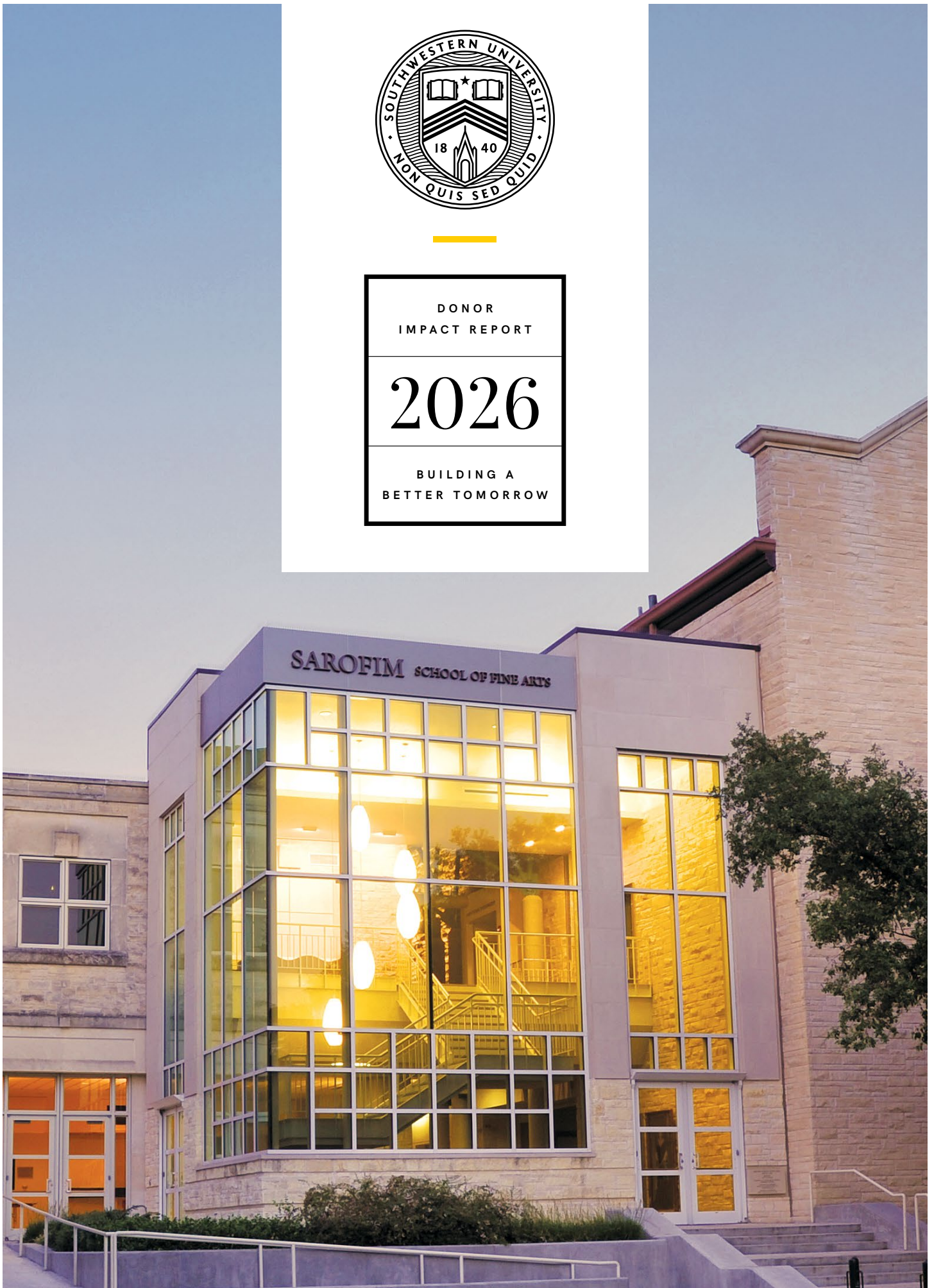




DONOR
IMPACT REPORT

2026

BUILDING A
BETTER TOMORROW





Dear friends of Southwestern,

Every gift to Southwestern University is an investment in our students and in the futures they are building. Whether supporting scholarships, transformative learning experiences, faculty excellence, or the spaces where our community learns and thrives, your generosity creates opportunities that change lives. Thank you for believing in our students and for making their Southwestern experience possible.

In July, Southwestern adopted a new five-year Tactical Plan that charts a bold course for our future. Built on nearly 200 years of academic excellence, the plan reinforces our commitment to helping every student thrive while ensuring that a Southwestern education continues to prepare graduates for lives of purpose, leadership, and impact.

At the center of the Tactical Plan is the Pirate Plan, a personalized four-year roadmap that intentionally integrates academics, internships, research, leadership, and career preparation into one cohesive student experience. From a student's first day on campus through graduation, the Pirate Plan provides the guidance, opportunities, and support needed to prepare them for meaningful careers and lives of purpose.

The stories in this report are a testament to what is possible because of you. They highlight students whose lives have been changed through scholarships and high-impact experiences, faculty whose teaching and research are expanding what's possible, and donors whose gifts are shaping Southwestern's campus and curriculum in profound ways.

As we look toward our third century as Texas's first university, I am confident in what lies ahead. Together, we are strengthening Southwestern's distinctive value, investing in student success, and ensuring that future generations of Pirates have every opportunity to learn deeply, lead boldly, and thrive.

Thank you for your partnership, your generosity, and your belief in the power of a Southwestern education.

Warmly,

Laura Skandera Trombley

President Laura Skandera Trombley

Together, We Went Beyond

Thank you to all our alumni, parents, and friends whose generosity ensures the enduring success of the University and of our exemplary students.



2025–2026 Philanthropic Overview

\$12.45 *Million Received*

\$2.95 *Million Above Our Overall Cash Goal*

Because of you, Southwestern exceeded its overall fundraising goal for the 2025–2026 fiscal year, providing critical resources for students, academic programs, campus spaces, and the experiences that make a Southwestern education distinctive.

