

# PURA Editor Bios



## Georgia Goulding '25

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Hey y'all! I'm Georgia and I am in the class of 2025. I'm majoring in science education with a concentration in chemistry. I am from Drexel, a small rural town in the mountains of western North Carolina and attended Draughn High School where I graduated as valedictorian and completed my Associate of Arts. In high school, I was a captain for the volleyball, swim, and track & field teams. I filled my time as yearbook editor, president of SGA, FCA, and anchor club. I was also the host/editor of school news and was a social media intern for my county school system. Outside of school, I coached travel volleyball and club swim, worked as a lifeguard and at a daycare, as well as being active in my church. I'm here to help you and can't wait to hear from y'all!

Key Words: Female, Blended Family, Christian, STEM,  
Under-resourced high school, Military family

## Joe Staudt '24

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Hey everyone, I'm Joe Staudt. I'm a Junior Park Scholar majoring in Civil Engineering with a minor in International Studies from Navarre, Florida. In high school I was heavily involved in Boy Scouts, served in different ministries at my Church, lead in Mu Alpha Theta, and played on my school's golf team. I was also in the AP Capstone program and volunteered at a summer camp for kids with IDD. In my college essays I talked about scouting, volunteering with children with IDD, and my experiences in a military family. Reach out, I'm here to help. Go Pack!

Key Words: Out of State, Engineering, Eagle Scout, Military Family, Under-resourced High School, Eagle Scout, Christian.





## Eleanor Meinhold '26

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Hi! My name is Eleanor Meinhold. I am a Freshman studying Environmental Engineering from Wilmington, NC. I attended Isaac Bear Early College and during high school, I was involved in local and statewide STEM mentoring initiatives, a research internship with the Plastic Ocean Project, Science Fair, and a local rowing club. I also created the Environmental Action Club and was a member in Women's Empowerment through Education, National Honor Society, and Science Olympiad.

Key Words: Women in STEM, Engineering, White, Environment, *not* Valedictorian, Chemistry

## Dylan Philipps '26

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Hi everyone! My name is Dylan Philipps and I from Pittsboro a small town in central North Carolina. I attended the Chatham School of Science & Engineering which is a very small early college program (25 or so in my graduating class). Do not be fooled though, I am a freshman studying business administration with a concentration in entrepreneurship! In high school I was in charge of media for the robotics team and I was a member of Beta Club. I enjoy spending time outdoors; backpacking, kayaking, riding my horse, and training for triathlons!

Key Words: rural hometown, early college, small high school, outdoor adventures, health and fitness





## Jayda Murray '26

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Hey there! The name's Jayda. I'm an out-of-state student currently living in Memphis, TN (I have moved eleven times!) I was homeschooled my whole life, but I graduated highschool under Faith Heritage Christian Academy. As a freshman I'm planning to study Computer Science (Game Development Concentration) with minors in Art & Design and Japanese. In highschool, I lead a team with St. Jude's ALSAC to create an AI chatbot for donor bases, and created the art and programming for private short video game demos like SheroHub. I enjoy drawing, singing, and foraging nature's free food in my spare time!

Key Words: African-American, Christian, Female in STEM, Game Design, Game Development, Art, Japanese Language



## Syd Fryer '26

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Hi! I'm Syd (she/her), a freshman majoring in Political Science with a concentration in International Politics and a double major in Spanish. I'm from Charlotte, NC and went to South Meck High School. I'm passionate about social justice issues and human and civil rights. In high school, I did student government, Young Dems, and the National Spanish Honors Society. I currently work for a non-profit focused on youth empowerment and education justice. I love auto-racing (F1/IndyCar), traveling, learning about new cultures, etc. I've experienced parental loss and know it can be tough to find guidance during this time, so feel free to reach out! Super excited to help y'all along this journey!

Key Words: Humanities/social sciences, social justice, activism, parental loss, Spanish language.





## Sam Dotson '24

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Hey, everyone! My name is Samantha Dotson, but please feel free to call me Sam. I am a Park Scholar from the Class of 2024 majoring in Business Administration with a concentration in IT and a minor in statistics! I am from Marion, North Carolina and attended McDowell High School. While in high school I competed in DECA competitions, was woodwind captain in our marching band, founded a service project with my local women's shelter, was a stage manager for a charity pageant called Mr. MHS, + many more fun things! I am a first-gen and came from an under-resourced high school. So, I know what it's like and I am here to help. I am so excited to hear from you!

**Key words:** Female Empowerment, First-Gen, Under-Resourced, Band, DECA, Service Projects



## Brennan Selcz '26

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Hi there, my name is Brennan. I'm currently double majoring in Physics and Philosophy and minoring in Statistics. I went to Lake Norman High School in Mooresville, NC, but before that I lived for 15 years in Granger, IN (near Notre Dame). In high school I was in FBLA, ran cross country and track, and played soccer. I was also a math tutor and worked in a club called Friends4Change to promote inclusivity for special needs students at my high school and in my county. Outside of school, I also love reading, writing, running, and exploring the outdoors!

