise funds for four key areas: student success, academic excellence, building for tomorrow, and ongoing operational support. The campaign includes all types of contributions, from immediate cash gifts to deferred or planned gifts from individuals who will be at least 60 years old by June 30, 2025. These deferred or planned gifts can take various forms, such as bequests, beneficiary designations of retirement accounts, donor-advised funds or insurance policies, charitable gift annuities, and charitable remainder trusts, among others.

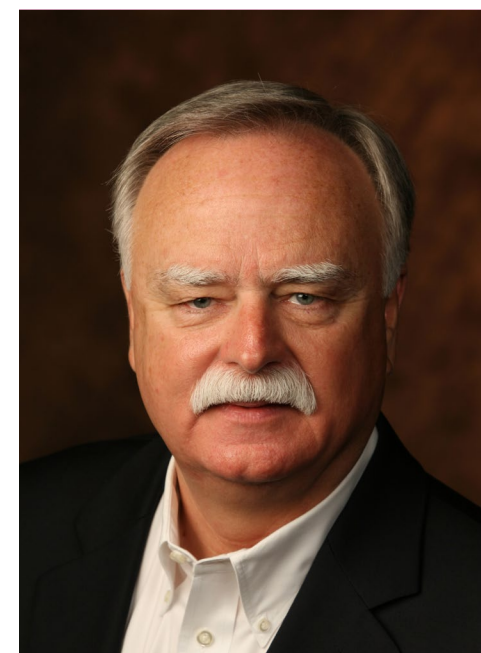


## Retired Minister Includes Southwestern in His Estate Planning

When an anonymous couple issued a challenge for fellow alumni to include Southwestern in their estate plans, Don Underwood '70 answered the call. Underwood has long supported the University, serving on the Board of Trustees for 23 years, and says the decision was “a no-brainer.”

“Planned giving is the easiest thing in the world,” he says, referring to the process of naming Southwestern in your will or as a beneficiary of your retirement plan. “You get an opportunity to make a difference for generations to come, but it doesn't affect your current financial situation or lifestyle in any way whatsoever.”

Underwood spent 37 years as senior minister of Christ United Methodist Church in Plano, Texas, before retiring in 2020. He says Southwestern helped prepare him for a rewarding career.



*Photo: Don Underwood '70*

“I stepped onto the campus as a naive 18-year-old from Denison, Texas, and when I graduated in 1970, I was prepared to go out into the world,” he says. “In addition to my academic grounding, I had developed social and leadership skills that I don't think I could have developed as well in any other setting.”

Underwood encourages Southwestern graduates and friends to reach out to the development team to learn more about planned giving and how they can give back to the University.

“We've all received so much from Southwestern,” he says. “We should be willing to commit part of our estates to ensure that the transformational experience we received will be available to those who come after us.”



# Athletics Giving

*Donor support helps Pirate Athletics maximize the potential of each student-athlete in the classroom and during competition.*

## New Pirate Athletic Association Elevates Student-Athlete Experience

More than 500 student-athletes, or over one-third of the total student body, compete across 20 varsity sports at Southwestern. In 2024, the University unveiled the Pirate Athletic Association (PAA) to help them thrive.

The PAA aims to enhance donor support so that Pirate Athletics can deliver exceptional athletic experiences, including top-tier training facilities, equipment, and travel arrangements. It combines the previous efforts of the “S” Association and the Pirate Club into a variety of engagement opportunities.



“The Pirate Athletic Association provides a more streamlined way for our generous donors to direct their support to athletics,” Athletic Director Ken Ralph said. “This is a key advancement for us as we continue to work toward providing the best possible experience for our students across our full array of varsity offerings.”

The launch of the PAA features four unique ways to support Pirate Athletics. Annual giving provides the opportunity to contribute to either a specific sport or to the athletic department as a whole. The Pirate Crew allows young alumni to give back through small monthly donations. Diamond Pirates are those who make a cumulative annual gift of \$12,000 or more to a specific sport or to the general athletic fund. Finally, endowments and estate planning provide financial stability for the program in perpetuity.

Student-athletes at Southwestern embrace a commitment to excellence in both academic and athletic venues. Members of the PAA will play an instrumental role in fostering growth and success in every aspect of their lives.



## Cullen Trust for Higher Education Pledges \$3 Million

The Cullen Trust for Higher Education (CTHE), a Houston-based nonprofit dedicated to investing in high-performing education organizations, has pledged a \$3 million gift toward the construction of a new multi-purpose sports complex on the Southwestern campus. CTHE also challenged the Southwestern community to match another \$3 million in gifts for the facility. The pledge officially kicks off fundraising efforts for the complex.