Gift Fund Designation Impact

<i>Fund</i>	<i>Total Dollars Received</i>	<i>Goal</i>	<i>Result</i>
Annual Fund	\$1.02 million	\$1.60 million	64% of goal
Current Restricted Funds	\$2.26 million	\$1.90 million	119% of goal
Endowment	\$2.29 million	\$2.50 million	92% of goal
Capital Improvements	\$6.85 million	\$3.50 million	196% of goal

Your gifts enriched the student experience at Southwestern.



SOUTHWESTERN ANNUAL FUND

\$1.02 Million Received

These funds supported student scholarships, students' curricular and cocurricular experiences, faculty research and creative works, general operations, and other institutional objectives.



CURRENT RESTRICTED FUNDS

\$2.26 Million Received

These gifts supported student scholarships, high-impact experiences, Pirate Athletics, the fine arts, academic departments, student mentorship, financial literacy, Greek life initiatives, the Emergency Fund, the library, the Center for Career & Professional Development, and student organizations.



ENDOWMENT

\$2.29 Million Received

These contributions supported student scholarships, high-impact experiences, undergraduate and faculty research, and student awards.



CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

\$6.85 Million Received

These gifts supported the construction or renovation of the Dorothy Perry White Welcome Center, Mood-Bridwell Hall, the Fine Arts Building, the lighting in Lois Perkins Chapel, the Alumni House, the multipurpose sports complex, the lacrosse wall, and the new padded outfield wall at Rockwell Family Baseball Field.

*Thank you to our 2025–2026
Honor Roll of Donors, who
made all this possible!*



*Explore ways
to give:*



Capital Improvement Projects

Alumni and friends make Southwestern's capital improvements possible through their generous support.

Building Together

Thanks to a \$5 million gift from an anonymous donor, the Fine Arts Building, home to the Sarofim School of Fine Arts, will undergo a thorough substructure enhancement as the first step of a comprehensive renovation to support the next generation of creative work at Southwestern. Planned improvements will enhance building infrastructure and accessibility while reimagining studios, rehearsal spaces, and outdoor areas to elevate creative performance and interdisciplinary collaboration.

"We are deeply grateful for this transformative gift," says President Laura Skandera Trombley. "Investments like this ensure that Southwestern continues to offer an environment where our students can thrive."

To complement the architectural updates, University leaders and faculty are crafting a new fine arts strategic plan while also expanding graduate pathways, certificates, and campus partnerships. The plan is a key component of Southwestern's new Tactical Plan, launching in fall 2026.

"Our heartfelt thanks go to our donors for their vision and commitment," Executive Vice President for Advancement, Athletics, and Career Services Marie Muhvic shares. "This gift is both a celebration of what this building has meant to our community and a bold step toward what it will become."



Photo: The Fine Arts Building

Illuminating a Family Legacy

When Elizabeth Yeager P'17 walks into Southwestern's chapel, she often pauses at a plaque inscribed with a letter written by her great-grandmother, Lois Craddock Perkins. "Those words are really meaningful to me," says Yeager. "They make me realize what motivated her to do the amazing things she did in her life, how important her family and certain places were to her, and how grateful she was to have the ability to do all she did."

Perkins studied at Southwestern from 1908 to 1911; she and her descendants have been contributing to the campus since 1913. And now, thanks to the generosity of the Perkins-Prothro Foundation, the chapel that bears her name is getting a significant renovation it's needed for decades: lighting. "When you walk into the chapel, it is a beautiful space," says Yeager, who serves as the foundation's president and chairs the SU Board of Trustees' Facilities Committee, "but it does feel dark."

In addition to daily use by students, the chapel hosts award ceremonies, convocations, weddings, concerts, and Southwestern's beloved Candlelight services. Yet its vintage wiring left the space dim and muted. "Upgrading the lighting will go a long way toward making it feel more modern and showcasing the architecture and stained-glass windows," Yeager explains.

For more than a century, the Perkins-Prothro Foundation has supported the University because of the family's enduring commitment to higher education. And for Yeager, there's a more immediate personal connection, too: her daughter, Lara Herreid '17, is a young alum. "There's a deep sense of sustaining the legacy that our family has created at Southwestern," she reflects. With this latest gift, Yeager envisions the chapel transformed into a more vibrant, welcoming space for all—one as luminous as the history it holds.

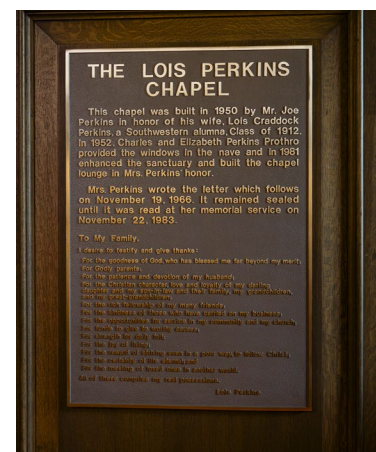


Photo: Lois Perkins Letter

Capital Naming Opportunities

Southwestern recognizes meaningful contributions that preserve the institution's storied past and ensure its continuing growth.

A Home for Pirate Spirit

Located on the site of the former football practice field east of campus, Southwestern's new multipurpose sports complex is a vibrant gathering place for students, alumni, parents, and fans. Funded entirely by philanthropy, the \$9.2 million facility will bring football back to campus for the first time since 1950 while serving as a hub for community connection.

With state-of-the-art design by Hellas Construction, the fenced complex features a home-side grandstand, press box, synthetic turf field, locker rooms, and concourse area. Construction began in January 2026 on Kevin '81 and Elizabeth '84 Dice Field—named in honor of the alumni couple's generosity—and will be completed in time for kickoff at Homecoming Weekend on October 24, 2026. Beyond Pirate football and lacrosse, the complex may host club and intramural sports and serve as the venue for University events, including commencement.

Naming opportunities are currently available for the following:

- *Stadium name at the archway entrance*
- *Visiting team locker room*
- *The scoreboard at pavilion 1 (south end zone)*
- *Pavilion 2 (south of the grandstands)*
- *Pavilion 3 (north of the grandstands)*

To learn more about naming opportunities for these and other projects across campus, please contact **Marie Muhvic** at mmuhvic@southwestern.edu.



