

Meet the 2025 Ralph Bunche Summer Institute Scholars

INDIA SIMMONS | PROGRAM MANAGER, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION PROGRAMS

The Ralph Bunche Summer Institute Program (RBSI) is an annual, intensive five-week program held at Duke University under the direction of Dr. Paula D. McClain. RBSI is designed to introduce aspiring political scientists to the world of doctoral study. This is the 39th year of the program. The 2025 institute was held May 25 – June 26, 2025. Please join us in congratulating the 2025 scholars!

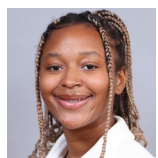
LUKE BELLINGER



Luke Bellinger is a government and humanities honors major at the University of Texas at Austin and a continuing student at Tarrant County College. He is a Sumners Scholar and earned the Harry Hale Award for undergraduate research from the Association for the Scientific Study of

Religion. His main research interest is religion and politics, with a focus on political socialization in minority religious communities. He is also broadly interested in public opinion on religiously charged social issues, such as public opinion on gay marriage and abortion. Additionally, Luke is working on several projects related to gerrymandering. He is intrigued in both qualitative and quantitative methods of research, and is especially interested in ethnographies. He works as a research assistant on several projects, including projects on creating crime trends reports for Texas, interviewing people of color about their health behaviors, and building an AI to anonymize qualitative data. He will be applying to PhD programs for political science in December 2025. He hopes to someday become a professor in order to continue his research whilst teaching people about the American government.

KAYLEN BRANDT

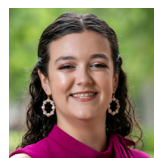


Kaylen Brandt is a rising senior at Ohio Wesleyan University majoring in politics and government along with communication and a minor in data and society. She is a member of the Leland F. and Helen Schubert Honors Program. She has been awarded with the Branch Rickey Academic

Excellence and Guelich Endowed scholarships. Furthermore, she is a member of the Pi Alpha Sigma National Political Science Honors Society. On campus, she is involved with several organizations and clubs that engage with and promote diverse viewpoints, identities, and art. Kaylen is a pillar member of her school's Black Student Union, Sisters United, and Reality Remix. She was a lead intern at Rainbow PUSH Coalition founded by Rev. Dr. Jesse Jackson. She looks forward to continuing her work

on her research paper with her mentor and advisor, Dr. Brianna Mack, about youth marriage trends among racial and political identities. She plans to earn a PhD in Public Policy, where she hopes to explore how legislative solutions can more effectively address the needs of marginalized communities. Through this unique opportunity, Kaylen is excited to be enriched with resources and support at the Ralph Bunche Summer Institute.

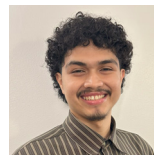
PAIGE GONZALES



Paige Gonzales is a rising senior at Purdue University majoring in political science and communication, with minors in human rights studies and sociology. She is a Steven C. Beering Scholarship recipient at Purdue as a part of the John Martinson Honors College. As of Spring 2025,

Paige is also a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society. Previously, Paige has participated in Vanderbilt University's Accountability, Behavior, and Conflict in Democratic Politics Research Experience for Undergraduates under Dr. David Lewis, studying the effects of political partisanship on implementation of burden-focused policy design. Currently, Paige works with Dr. Jennifer Hoewe and Dr. Brett Sherrick in Purdue's PRIME Lab to study the effects of media on political polarization. On campus, Paige is also the head of performance preparation for the Purdue University Choir, a team supervisor for the Boiler Gold Rush Orientation Programs, and a part of the university-wide Student Life Advisory Board. As a first-generation student, Paige is passionate about bringing more transparency and multidisciplinary approaches to political science. After graduation, Paige hopes to pursue a PhD in political science, focused on political communication, behavior, and institutions.

LUIS XAVIER GUAMAN



Luis Xavier Guaman is a first-generation rising senior at Princeton University, majoring in politics. He is interested in examining how generational status and acculturation levels of Latinxs condition the effects of partisan immigration frames on open-immigration policy support. As

a member of the Lab on Politics, Race, and Experimental Methods, Luis contributed to experimental pilot studies for the Princeton-Jackson State National Election Study. He also participated in the University of Michigan Summer Research Opportunity Program, where he conducted conjoint survey experiments on how gender and race affect perceptions of policing. Luis is dedicated to mentorship and civic engagement, serving as a Civic Engagement Educator for DC Public Schools, a Matric-

ulate College Advising Fellow, and a Youth Enrichment Liaison at Princeton. He has received the Questbridge National College Match Scholarship and the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship, along with multiple research grants from the Mellon Foundation, Princeton's Office of Undergraduate Research, the Department of Politics at Princeton, and the Princeton Research in Experimental Social Science working group. He has presented his research at the 2025 Southern and Western Political Science Association conferences and will present at the 2025 American Political Science Association conference. Luis plans to pursue a PhD in political science, focusing on American politics with an emphasis on public opinion and experimental research methods.