**Key Words:** Science, Reading, Writing, Running, New to NC, Outdoors, Older Brother





## Megan Cislo '23

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Hi! My name is Megan (she/her) and I am a Nutrition Science and Biology student in the class of 2023 from Forest, Virginia. In high school, I played saxophone in my high school band, danced in our dance team and at a local studio, was president of HOSA club, and secretary of my church's youth group. I was active in hunger relief service organizations and biological research at my magnet school. Outside of school and activities, I love baking, kayaking, traveling, and trying new foods.

Key Words: Woman in STEM, dance, band, medicine, Christian

## Emie Kiser '24

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Hey everyone! My name is Emie, and I am currently a junior in genetics., looking to go into medical school after graduation. I went to a public high school in Columbus, Indiana (Columbus East). There I was mostly involved in student government, a local fundraising event for our domestic violence service provider, and swimming/tennis. Outside of school I enjoy hanging out with my friends/roomies, being outside, and when I go home hiking with my doggo (Sassafras/Sassy).

Key Words: out of state, medicine, Christian, women in STEM





## Bethel Chanyalew '26

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Hi! My name is Bethel! I'm currently majoring in Criminology but am planning to switch to Social Work. My family is from Ethiopia but I was born and raised in Silver Spring, Maryland and I went to Montgomery Blair High School. While in high school, I was a part of Key Club and National Honor Society. I was also the secretary of the We the East East African club. Outside of school, I worked at an aftercare program of over 100 elementary schoolers, and I was the Sunday school teacher of my local church. In my free time, I love to read, listening to music, watching shows and movies (anything from Marvel movies to Kdramas!), and more. I'm here as support and help but also like your personal cheerleader throughout this journey! I can't wait to hear from you!

Key Words: Social Work, Black Woman, Christian, Out of State



## Dalya Al Obaidi '26

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Hey! My name is Dalya. I'm from Durham, North Carolina, but I was born in Iraq. I'm currently majoring in Biological Sciences and potentially adding a minor in Business. In high school, I published a book called Intersectional Feminism, started a Women's Awareness Club, and started a podcast! Besides my feminist and writing passions, I participated in many health programs over my summers (balance is key). In my free time I like to take walks, watch shows/movies, and catch up with friends.

Key Words: STEM, Writing, health, Minority, Arab, Muslim, Female,





## Isaac Carreño '26

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Hi everyone! My name is Isaac Carreño, and I am excited about being your editor. I am currently majoring in Political Science, but I plan on switching to Social Work. I went to Wayne School of Engineering in Goldsboro, Wayne County. In high school, I served as President of the Key Club. I served as a tutor with migrant students in my county. I also had some policy research experience at NC State. I look forward to helping you on this journey!

Key Words: First generation, Latino, under resourced, rural, Eastern NC, Humanities and Social Sciences



## Anna Powell '26

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Hi! My name is Anna Powell and I am a freshman studying Biomedical engineering with a minor in vocal performance! I am from Rocky Mount, NC and attended Northern Nash High School. In high school I played volleyball for a national club team as well as my high school, sang in my church's praise team, and served on multiple service projects. These service projects include the Appalachian Service Project, Sleep in Heavenly Peace, and PeaceMakers of Rocky Mount. Over the summers I worked as a camp counselor and during the school year I tutored! I came from an under-resourced school so I understand that applications feel like an uphill battle, but PURA is a great resource and I am super excited to help you guys out!

Key Words: Music, Volleyball, Christian, Woman in STEM, under-resourced, engineering, rural hometown, Eastern NC





## Chalina Morgan-Lopez '26

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Hi there! My name is Chalina Morgan-Lopez, and I'm a freshman studying Political Science with a possible minor in Spanish. I'm from Raleigh, NC, where I attended Sanderson High School. In high school, I was involved in educational policy with Wake County Equity Affairs, and with SafeBAE, a national organization dedicated to ending sexual violence in schools. I was also involved with student government, service organizations geared towards queer, Black and Latinx youth, varsity tennis, and a bit of film acting. You can find some of my features in the news and in statewide panels! I know firsthand how nerve-racking the application process can be, and I'm more than happy to lend you a hand.

Key Words: Political Science, Latinx, Black, queer, anti sexual-violence, education, equity, tennis, acting



## Sascha Godfrey '26

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Hey everyone! I'm Sascha, and I'm from Hillsborough, NC and double majoring in Statistics and Geology. In high school, I was an assistant editor for the News of Orange County, captain of the cross country and track teams, founded an environmental science club, and started Save Hillsborough, a movement to promote sustainable development and fight for environmental justice in my hometown. I also have experience working with local government, volunteering with Beta Club, and am a National Merit Scholar. In my spare time, I love writing poetry, playing guitar, reading philosophy, riding horses, and doing just about anything outdoors. Fun fact: I drove coast to coast to see the national parks this summer! Also, I had several surgeries during high school for an athletic injury and ended up taking a gap year to have several more, so I faced a bit of adversity in the college application process. Everyone has such a unique story, and the essays are a great chance for you to tell yours. I'm so excited to help out!