Photo: Multipurpose Sports Complex



Photo: Kevin '81 and Elizabeth '84 Dice Field



Photo: Visiting Team Locker Room

Endowed Gifts

Endowments empower Southwestern to sustain its signature strengths, fund current priorities, and achieve future goals.

Paying It Forward

This past spring, Timothy B. Boone '77 pledged a gift of \$1 million to establish an endowed chair in engineering. His generous gift coincided with Southwestern's announcement of its first new major in two decades: a bachelor of science in engineering.

"Funding an engineering chair is deeply personal to me, and it is my way of paying it forward," says Boone. "Engineering students, shaped by a liberal arts education, will see people with more compassion and apply their technical skills to meet human-centered values."

A graduate of Southwestern's biology program, Boone is the dean of the Texas A&M School of Engineering Medicine in Houston. He holds the Craig C. Brown and Suzanne Smith Centennial Chair in Medical Education at Houston Methodist and is an emeritus professor of urology. Boone previously facilitated Southwestern's partnership with Houston Methodist Hospital in 2014, which has allowed dozens of students to gain hands-on experience in one of the nation's leading hospital systems.

"While Tim's distinguished career speaks for itself, his deep generosity and unwavering belief in the power of education truly set him apart," says Executive Vice President for Advancement, Athletics, and Career Services Marie Muhvic. "His visionary support will benefit students for generations."

The Timothy B. Boone, M.D., Ph.D. '77 Endowed Chair in Engineering will be awarded to a faculty member in the newly expanded Department of Physics and Engineering. Boone hopes that his gift will encourage other alumni and friends of the University to support Southwestern's upcoming initiatives. "Creativity with critical thinking based on an ethical foundation were fundamental to my Southwestern education," he reflects. "I am who I am today because Southwestern University impacted my life forever."



Photo: Timothy B. Boone '77

New Endowments

Southwestern is grateful for the following endowments established in 2025–2026:

- ***Dr. Manuel Antonio Ramos Endowed Scholarship***
- ***Janet Westervelt Brown Endowed Scholarship***
- ***Kylie Intfen Heart of Gold Endowment***
- ***The James M. Ramey '49 & Frankie Montgomery Ramey '52 Scholarship Endowment Fund***
- ***Timothy B. Boone, M.D., Ph.D. '77 Endowed Chair in Engineering***
- ***Victoria Star Varner Studio Art Award***
- ***Dr. Kenny Sheppard Endowment for the Southwestern University Chorale***



Photo: Victoria Star Varner & Kenny Sheppard



Photo: Europa and Cowboy as Cadmus by Star Varner



Photo: Centripetal Forces by Star Varner

The Conductor and His Bright Star

Kenny Sheppard was researching at Smith Library in 1985 when he first met Victoria Star Varner. He was sitting in the 780s—the music stacks that, perhaps fatefully, follow the art books in the Dewey Decimal System—when head librarian Mildred Gervasi introduced him to the new art instructor. A first date followed months later, and the two clicked. “Star and I were going steady for about 18 years,” Sheppard recalls with a smile, “and then we decided we’d better get married, so we did—in 2004.”

As their relationship deepened, so did their impact on students. Sheppard had established the SU Chorale when he arrived in 1974 and went on to build an internationally respected ensemble that performed in China, Italy, and France. When he retired as emeritus professor of music in 2018, alumni celebrated how he’d challenged them to become better musicians; many became conductors and teachers themselves. Varner, meanwhile, mentored students in the studio while exhibiting her own work across five continents. Four of her *Mysteries Revisited* paintings—a postmodern reinterpretation of Pompeii’s Villa of the Mysteries—are permanently displayed in the SU Welcome Center. Three untitled pieces of an earlier work featuring handmade paper adorn the walls of the library where she first met Sheppard.

In 2022, Varner was diagnosed with an aggressive form of brain cancer. Her family and students were heartbroken. She retired the next year as full professor, but Varner remained upbeat, even renaming her GBM (glioblastoma) Grateful Beyond Measure. “Well-meaning people would say, ‘You’re gonna beat this thing. You’re strong,’” Sheppard remembers. “And she would say, ‘It’s not a fight. I’m just grateful for the time I have each day.’” Even in her final months, he adds, “Star woke up smiling, thinking about all the friends and wonderful life she’d had.” Varner died on February 25, 2024.

This year, two endowments honor the pair’s intertwined legacies. Alumni created the Dr. Kenny Sheppard Endowment for the SU Chorale, providing the choir with resources for purchasing music, risers, stands, and other essential equipment for years to come. Sheppard, in turn, established the Victoria Star Varner Studio Art Award, which recognizes an outstanding painting or drawing student each year while memorializing Varner’s contributions to the Southwestern community and the art world.

Sheppard says his former students’ tribute left him feeling “overwhelmed and humbled.” And when he speaks of that “lovely creature” he first chanced to meet in the library decades ago, he gets a little choked up. “She was such a bright light,” he says.

Parent Giving

Parents' engagement in Southwestern supports the exceptional opportunities that make the University a leader among liberal arts colleges in the nation.

The Inside Track

For Kimberly Dowling P'28 and Timothy Dowling P'28, joining the Parent Leadership Council (PLC) felt like a natural extension of how they show up for their children's education. So when their son Ace arrived at Southwestern for Sprog, they immediately got involved. "We like contributing to the campuses where our kids go to school," Kimberly says. "And we think Southwestern is on an upward trajectory—we'd like to be part of that."

Engaging with the PLC offered something invaluable to the first-time SU parents: context. "Children of alumni and students with older siblings have native knowledge, whether it's how much fun it is to join the Outdoor Adventure program, how departments work, or when SOAR is," Timothy explains. "The PLC gave us a great way to share those kinds of opportunities with Ace and support the University in a meaningful way." The council's deeper access—meeting administrators, hearing updates in person, asking questions directly—has



Photo: Dean Dowling, Ace Dowling '28, Kimberly Dowling P'28, and Timothy Dowling P'28

made their experience richer and more grounded. "The more you're around, the more you know," Kimberly adds.