XAVIER HUMPHREY



Xavier Humphrey is a rising senior at Tufts University, where he majors in political science and applied mathematics, with a focus on economic theory. Throughout his life, two driving forces have remained constant: deep curiosity and a commitment to understanding all positions. This manifests in his academic approach, as he strives to embrace diverse viewpoints—believing that omitting even one perspective could mean overlooking a critical factor. Xavier believes that to solve any problem, one must first understand all sides, including those of adversaries. After graduating from Tufts, Xavier plans to pursue a PhD focused on political science or economics, ensuring he has the tools necessary to address future projects. For Xavier, a PhD is not merely a research degree or a prestigious title; it is a commitment to lifelong learning, with the ultimate goal of sharing knowledge to help and teach others.

KEVIN HUNTER



Kevin Hunter is a rising senior and first-generation college student at the University of Tennessee, majoring in political science and minoring in social justice. Throughout his college tenure Kevin has been a Dean's List recipient all five semesters. He is the Vice President of his university's Africana Studies Student Association and is a member of the University of Tennessee Success Academy. Kevin is also a recent inductee of the Phi Beta Kappa academic honor society. In the future Kevin aspires to obtain a PhD in political science and provide many contributions to the field of African-American policy issues. Kevin is particularly interested in voter mobilization in the Black community. He hopes to make a long and fulfilling career of providing meaningful scholarship to the problems faced by the Black community.

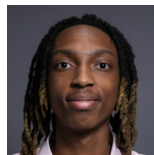
MELISA MENDEZ



Melisa Mendez is a rising senior at Indiana University Bloomington majoring in political science with minors in international relations, American studies, and Spanish. She is a Hutton Honors student pursuing the Honors Notation and a recipient of both the GROUPS and 21st Century Scholars scholarships. A consistent high-achiever, she has been named to the Executive Dean's List every semester since entering university in 2022 and is a member of Phi Eta Sigma and Alpha Lambda Delta. Melisa's academic interests center on US-Latin American relations, with a focus on the cultural, economic, and political impacts of US foreign policy. She

is also drawn to studying political polarization and its effects on democratic governance. Her goals include writing an honors thesis that contributes meaningful scholarship to the field of political science and pursuing graduate study after completing her undergraduate degree. On campus, she has held several leadership positions, including President of the Forest Hutton Honors Council, Vice President of the Ambassador Division, and incoming President of the 21st Century Leadership Corps. As a bilingual scholar fluent in English and Spanish, Melisa hopes to build a career at the intersection of diplomacy, public service, and international policy.

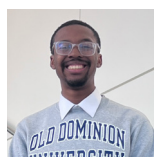
MYLES NDIRITU



Myles Ndiritu is a senior at Morehouse College majoring in international studies, with a concentration in natural sciences and mathematics, and a minor in data science. He is especially interested in applying quantitative methods of research to global issues, with a regional focus on Africa.

Myles has co-authored two research projects—one analyzing Chinese investment in Sub-Saharan Africa and another examining China's position in the global battery supply chain—both currently in the process of publication. Myles has presented his work at major political science conferences such as APSA, ISA, and PeaceScience. Dedicated to building research capacity on campus, Myles serves as a teaching assistant for a political science research methods course and is a senior fellow with the Morehouse Community Data Fellowship, where he mentors students and faculty in data analysis and R programming. He also represents Morehouse through the Atlanta University Consortium Data Science Initiative, participating in interdisciplinary data science events and competitions across the country.

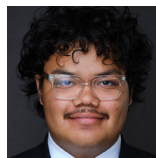
MILES SALLEY



Miles Salley is a rising senior at Old Dominion University, majoring in political science with a double minor in sociology and African American studies. He currently serves as the President of the NAACP college chapter at Old Dominion University, where he works to promote civic engagement and advocates for social justice on campus and in the broader Norfolk community. He is a member of the Black Student and Pi Sigma Alpha Honor Society. He has conducted research within the political science department under the supervision of Dr. Athena M. King, focusing on the environmental justice movement and examining the nexus between the environmental justice movement and intersectionality. Upon graduation, he plans to pursue a PhD in political science focusing on political sociology, public policy, and race and ethnicity.

