



# SMU Student Senate

Legislative Number: S-110-07

Final Vote: 45-0-0

Authors(x): Meyer, Castle

Senate Secretary: Michael Castle

Vice President for Student Affairs: Dr. K.C. Mmeje

Senate Speaker: Connor Ferguson

## A RESOLUTION TO EXPAND THE SENATE ROTUNDA SCHOLARSHIP FUND AND CREATE ELIGIBILITY FOR FIRST-GENERATION PELL GRANT ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

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**WHEREAS**

The Southern Methodist University Student Senate passed S-108-Rotunda to support low-income SMU students and allocate \$100,000 every year to the Rotunda Scholars Program from the DFW Scholarship account.

**ACKNOWLEDGING**

The DFW Scholarship account has accrued \$348,000 that is not currently being allocated to the student body even though the funds were raised from student fees to benefit low-income students in the form of scholarships.

**RECOGNIZING**

The DFW Scholarship saw annual revenues of \$133,000 in the 2023-2024 academic school year while spending an average of \$93,000 in expenses on the Senate Rotunda Fund.

**RECOGNIZING**

The partnership created between the Rotunda Scholars Program and the Student Senate in the form of the Senate Rotunda Fund has been greatly successful in providing purposeful, beneficial, and substantive scholarship support for low-income SMU students over the last two years. This successful program has enabled dozens of students to take advantage of numerous SMU opportunities such as supplemental academic terms, book/course materials, study abroad, etc.

**RECOGNIZING**

Over the last two years the SMU First-Generation Initiative under the Student Academic Success Programs Office has been underfunded as it has experienced significant demand for financial support for First-Generation students through the Course Materials Fund.



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- 32 **RECOGNIZING** The success of the Senate Rotunda Fund has been limited
- 33 to historically underrepresented students under the
- 34 Rotunda Scholars Program while the Student Senate has
- 35 had no historical initiatives to support Pell Grant Eligible
- 36 First-Generation Students who may possess additional
- 37 financial challenges.
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- 39 **RECOGNIZING** The Rotunda Scholars Program is expanding to double its
- 40 size in a four-year period and will have a membership of
- 41 600 people by the 2026-2027 academic school year which
- 42 will greatly increase the demand on the Senate Rotunda
- 43 Fund.
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- 45 **BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED** The SMU Student Senate will expand the Senate Rotunda
- 46 Fund by \$70,000 for a total amount of \$170,000 to be
- 47 approved each year by the Student Senate, starting in the
- 48 Fall of 2024, for the next 9 years out of the DFW
- 49 Scholarship Fund Account (12 440800).
- 50
- 51 **BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED** to address the growth of the Rotunda Scholars Program,
- 52 \$20,000 of the proposed \$70,000 will be appropriated to
- 53 increase scholarship access for historically
- 54 underrepresented students through the Rotunda Scholars
- 55 Program, totaling \$120,000 every year.
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- 57 **BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED** the remaining \$50,000 of the proposed \$70,000
- 58 expansion will be appropriated for First-Generation Pell
- 59 Grant Eligible Students.
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- 61 **BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED** the Senate Rotunda Fund Committee structure will be
- 62 modified to include the Director of the First-Generation
- 63 Initiative who will be tasked with managing requests from
- 64 Pell Grant Eligible First-Generation students and
- 65 presenting their requests to the full committee. These
- 66 requests will be subject to the same rules and procedures
- 67 as the requests seen by the Senate Rotunda Fund
- 68 Committee established under S-108-Rotunda.
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- 70 **BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED** the Senate Rotunda Fund Committee structure will be  
71 modified to include the First-Generation Senator as a  
72 voting member, along with the Student Body Treasurer  
73 and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Chair previously  
74 defined in S-108-Rotunda.  
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- 76 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** As previously established in S-108-Rotunda, Students who  
77 submit a request based on a financial hardship need to  
78 have a FAFSA and a CSS profile on file with the Office of  
79 Financial Aid to determine the financial situation of the  
80 student/family. Students without this may also request  
81 funding for personal reasons.  
82
- 83 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** As previously established in S-108-Rotunda, The Rotunda  
84 Scholars Grant Award Fund will be used to provide  
85 support for students over and above tuition and fees.  
86 Included but not limited to study abroad, student  
87 organization dues, fees for honor societies, etc.  
88
- 89 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**

Respectfully Submitted,

**Student Body Treasurer**  
Clayton Meyer

**Student Body Secretary**  
Michael Castle

**Student Body President**  
Alex Alarcón

**First-Generation Senator**  
Wyatt Harms



# SMU Student Senate

Supported by



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Nikole Melgarejo Juarez  
Director, Rotunda Scholars Program



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Christopher Meyers  
Director of the First-Generation Initiative