Living in Austin, the Dowlings visit campus often—"but without lurking," Timothy says. They know Ace's friends, recognize the people guiding his education, and see firsthand the benefits of Southwestern's smaller, high-touch environment. As incoming PLC chairs, they hope to recruit more families and share how rewarding their work with the council has been. "You can help your child and all the other students at the University," Kimberly says. "We're excited to get started."



Fiscal Year 2026 Parent Giving by the Numbers

45 *PLC families*

\$228,969.20 *PLC cash gifts*

924 *Current number of parents who donated*

\$471,899.13 *Total parent cash gifts*

37.44% *Parent participation in giving*

A Shared Legacy Signed in Stone

As Michael Hansen '93 stood beside his daughter, Clea Hansen '26, in the Cullen Tower, marker in hand, waves of pride coincided with pangs of nostalgia. For Michael, it was the first time signing the tower—a tradition he had missed at his own graduation decades earlier. For Clea, it was the culmination of her Southwestern adventure. Together, father and daughter inscribed their names side by side. “It was a beautiful emotional experience to share,” he reflects.

Michael has long championed Southwestern as the close-knit liberal arts community where he could major in business while playing baseball competitively. Gratitude for the financial support he received as a first-generation college student inspired a lifetime of giving back—through alumni networks, the Board of Visitors, and ultimately the Board of Trustees. He has supported high-impact learning and brought his years of experience growing businesses to helping shape the University’s Tactical Plan. Yet amid all his service, the tower signing with Clea stands apart: a moment of “deep connection,” he says, between generations, of family legacy with alma mater.

He still gets a little teary-eyed when he recalls Clea telling him Southwestern was her first-choice college—without any special prodding from her dad. “I wanted her to have her own journey,” Michael says. Throughout Clea’s undergraduate years, the pair often compared notes. They talked about Greek life and learning leadership skills on campus—and about her growing passion for politics and public policy. During those conversations, Michael saw his own experiences reflected in hers while marveling at how much the campus and Georgetown have transformed since he completed his degree.

Gazing at the tower walls filled with names of graduates past, Michael felt a sense of history and continuity. “It was bittersweet for me knowing that Clea’s time at SU was over,” he admits. But he is also excited to see a new chapter beginning: both father and daughter now alumni, carrying forward the tradition of engagement.



Photo: Clea Hansen '26 & Michael Hansen '93



Karen Hrdlicka Cangas '92 and honorary Pirate Jaime Cangas also attended the ceremony, where their son, Mitchell Cangas '26, signed his name alongside his mother's. Reflecting on the momentous occasion, Jaime says, “The century-old tower walls turn a simple tradition into an unforgettable University milestone.”

Foundation Giving

Local, regional, and national foundations help Southwestern meet its mission through generous grants and support.



Photo: 2024 Paris Olympics Study Abroad Trip

A Champion of Student Success

For three decades, the Albert and Margaret Alkek Foundation has been helping to advance medical research and education across Texas—and Southwestern has been a beneficiary of its support. In recent years, the foundation has contributed to the construction of the new Dorothy Perry White Welcome Center, a space inviting prospective and current students and their families to learn the University's history and experience its community spirit. It has also funded scholarships, internships, study abroad, and collaborative research with faculty—benefiting dozens of students each year who might otherwise not be able to attend the University or engage in high-impact experiences. “We’re proud to support learning and research at Southwestern,” says President Charles A. Williams ’84. “Our foundation is invested in improving access to opportunities that will prepare future leaders to succeed in this fast-changing world.”

Advancing New Frontiers in Chemistry with NSF Support

In September 2025, Assistant Professor of Chemistry Sara Massey was awarded a \$250,000 Launching of Early-Career Academic Pathways in the Mathematical and Physical Sciences grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF). The program is designed to accelerate the careers of pretenure faculty at institutions like Southwestern that do not traditionally receive significant funding for scientific research.

“This grant has allowed me to push my research in new directions in ways that simply wouldn’t be possible otherwise,” Massey shares.

Massey studies how native environment and external stressors, such as changes in light, nutrients, and temperature, affect the way diatoms—single-celled algae—harvest light for photosynthesis. Thanks to the NSF’s two-year grant, her findings could inform future efforts to engineer diatoms to produce biofuels, biodegradable plastics, and other sustainable applications.



Photo: Benjamin Choi '27, Lara Alswafta '28, Jenna Viscani '27, and Sara Massey

Beyond accelerating Massey’s research, the NSF funding expands opportunities for Southwestern students. It supports two paid undergraduate researchers each year, their travel to conferences, and the hire of a postbaccalaureate researcher, who will be recruited from among chemistry and biochemistry majors. “This grant is having a huge impact on students,” Massey says. “It’s preparing them to pursue research in graduate school and jobs in industry. It’s great skill building for STEM careers.” She adds that the funding will soon bring an optical liquid nitrogen cryostat to campus, a powerful new tool that will enhance faculty and students’ research capabilities—and ultimately unlock new possibilities for discovery.

Greek Life Giving

Loyal donors ensure fraternity and sorority members benefit from chapter scholarships, leadership development, and modernized chapter spaces.

Since 1883, Greek life at Southwestern has grown into far more than a campus tradition; it's a thriving, student-driven community built on leadership, service, and relationships that last well beyond graduation. Today, nearly 500 members across six sororities and five fraternities make up more than one-third of the student body. Scholarship support for sorority and fraternity members helps ensure that this experience is within reach for every student, regardless of financial circumstance.



"Your support has allowed me to pursue my education, grow as a student and leader, and fully embrace the experiences that make college so meaningful. I hope to continue honoring your generosity through my hard work, involvement, and commitment to serving others."

—**Luca Bella Francis '29**, recipient of the
Allison Dickson Delta Delta Delta Scholarship



"As a first-generation student and proud brother of Phi Delta Theta, I am deeply grateful for the support, encouragement, and opportunities this scholarship has provided. Thank you for believing in my potential and for making a lasting investment in my future."