ANGEL SOSA LLANOS

Angel Sosa Llanos is a rising senior at Emory University from North Las Vegas, majoring in political science. As a Questbridge Scholar, he has excelled academically, earning recognition on the Dean's List and induction into Pi Sigma Alpha. On campus, Angel is President of the Emory International Relations Association and the Latinx Student Organization. He has also interned with the Emory Votes Initiative, the Latinx Studies Initiative, and the Latino Community Fund. Additionally, Angel has conducted research for the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Latino Community Fund, and has served as a research fellow for the Center for Law and Social Sciences. His research focuses



on Latinx political engagement, voting behavior, immigration, and racialized violence. He is working on a senior thesis investigating overreporting in voting and the Latino vote shift. Furthermore, he is co-authoring a paper on racialized mass shootings and working on replicating a study analyzing the impact of Trump-era immigration judge quotas. Angel has presented his work at academic conferences, including the Emory Summer Undergraduate Research Symposium and the Midwest Political Science Association. After graduation, he plans to pursue a PhD in political science to become a professor.

MADISON SPENCER



Madison Spencer is a rising senior at George Washington University majoring in political science. Throughout her academic career, she has strived for excellence, being a Presidential Scholarship and University Alumni Award recipient, earning honors in political science, and maintaining Dean's List distinction for five consecutive semesters. She is a member of the Pi Sigma Alpha Political Science Honor Society and the National Society for Leadership and Success. Madison is a dedicated community leader at her school, leading the Queer and Trans People of Color Association and the Editorial Department of the Black Ace Magazine where she has aimed to center the voices of the most marginalized and give them refuge in community safe spaces and art. Informed by intersectional politics, her research interests center on race, class, gender, and sexuality and how these factors can impact electoral politics. She is committed to fostering a political landscape that is inclusive of all marginalized people. A landscape that not only allows them to be heard but also to affect the change they desire. After graduating, Madison plans to pursue a doctoral degree in political science.

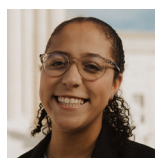
MAXWELL TAYLOR



Maxwell Taylor is a rising fourth-year student at the University of Chicago, double majoring in political science and race, diaspora, and indigeneity. He is currently working on his honors thesis on the emergence of artificial intelligence in the criminal justice system and how this new technology encounters social dilemmas like racial bias. As a research assistant for renowned political scientist, Cathy Cohen, Max worked with the GenForward survey team and the University of Chicago Institute of Politics (IOP) as one of six students selected to develop an original survey for young adults, aged 18-40, ahead of the 2024 Presidential election to examine their political, social, and cultural experiences. He returned to Chicago to present the results at the 2024 Democratic National Convention in front of media members from the New York Times,

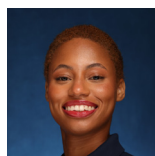
Chicago Sun Times, and WBEZ Chicago. On campus, Max has held several leadership roles as Political Chair of Pan Africanism of the African and Caribbean Student Association, Leadership and Development Coordinator of the IOP Leaders of Color program, and Editor of the Politics and Economic section of a black student-led newspaper titled, *The Independence*. After graduation, Max aims to attend a postdoctoral political science program to further research the emergence of artificial intelligence in the criminal justice system and how social science principles can be applied to mitigate its potentially harmful effects.

ROCHELLE WILLIAMS



Rochelle Williams is a rising senior at Pepperdine University in Malibu, California. She is majoring in political science and minoring in journalism. She is the president of her university's Black Student Association, serves as a resident adviser, spent a year studying abroad in Italy, and interning in Washington, DC for a member of Congress. She has spent the last year working on research under her advising political science professor researching political opinion and voting patterns of various partisan and religious groups. She has presented research at multiple symposiums at her university and the 2025 Midwest Political Science Association conference in Chicago. She is most interested in researching effective campaign strategies and the voting patterns of gender and ethnic minorities. After graduating from Pepperdine, she hopes to pursue a PhD in political science at a university in Washington, DC. Her goal is to use her research to do campaign work and help members of Congress get elected. Later on in her career, she hopes to be a professor of political science and pay it forward by investing in students the way her professors have for her.

CAMRYNN WIMBERLY



Camrynn Wimberly is a rising senior from the hub city of Hattiesburg, Mississippi. She majors in political science at Jackson State University where she is also a Presidential Scholar and a member of the WEB. DuBois-Harvey Honors College Council, Girls Coalition, and the Student Government Association. She is a Spring 2025 Initiate of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated. She has spent the past academic year interning with the Hinds County Sheriff and conducting research under Dr. Byron D. Orey, also assisting him in publishing his book, *Mississippi Conflict and Change*. Camrynn wishes to pursue a research career in political science, studying political extremism on a global scale. ■