“As a former student-athlete, I fully appreciate the value of athletic competition to a great university,” CTHE Chairman Corby Robertson said. “It brings the campus together and provides golden moments of achievement and learning experiences from disappointment. Both create growth opportunities for the students and faculty. Teamwork and enthusiasm are lifelong ingredients for success.”

The new multi-purpose sports complex will be built on the site of the current football practice field east of campus. Included in the preliminary plans are grandstands for both the football field and the track and field area, a stadium press box, a synthetic turf playing surface, scoreboards, a visiting team locker room complex, and ticket windows.

The proposed stadium portion of the multi-purpose sports complex will not only bring football back to campus for the first time since 1950, but can also be utilized by other Pirate athletic teams. The synthetic turf playing surface will be adaptable to other sports, including intramurals.

The multi-purpose sports complex is a necessity for student-athlete recruitment and retention. Outside of athletics, the complex will serve as a central gathering point for many large University events, including Commencement.



# High-Impact Experiences

*Funding for high-impact experiences allows students to engage in internships, faculty-student research, study abroad, and community-engaged learning opportunities.*

## Parents Fund Faculty-Student Research Project in Kinesiology

Peter and Nancy Strong P’18 have supported Southwestern since the day their son, David Strong ’18, arrived on campus. As past members of the Parent Leadership Council, they supported a variety of University priorities, and as current members of the Board of Visitors, they advise the president and other administrators on a range of issues.

In 2022, the couple established the Strong Family High-Impact Experience Endowed Fund to provide funding for research, internship, and study abroad opportunities. Most recently, the Strong family supported a faculty-student research project led by Assistant Professor of Instruction in Kinesiology Vanessa Mikan. Jay Hannath ’23, Taylor Dean ’25, Madison Deitch ’25, and Landry Gilpin ’23 designed a harness-assisted treadmill apparatus and training program for 25-year-old Connor with spastic quadriplegic cerebral palsy that not only increased his strength and flexibility, but also enhanced his level of ability and comfort when engaging in daily living activities.

“The University has been very open to allowing us to choose what we want to support, and this was the icing on the cake for us,” Peter Strong says. “We were so happy to be able to support him and his program.”

The Strong family appreciates the personalized education Southwestern provides. They note that high-impact experiences in particular play an important role in preparing students for future success.

“Creating the fund was our way to keep supporting these experiences long after our involvement,” says Nancy Strong. “They will continue even without us being there and without our input.”



*Photo: Jay Hannath '23, Taylor Dean '25, Madison Deitch '25, and Connor*



*Photo: Audrey Thimesch '27, surrounded by the Pocket Sandwich Theatre Company, Carrollton, Texas*

## Holloway Endowment Provides Funding for Fine Arts Internships

The fine arts have played a constant part in Carolyn Holloway’s life. As a teenager, she helped with costume design at a children’s theater in Raleigh, North Carolina. After graduating from high school, she worked for an outdoor theater in Cherokee, North Carolina, where she met and later married Graham Holloway. When the couple moved to Dallas, she got involved with Junior Players and the Dallas Children’s Theater; after arriving in Georgetown, she helped bring a children’s program to the Palace Theatre.

Today, as co-founder of the Holloway Family Foundation, she supports the fine arts through philanthropic gifts. She also established the Graham and Carolyn Holloway Family Endowment for the Fine Arts at Southwestern, which supports high-impact experiences for students majoring in the fine arts.

“I’ve always felt that the arts give young people, especially children, an outlet,” Holloway says. “I want the young people at Southwestern to have every opportunity for the arts to be part of their wonderful education.”

In 2024, the endowment supported Audrey Thimesch ’27 as she completed a summer internship at the Pocket Sandwich Theatre in Carrollton, Texas. Thimesch learned the ins and outs of running a theater, from working the box office to managing employees, and helped with the theater’s summer camp.

“This opportunity was such a blessing,” Thimesch says. “All work experience is good, but I was looking for something that would give me a competitive edge in the theater world. I was able to continue learning about theater without having to worry about finding a job to support myself.”



# Greek Life Giving

Generous gifts from Greek alumni ensure a rewarding fraternity and sorority experience at Southwestern.

## Endowed Scholarships Support Fraternity and Sorority Members

The Greek Life system at Southwestern offers a unique and transformative experience for students seeking lifelong friendships, personal growth, and unforgettable memories. Fraternity and sorority members currently constitute 30% of the student body. Today, Southwestern is home to six national sororities and four national fraternities, all of which are vital members of the campus community.

“Some of my most enjoyable moments have been meeting students in our Greek Life chapters,” said President Laura Trombley. “In every instance, I have been impressed with their love of Southwestern University, their genuine commitment to Greek Life, and the leadership they have consistently displayed.”