—**Matthew Diosdado '28**, recipient of the
Gabe W. Lawson and Phi Delta Theta Scholarship



Planned Giving

By including Southwestern in their estate or long-term financial plans, donors can enjoy substantial tax and financial benefits while ensuring the University's success for generations to come.



Photo: Linda Munguía '75



Photo: Neil Wilson Nease

A Harmonious Union

Growing up in Kingsville, Texas, Linda Munguía '75 didn't have much. What she did have was music: Every family member played an instrument, and Munguía chose to cultivate her soaring soprano voice. "You can express your emotions in music even if you can't articulate them in words," she shares. "I can't imagine my life without it."

Munguía began envisioning a career in classical singing at Southwestern, where she met first-year tenor Neil Wilson Nease in a music class her junior year. That fall, their romance blossomed on their drives to and from Temple, where they sang with a church choir; by January, they were engaged. "We never planned for forever, but we just bonded that way," Munguía remembers. "It was him and me against the world."

After the pair attended grad school at Oklahoma City University, Nease landed a prestigious internship at Wolf Trap in Virginia and toured with Houston's Texas Opera Theater while Munguía lived in New York and debuted at Newark Symphony Hall. Then, the couple made for Germany, where he assumed the stage name Neil Wilson; Nease sounded too much like *niesen*, the German word for "sneeze." Wilson caught his big break in the title role of Massenet's *Werther* in Stuttgart, garnering international acclaim. "We didn't know it would be a big success," Munguía recalls, "but it was a new production, so the whole world came." New York's Metropolitan Opera soon came calling, and Wilson often stepped in when José Carreras canceled appearances. Munguía occasionally performed alongside her husband, but she also won multiple coveted roles herself, including singing opposite Plácido Domingo and Justino Díaz.

For 15 years, the couple traversed concert halls across the world, from Buenos Aires and Vienna to Vancouver and Sri Lanka. But in 2000, Wilson's voice was prematurely silenced by kidney cancer; he was just 44. In his memory, Munguía established the Linda Munguía and Neil Wilson Endowed Scholarship in Music to support students from Texas pursuing degrees in music. "We owe everything to Southwestern," she says. "It's where we met, and we were inspired to aspire there." For Munguía, the scholarship is both tribute and promise: a way to honor her husband's lifelong dream of singing and to ensure future students find their own voices. "There are so few music majors now," she reflects. "I hope this scholarship helps bring more students back—and gives those with need that opportunity."



Photo: Margaret Shilling and Roy B. Shilling Jr.



Photo: Nancy Shilling

Fulfilling the Fifth Commandment

Nancy Shilling never lived at Southwestern; she'd graduated from Hendrix College and moved to Dallas before her father, Roy B. Shilling Jr., became SU's president in 1981. Still, she became a familiar presence on campus, attending faculty dinners and student plays and returning for family birthdays and Christmas.

During her parents' 19 years on campus, her mother, Margaret, made the president's home a lively gathering place while Roy was dedicated to improving the student experience. "Daddy wanted students to get the education they needed to improve their lives," Nancy shares. Together, the couple transformed Southwestern. Before the Shillings, the campus had little greenery; many of the trees beautifying the University today were planted at Roy's behest. Nancy's parents were also adept at winning over donors. "He was very proud of getting that endowment from almost nothing to \$341 million," she says.

After her father passed away in 2023, followed by his beloved wife just 15 months later, Nancy wanted to honor their shared legacy. Her \$2 million planned gift will establish the Roy B. and Margaret Shilling Endowed Presidential Chair—a tribute to the parents who gave so much of their lives to Southwestern. "Daddy always wanted to do something special for the presidents, and I still do what my parents say," Nancy laughs. The gift will support future University leaders, whom she describes as "very special people" shouldering immense responsibility with little recognition.

The gift is also Nancy's way of keeping her parents close. "I enjoy being involved with Southwestern," she reflects, "because it brings my mom and dad back to me."

Ahead of the Curve

When most people picture someone thinking seriously about estate planning, they don't imagine a young alum. But for Hannah Freeman '20, creating a will that included a planned gift to Southwestern felt not just practical but necessary. "Some of my sorority alumni friends have recently experienced deaths in their families," explains the Zeta Tau Alpha alumna, "and they're big proponents of creating a will and making sure your affairs are in order."

Her interest in personal finance only accelerated the process. After graduation, budgeting and retirement modeling became a hobby, and she quickly realized that estate planning was simply another part of responsible financial stewardship. Through her employer, she used LegalShield, an inexpensive legal-services benefit

that allowed her to complete her will within a month. She encourages friends and SU alumni of all ages to explore similar reputable services and talk honestly with loved ones, ensuring their plans are in place so that confusion or concerns about finances don't later exacerbate the emotional burden of bereavement.

Freeman's planned gift is, in her mind, just an extension of her annual giving to SU. "I received a lot of scholarships from Southwestern and Zeta, so I want to pay that forward," she says. She hopes her gift enables future students—especially those with financial need—to do more and give up less. "I won't ever personally see the impact because I'll be gone," she said, "but that's OK because I know someone will benefit."



Photo: Hannah Freeman '20

Athletics Giving

Donor support empowers Pirate Athletics to provide exceptional experiences for Southwestern's 500+ student-athletes.

Swing for the Fences

Southwestern's baseball team is now hitting more home runs than ever since donors contributed new padded fencing that Head Baseball Coach J. C. Bunch describes as a significant upgrade for the program. Installed by RS3 Sports between the fall 2025 and spring 2026 seasons, the new outfield wall and backstop fence replaces the chain-link structure that encircled Rockwell Family Baseball Field for decades. "It makes the field look professional," Bunch says. "If you go to any big-time stadium, it's all padded with graphics and ad space. Now ours matches that standard."



Photo: Rockwell Family Baseball Field

Designed to enhance player safety, the upgrades have also elevated the game-day experience. Prospective student-athletes and families who returned to campus after the installation immediately noticed the change. "Every recruit who visited commented on how awesome the fence looks," Bunch notes. Fans and alumni see the difference too, from the updated NCAA graphics to the display of retired players' jerseys and the championships Southwestern has won throughout the team's 118-year history.