Key Words: writer, environmentalist, runner, physical disability, rural hometown, double major, woman in STEM

## Nayah McKenzie '26

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Hi! My name is Nayah. I am a freshman currently studying computer engineering. I went to Baldwin Senior High School in Baldwin, NY. Throughout high school, I was involved in FIRST Robotics, Make-A-Wish club, Wind Symphony Band/Pep Band, and The Phoenix Magazine. Additionally, I am a Christian and was a Junior Missionary at my church for six years. In my free time I love to listen to music, play guitar, skateboard, write poetry, and tinker with my Arduino Uno. I am also passionate about getting more women of color into the engineering field. I look forward to reading your essays and helping you through this process!

Key Words: Black Woman, Christian, Engineering, Band/Music, Out of State





## Ana-Victoria Gomez

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Hi! I'm Ana-Victoria, a freshman currently majoring in psychology with an intended major in engineering. I'm from Winter Park, Florida and went to Winter Park High School. I am passionate about helping immigrant students ease into the American school system, as I created my own program at my high school. Throughout high school, I took part in student government, Spanish/National Honor societies, and cross country. I am extremely excited to get to know and help everyone!

Key Words: Hispanic, bilingual, woman in STEM, out of state



## Ferdinand (Freddy) Kelley '25

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Hello! I am Freddy (They/Them) and I am in the class of '25 and I am majoring in Biochemistry and Sociology. I am from Asheboro, NC and went to Asheboro High School. In high school, I was involved in our Diversity Student Taskforce, founded our Mu Alpha Theta Honors Society, and was deeply involved in our arts programs including the Marching Band. I was also captain of our swim, tennis, and cross country teams. I am very passionate about equity because of my high school background and am on the executive board for PURA. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to help you out with your essays!

Key Words: Under-resourced High School, Multiracial, Queer, Gender Queer, Double Major, CHASS, CALS, Music, Undecided Future.





## Kennedy Fipps '24

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Hey, ya'll! My name is Kennedy Fipps (she/her), and I am a Park Scholar in the Class of 2024. I am from Greenville, NC, and attended South Central High School. I am majoring in social work and minoring in nonprofit studies with plans of becoming a licensed therapist. I would specifically like to serve pregnant and young mothers, and have a passion for women's health education. While in high school, I was captain of the softball team, involved in student government, oversaw a county-wide organization, and spent time leading and serving within my church. I devote much of my time to mental health advocacy and awareness, as I have faced many mental health struggles. I believe there is so much value in honoring one's story through writing, so I can't wait to help you curate your essays into something special!

Key Words: Social Justice, Queer, In-state, Community Outreach, Christian, Female Empowerment, Depression, ADHD, Equity.





## Sarah Ho

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Hello! My name is Sarah and I am NOT a Park Scholar! I worked for Park Scholarships for nine years and have read hundreds (thousands?) of Park essays. Fun fact: I wrote the current essay questions. Now I work at NC State's vet school, but accessibility and equity in the Park Scholarships community is still very important to me. So is grammar and coherent story-telling. I am particularly well-equipped to assist in writing about activism, unique scholarly activities, and sustained service. I'm so excited to help you demonstrate how special you are to the selection committee!

Key Words: social justice, first-gen college students, diversity/equity/inclusion, people of color, immigrants, humanities

## Kate Scheer '25

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Hi y'all! I'm Kate and I am majoring in Mechanical Engineering with (undeclared) minors in Theatre and History. I grew up in Chapel Hill, NC and went to East Chapel Hill High School. In high school I was heavily involved in theatre, including, acting, directing, stage managing, and teching over a dozen shows. I restarted my school's literary magazine from scratch, and founded a writer's group where I ultimately taught creative writing lessons with my co prez. I also founded my school's annual poetry slam.

I started fencing and became captain of my high school's club team. I was on the Battle of the Books team, volunteered often and was very active in my church's youth group. (And did ASP trips.) I was also a huge cyclist. I took ground school in effort to get my pilot's license in high school. (I have yet to meet that goal.)

Outside of school I was (and still am) heavily involved in the arts, exploring the outdoors, reading, aviation and history, and just a nerd overall.

Key Words: Engineering, Woman in STEM/Engineering, Writing, Reading, Twin, Christian, Queer, Humanities, Arts



## Maddy Hannan '24

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Hello! My name is Maddy Hannan and I am a junior studying Math and Math Education with a minor in Outdoor Leadership. I plan to teach math after college, hopefully middle school! I would also love to lead outdoor trips in the summer! I am from Atlanta, GA and I came in as an engineering major so I also have some experience there. Outside of school, I work part time as a CrossFit coach and I lead a Bible study on campus! I love to bake, hang out with my friends, and do basically anything outdoors or active! In high school, I also worked at my gym, was involved in some engineering/science clubs, and was very involved in a mental health ambassador program at my high school. I can't wait to help some of y'all tell your stories!

Key Words: Math, Education, Out-of-State, Christian