SOUTHWESTERN IS GRATEFUL FOR THE FOLLOWING SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS THAT SUPPORT THE GREEK LIFE EXPERIENCE:

- The Alpha Xi Delta Stephanie Quimby Memorial Endowed Scholarship
- Nell Barnes Benold '48 Zeta Tau Alpha Endowed Scholarship
- Dorothy Stevens Bruner Zeta Tau Alpha Endowed Scholarship
- Allison Dickson Delta Delta Delta Endowed Scholarship
- Harpst Endowed Scholarship
- Kappa Sigma Iota Chapter Endowed Scholarship
- Pi Kappa Alpha - Alpha Omicron Centennial Scholarship
- Thomas White Memorial Kappa Alpha Order Scholarship
- The Gabe Wiley Lawson and Phi Delta Theta “The Road Goes on Forever” Endowed Scholarship
- The Zeta Chapter-Alpha Delta Pi Endowed Scholarship

Greek alumni also contribute generously to their house funds to maintain and enhance their houses and chapter rooms. Offering students modern living and gathering spaces is a high priority for all fraternities and sororities at Southwestern.



“Without the support of scholarships, I would not be able to attend college. It is truly a dream come true to have such financial support through your generosity. Southwestern has provided the perfect learning environment with so many resources, support systems, and opportunities that have already broadened my horizons.”

— **Sophia Trifilio '25**, recipient of the Allison Dickson Delta Delta Delta Endowed Scholarship



“The scholarship help at Southwestern allows me to be who I truly am: an athlete, a student, and a brother. I will never be able to repay Southwestern for the amazing education and experience that I have had. I promise to give back so that students in the future can receive financial help to have their own Southwestern Experience.”

— **Charles Fournier '25**, recipient of the Gabe Wiley Lawson and Phi Delta Theta “The Road Goes on Forever” Endowed Scholarship



# Alumni Council

## Attorney Joins Alumni Council to Strengthen Connections

When LaToya Alexander '08 learned that Southwestern was expanding its Alumni Council, she was interested in joining for a variety of reasons. First, she wanted to reconnect with her classmates. Second, she wanted to build relationships with alumni she had not met before. Finally, she wanted to not only have a voice on the council, but also offer her own diverse perspective.

“People from so many different backgrounds have attended Southwestern,” Alexander says. “The list of council members includes recent graduates as well as people who attended 30 or 40 years ago. It will be interesting to hear how everyone feels about their experiences.”

Alexander’s own experiences were many and varied. She was a member of the track and field and lacrosse teams, a King Creativity Scholar, and president of Ebony. She volunteered in the community and studied abroad in Spain. Now, as senior legal counsel with Sally Beauty, Alexander puts the skills she gained as an undergraduate into good use on a daily basis.

“I’m at a point in my career where I can give more time and be more involved,” she says. “I also want to support current students. I had scholarships myself, and I want to pay it forward.”



Photo: LaToya Alexander '08

## Expanded Alumni Council Offers New Opportunities for Engagement

Following a two-year research and restructuring process, the Southwestern University Alumni Association announced an expanded Alumni Council in 2024. This group of 32 alumni and two student representatives will serve as the association’s governing body and seek ways to strengthen connections between alumni and students, the University, and one another.

### THE 2024–2026 ALUMNI COUNCIL MEMBERS

President: Liz Guillory Medina '97	Lee Silva Ferguson '95	Ron Sandberg '69
President-Elect: Kate Fimbel York '02	John Foster '75	Paul Santa Cruz '06
LaToya Alexander '08	Matt Harper '10	Kent Sholars '04
Lydia Andrade '85	Ken Holley '71	Lucero Sondakh-Dorantes '15
Katy Merrill Andre '99	Lana Johnson Horne '69	Rachel Thompson '23
Joe Bourne '81	Lisa Jacob '93	Andy Welch '72
Jillian Clack '25	Nate Lipp '27	Ben Woods '06
Kathleen Cogan '05	Ray Martinez '87	Donna Carter Worley '80
Lori Cook '11	Gaylon Morris '87	
Caden Cox '23	Chris Nieto '97	
Keith Curlee '90	Marissa Madrid Ortega '18	
Kenda Jameson Evans '92	Christopher Ray '06	
Anne Fenley '13	Sammie Robinson '73	



## Student Highlights

*Southwestern students continue to earn accolades and awards for their leadership, scholarship, and accomplishments.*

### Two Sophomores Earn 2024 Sumners Scholarships

Andrea (Andie) Abell '26, a political science major, and Fernando Cruz-Rivera '26, a political science and philosophy double major, were each recently awarded a \$30,000 scholarship from the Sumners Foundation. Abell and Cruz-Rivera are two of just 45 students nationally to receive the prestigious scholarship in 2024.