To the donors, Bunch offers heartfelt appreciation. "Thank you," he says. "Your generosity impacts our players, our recruiting, and the entire atmosphere every time we take the field."

Bouncing off the Wall

When the spring 2027 season heats up later this academic year, Head Men's Lacrosse Coach Bill Bowman '92 will be telling his players to "hit the wall-ball wall." Drills on SU's new lacrosse wall, located behind the stands as you walk between the baseball and softball fields, will allow the Pirates to sharpen their hand-eye coordination and improve their ambidexterity. "The wall is one of the best ways to hone your stick skills," says Bowman. "Even at the highest levels of play, if you spend as little as 15 minutes a few times a week, you will improve immensely."

The structure will allow players to practice fundamentals like throwing and catching, building their confidence and versatility during competition. The impact extends beyond Bowman's team, benefiting women's lacrosse and attracting future student-athletes to Southwestern. "Through this gift, we're going to be able to step up how we play the game," Bowman says. "It's going to have an immeasurable impact this year and for years to come."



Photo: Lacrosse Wall (Front)



Photo: Lacrosse Wall (Back)

The Heart of Gold

When student-athlete Kylie Intfen '27 began touring colleges, she applied what she called the “broken-leg test”: If she could no longer play volleyball, would she still want to stay? At Southwestern, she fell in love with the campus, but she wanted to return just to make sure she'd click with her teammates. From the moment she met “the girls,” she knew she'd found her home away from home.

A political science major and history minor, Kylie loved Church and connected deeply with her roommates, professors, and Open Table, her Bible study group led by Kenny Bray at First United Methodist Church. Most of all, she cherished her volleyball teammates and coaches Jeremy Ford and Don Flora. “She had never been happier,” remembers Kylie's mother, Crystal.

Kylie's passing in June 2025 devastated her family and the entire Southwestern community. The University honored her with a posthumous degree at graduation, where her family received a standing ovation. At a home game that fall, Eric, Kylie's father, caught sight of an alumna wearing a T-shirt the team had designed; it read, “Smile Like Kylie.” Over the past year, the family has been inundated with letters from students expressing how much Kylie had touched their lives. “When you're not on campus, you don't always realize the impact your child has had on others,” Crystal says. “Making that connection gives you hope for tomorrow.”

Wanting to carry forward their daughter's spirit, the Intfens established the Kylie Intfen Heart of Gold Endowment. The fund supports the annual alumni volleyball game—now renamed in Kylie's honor—and launches the new First Serve Banquet to bring together players, alumni, and families at the start of each season. For Crystal, the gift reflects Kylie's strong faith, her ability to make everyone feel seen, and her focus on giving to others. “Kylie valued everybody and treated them with respect; I think we need more of that in today's environment,” Eric adds. “Southwestern had such an impact on Kylie; this is the best way we can honor her and keep her memory alive there.”

Through the Heart of Gold Endowment, Kylie's legacy will continue to inspire future generations of SU athletes. “We miss her every day, and it always helps when we can tell others about her genuine heart and beautiful smile,” Eric says. “We are forever humbled and grateful to the other families and supporters of Southwestern who have donated so generously to her endowment.”



Photo: Kylie Intfen '27



Photo: Kylie Intfen '27

High-Impact Experiences

Gifts that support high-impact experiences allow students to engage in internships, collaborative research with faculty, and study abroad.

A Practice Built on Relationships

Each summer, Cox Family Dentistry warmly welcomes a Southwestern student as they join the team. For the next six weeks, the paid intern joins morning huddles; observes various restorative procedures, such as fillings, crowns, and veneers; shadows specialists in nearby offices; and takes part in annual trainings. They even catch a brief look at the behind-the-scenes tasks of running a successful practice, from troubleshooting software to managing HR.

The internship is the brainchild of Nicholas Cox '11, who began offering the opportunities after considering his own experiences applying for dental school. "Applications are really expensive, and getting a letter of recommendation from a dentist is challenging," he explains. His goal was simple: Provide both

professional preparation and clarity by giving SU students an authentic picture of life as a dentist. "If after six weeks they realize they don't like dentistry, that is still a successful internship," he says.

Nevertheless, every intern he has mentored has gone on to dental school. That's no surprise given each student has been "incredible," says Cox, but it's still a source of pride for his entire team. He adds that offering the shadowing program is fulfilling, primarily because it reflects what he valued most at Southwestern and what defines his practice today, where he now provides care to multiple generations of the same families: "It's really about building relationships. That's my favorite part."



Photo: Nicholas Cox '11

A Foot in the Door: Supporting Summer Internships

When Sue Stauffer Harshman '73 was still an undergraduate, internships were practically nonexistent. But years later, while working with summer interns as a senior vice president at Bank of America, she saw how on-the-job experience gave students a remarkable advantage. So after she retired, she decided to endow a fund that supports Southwestern students with financial need so they can pursue unpaid internships at nonprofit organizations. "It's beneficial for students to learn about the careers they might want to pursue," she says.

In addition to the internship fund, Harshman serves on the Board of Visitors and has contributed to recent capital projects—the two meeting rooms in Mood-Bridwell Hall bear her name and that of her late husband, Franklin Atkinson Harshman '71—and gives to the Southwestern Annual Fund. "I enjoy giving back," she says, "because when I come to campus, I talk with students about what they're learning, and I enjoy listening to all that they're doing on and off campus."



Photo: Sue Stauffer Harshman '73



Photo: SU European Cultural Explorations Participants

A Whole New World

Every other year, Southwestern's European Cultural Explorations takes students across the pond for four weeks of immersive learning that stretches far beyond the classroom. Co-led by Professor of Communication Studies Valerie Renegar and Professor of Psychology Erin Crockett, this year's program traveled to France, Hungary, and Portugal and paired coursework in the rhetoric of tourism and cross-cultural psychology with firsthand experience in some of Europe's most storied cities.

"This was a fantastic opportunity for our students to experience a different part of the world with the support of classmates and faculty," says Renegar. "The two classes worked together seamlessly, and students had an unparalleled Paideia experience."

For Crockett, the program's value lies in transformation. "We watched our students develop into better travelers and global citizens," she reflects.

"It was such a joy to see their skills develop as they adapted from place to place, interacting with locals and making the most of their time in an international context."

That growth is precisely the takeaway students describe. In his blog, Patrick Armand '26 recalls the early discomfort of navigating unfamiliar transit systems and language barriers. "Every successful interaction, whether it was ordering food in another language or navigating a new city, made me a little more confident and comfortable," he writes. "By the end of the program, things that felt overwhelming during the first week had become second nature."

Classmate J-Lisa Chambers '28 agrees, adding that she cultivated important life skills: "Being able to adapt teaches you a lot about both yourself and other cultures."

Alumni Council Giving

Amplifying the voice of Southwestern alumni, the council connects students past and present while preserving the University's legacy.



Photo: Delta Zeta 1965 Pledge Class in 2025

Keeping Connections Alive

For more than two decades, Lana Horne '69 has made it her mission to keep her fellow alumni connected. In the years following graduation, she wasn't able to return to campus often; work, living on the East Coast, and raising her children didn't leave much time to attend reunions except for on milestone anniversaries. It was only after she retired and moved back to Austin that she first began attending homecoming regularly. But when she did, she didn't recognize a soul. "And if you don't know anybody, you're probably not going to keep coming," she says.

In 2003, Horne started encouraging friends to participate. For her 45th reunion, she stepped up as class representative, but the turnout was still sparse. So for the next milestone event, Horne started early, urging the reunion committee to "call everyone": Each member was responsible for phoning their list of 40 classmates—and "anyone they really wanted to see," she says. That persistence paid off: At their 50th reunion, the Class of 1969 set the record for highest attendance. "I did it selfishly because I liked seeing everybody," she laughs.

In addition to her service on the Alumni Council,

Horne's leadership extends to her sorority, Delta Zeta. Although the chapter is no longer active at Southwestern, Horne applied to have DZ recognized as an alumni affinity group. She and best friend Nancy Harris Bacchus '69 also host reunions at homecoming each year to preserve the bonds the sisters formed decades ago. "Delta Zeta provided me with a new family," she says. "They gave me confidence that I could do anything," she says. Those close friendships remain strong 60 years later as she and her Delta Zeta sisters rally together to support efforts such as the Pirate Pantry and the Student Emergency Scholarship Fund.

Horne and Bacchus also play a central role in one of Southwestern's newest traditions: Alumni Pinning Day. Since the event began in 2024, they have been present at every ceremony, held each May and December to welcome graduates into the Alumni Association. "It's reinvigorating. I feel rejuvenated hearing all the new grads' plans. They're just beginning, and we're at the other end of that life," Horne reflects. "We tell them to appreciate all Southwestern has given them. And we remind them SU needs us, so they should come back and continue to be part of the community."

Full Circle

For some Southwestern alumni, giving back begins even before they have their diploma in hand. For example, as a senior, Lee Silva Ferguson '95 helped organize her graduating class's fundraising effort. That early instinct was born of gratitude and a desire to pay it forward: "Somebody before me endowed a scholarship so I could go to SU," she says, "so it was important to me to provide for somebody else to have that same experience."

Ferguson has made annual gifts to Southwestern ever since, and she's arranged for a planned gift so that future students can reap "the benefits of the liberal arts education" she holds dear, such as "learning different ways of thinking and knowing the world." And now that the University is a Hispanic-Serving Institution, she's shifted her support toward initiatives that help first-generation and Latine students thrive. "I want to make sure those students don't struggle like I did so they can navigate the unspoken rules of college and be just as successful as everybody else," she explains.

A career educator, Ferguson has recruited many of her own former students to Southwestern. She's also beginning her second two-year term on the Alumni Council. She describes the group's role as part



Photo: Lee Silva Ferguson '95

translator, part "spokesperson for the University"—helping trustees and leaders understand the alumni experience while reconnecting graduates to campus life. "We serve because we are so passionate about what the school gave us and continues to provide to others," says Ferguson.

Her commitment comes full circle at the ring ceremony that precedes each commencement, where she and fellow Alumni Council members present seniors with their class rings. Watching especially the first-generation students and their families beam with pride reminds her why she continues to volunteer with and invest in Southwestern. "The University gave me the foundation I needed to be a successful professional and do all the things I get to do now," Ferguson shares. "This is the least I can do."

2026 Distinguished Alumni Award Recipients

Each year, the Alumni Association honors members of the campus community who exemplify Southwestern University's core values and the association's mission. We are proud to recognize this year's winners for their accomplishments:



W. Joseph "Joey" King '93
Medal of Honor



Charles R. Millikan '68
Distinguished Humanitarian



Audrey Allen O'Neill '03
Distinguished Professional



Kristin P. Starodub '99
Distinguished Professional



Thomas E. Frashier '16
Distinguished Young Alumnus

Student Highlights

Southwestern students are recognized for their leadership abilities in addition to their academic and extracurricular accomplishments.



Through SU's Summer Undergraduate Research with Faculty program, or SURF, students partner with faculty and fellow undergraduates from across the disciplines—including the natural and social sciences, the humanities, and the fine arts—to engage in scholarly and creative inquiry. While living on campus or off (depending on the nature of the project), students receive a stipend to collaborate full-time on faculty research projects and artistic works, from researching migrant rights in Paris and developing AI for video games to identifying mollusks using environmental DNA and examining the leadership styles of CEOs. They also engage in weekly social and academic events, fostering both a tight-knit learning community and individual professional development. This intensive experience culminates in the presentation of projects at the fall High-Impact Experiences Celebration and the Student Work by Southwestern University, formerly known as Research and Creative Works Symposium, in the spring.

Where Are They Now?

Past SURF participants have gone on to successful careers in a wide range of fields:



Greta Nelson '26
Case Manager, Serenity Pines
Counseling and Family Center



Travis Rafferty '24
Machine Learning Operations
Developer, Southern Glazer's
Wine & Spirits



Bess Hagan '25
Planning Specialist,
The City of Georgetown



Alejandro Medina '24
Ph.D. Student in Computer
Science, Baylor University



Rini Mannankara '22
Associate Attorney,
The Fuentes Firm



Victoria Díaz-Cuervo Pueblita '21
Founder and CEO, OHANA

Faculty Highlights

Southwestern's renowned faculty are passionate about mentoring and nurturing the next generation of scholars and leaders.