The scholarships are awarded based on civic engagement, academic excellence, a capacity for leadership, and a desire to further our democracy.

Southwestern has a long and successful history with the Sumners Scholarship. Gerald Jones '25, current Sumners Scholar, helped lead this year's scholarship information session. He and fellow Sumner Scholars Mara Stroll '25 and Jinx Wiener '25 provided one-on-one advice to this year's applicants.

The Sumners Foundation also invited Southwestern to pilot a Sumners Scholar mentor program in 2023–2024. Organized by Senior Associate Director of the Center for Career and Professional Development Alexandra Anderson, the program featured seven alumni of the scholarship program serving as networking mentors: Grace Atkins '16, Colin Berr '13, Natalie DeCesare '19, Sarah Gould-Stotts '10, Hunter Jurgens '13, Elizabeth Knox '08, and Danyale Kellogg '19.

“The Sumners Scholarship program has been at the core of the Sumners Foundation's purpose since shortly after its inception in 1949,” said Sumners Foundation Chairman Lon Williams. “Our scholars are selected from the very best students at colleges and universities after a rigorous interview process. To be selected as a Sumners Scholar is an honor that will remain with the scholar throughout his or her lifetime.”



*Andie Abell '26*



*Fernando Cruz-Rivera '26*

## Faculty Highlights

*Southwestern's world-class faculty are passionate educators, distinguished scholars, and accomplished experts in their fields*



Professor of Business **Debika Sihi** and Abigail (Abby) Ryan '25 presented “Proactively Leveraging AI Tools in Marketing Courses: A Process for Prompt Engineering Assignments” at the 2024 Marketing Management Association Virtual Spring Conference in March 2024.



Professor of Biology **Max Taub** and Marcelo Salazar-Barragan '23 published “The Effects of Elexacaftor, Tezacaftor, and Ivacaftor (ETI) on Blood Glucose in Patients With Cystic Fibrosis: A Systematic Review” in *Cureus* in July 2023. This work developed from Salazar-Barragan's capstone project.



Professor of Chemistry **Emily Niemeyer** published an article with Bailey Meyer '20, Haley White '20, and Jared McCormack '22 titled “Catechin Composition, Phenolic Content, and Antioxidant Properties of Commercially Available Bagged, Gunpowder, and Matcha Green Teas” in *Plant Foods for Human Nutrition* in November 2023.



Associate Professor of Mathematics and Computer Science **Jacob Schrum** attended the 2023 Genetic and Evolutionary Computation Conference in Lisbon, Portugal, in July 2023 with Melanie Richey '23 and Mark Mueller '24. Richey and Mueller presented their paper, “Evolving Flying Machines in Minecraft Using Quality Diversity,” which was co-authored with Schrum and Alejandro Medina '24 based on their SCOPE research experience in summer 2022.



Professor of Psychology **Fay Guarraci** and Assistant Professor of Kinesiology **Jennifer Stokes** published “Prepubescent Electronic Cigarette Exposure Affects Sexual Motivation and Puberty in Female But Not Male Long-Evans Rats” with Natalie Williams '24, Mila Fisher '24, Amanda Gale '23, Megan Kelly '23, and Jasmine Belfield '23 in *Nicotine & Tobacco Research* in January 2024.





# Admissions Profile & Student Body Profile

## FALL 2023 FIRST YEAR CLASS :



6585 First-Year Applications



403 First-Year Students

39%

Acceptance Rate

24%

First Generation

41%

Underrepresented

31%

Latina/Latino or Hispanic

11%

Outside of Texas from 21 States and 9 Countries

## 2023 - 2024 STUDENT BODY PROFILE :



55% FEMALE

45% MALE

1,459 Total Student Body



28% LATINA/LATINO OR HISPANIC

38% UNDERREPRESENTED

20% FIRST GENERATION

14% OUTSIDE OF TEXAS FROM 37 STATES AND 22 COUNTRIES

# Points of Pride

**1st** University in Texas

**#1** Private University with Largest Land Ownership (700 acres)

**#1** 100% Pre-Med Acceptance Rate

**#1** in Texas and **#5** in the Nation for Career Services (*The Princeton Review*)

**#1** in Texas for Economic Diversity (*The New York Times*)

**#1** Location in the Country to Launch a Career (*Bankrate*)

**#1** Location in the Country in Quality of Life (*Bankrate*)

**#1** Private University in Texas for Making an Impact (*The Princeton Review*)

**#1** University in Texas for Green Colleges (*The Princeton Review*)

**#1** Hispanic-Serving Institution on the Top 100 Liberal Arts Institutions list (*U.S. News & World Report*)





# 2023–2024 Leadership

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# SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY



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