Professor of Physics **Steven Alexander** presented “Using Molecular Annealing to Find Molecules with Specific Absorbance Peaks” at the Texas Section of the American Physical Society in Fort Worth, Texas, in October 2025.



Assistant Professor of Physics **Cody Crosby** published four articles: “A Quality Diversity Approach to Evolving Model Rockets” with Associate Professor of Computer Science **Jacob Schrum '06** in *Proceedings of the Genetic and Evolutionary Computation Conference*, April 2025; “Fabrication of Microgel-Reinforced Hydrogels via Vat Photopolymerization” in *ACS Macro Letters*, May 2025; “Dynamic Granular Hydrogels through Guest–Host Interactions to Spatiotemporally Guide Cellular Migration” in *Advanced Science*, January 2026; and “Digital Light Processing 3D Printing Enables High Throughput Fabrication of Human Engineered Heart Tissues for Disease Modeling” in *Cell Biomaterials*, March 2026.



Garey Chair and Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry **Maha Zewail-Foote** published the chapter “Developing an Effective Culturally Responsive Mentoring Program for Faculty of Color across Multiple Institutions: A Case Study of Two Faculty Mentoring Programs at Primarily Undergraduate Institutions and Community Colleges” with Tanya G. Velasquez (University of Washington–Tacoma) in *A Practitioner's Guide to Faculty Affairs* (Routledge, 2025).



Professor of Spanish **Katy Ross** published her book *Narrating Infertility in Spain* (Bucknell University Press, 2025), as well as the article “No Quiero Ser Mamá: Non-Motherhood in Pronatalist Spain” in *Letras Hispanas: Revista de Literatura y Cultura*, April 2025. Ross later led a workshop on artificial intelligence in the second-language classroom at the Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association in San Francisco, California, in November 2025, and presented the paper “Purchasing Pregnancy: Egg Donation in Spain” at the Northeast Modern Languages Association conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in March 2026.

A New Model for Higher Education

As the first university in Texas, Southwestern University has spent nearly two centuries preparing students for lives of meaning and purpose. Today, we are building on that legacy by creating a new model for higher education—one that combines the enduring value of a liberal arts and sciences education with personalized support, intentional career preparation, and innovative partnerships designed to help students thrive in a rapidly changing world. This model is brought to life through four distinctive advantages that set Southwestern apart from other institutions of higher education.

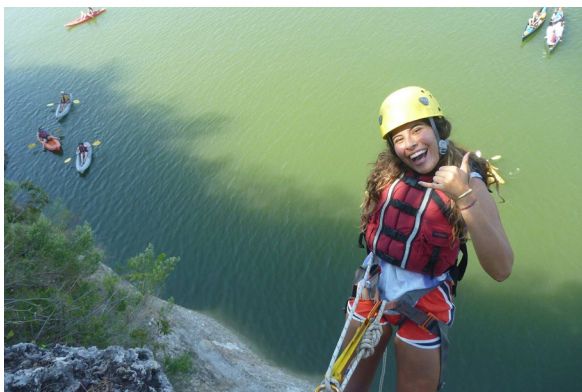
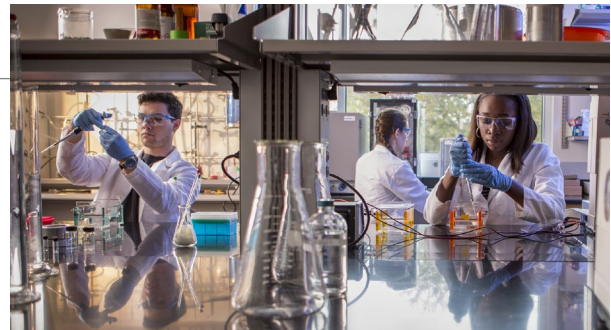


The Pirate Plan

Each student's personalized four-year roadmap integrates academics, student involvement, and career preparation into one intentional experience. Supported by success coaches and academic advisors, every student develops the skills, experiences, and confidence needed to achieve their goals after graduation.

Academic Excellence

Rooted in the ancient Greek concept of *paideia*, Southwestern's liberal arts and sciences education develops the uniquely human skills that remain essential in an age of artificial intelligence: critical thinking, communication, creativity, ethical reasoning, and problem-solving.



The Austin Advantage

Located in Georgetown and adjacent to one of the nation's leading centers of innovation and economic growth, Southwestern transforms Austin into an extension of the classroom. Through Texas's top-ranked Center for Career & Professional Development, students connect with internships, employers, entrepreneurs, and industry leaders while Pirate Adventures and Outdoor Adventure programs encourage exploration, leadership, and personal growth beyond campus.

Southwestern University 560

This first-of-its-kind mixed-use district reimagines the relationship between a University and its community, bringing together education, industry, entrepreneurship, arts and culture, hospitality, and civic partners to create a new model for learning, collaboration, and economic growth.



Points of Pride

Southwestern continues to receive accolades and recognition from a number of highly respected publications.

1st

University in Texas

#1

**in Texas and #18 in the Nation for
Career Services** *(The Princeton Review)*

#1

**Liberal Arts College in Texas and #6 in the
Nation for Professors Get High Marks**

(The Princeton Review)

#1

**Hispanic-Serving Institution on the Top 100
Liberal Arts Institutions List**

(U.S. News & World Report)

#1

in Texas for Economic Diversity

(The New York Times)

#1

Location in the Country to Launch a Career

(Bankrate)

#1

**Boomtown (Georgetown, Texas) for Growth
and Opportunity** *(SmartAsset)*

#1

**Small Private Liberal Arts College in the
United States for the Percentage of Hispanic/
Latino Students Enrolled** *(IPEDS)*

#1

**Private University with the Largest
Land Ownership** *(700 acres)*

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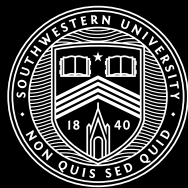
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