

Southwestern University

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Contact: Ellen Davis, 512-863-1570

THE PAIDEIA® PROGRAM AT SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

The Paideia® Program at Southwestern University was developed in 2002 as part of the University's Strategic Plan for 2010. The program is designed to help students make connections between what they are learning in the classroom and the world around them by emphasizing community, thought, action and creativity. "Thought into action" is how students describe the program. In addition to a rigorous academic curriculum, program participants fulfill requirements in civic engagement, intercultural and diversity experiences, and undergraduate research and creative works. The first class of Paideia® Scholars graduated in May 2006.

Paideia (pie-DAY-uh) comes from the Greek word *paidos*, which, in ancient Greece, connoted the sum total of educational experience required to train and prepare a young person to be a Greek citizen. Southwestern's Paideia® program is designed to encourage students to become critical thinkers with broadened perspectives on the world around them.

Southwestern's Paideia® Program was started with the help of an \$8.5 million grant from the Priddy Charitable Trust in Wichita Falls, Texas. This grant enabled Southwestern to hire several new faculty members, fund a program director, and provide stipends for students to cover Paideia®-related expenses. Part of the grant was a challenge grant for the construction of a new Center for Lifelong Learning, which will house the Paideia® Program. This challenge was successfully met and construction of the building began in summer 2008. It will open in spring 2010.

What is unique about the Paideia® Program at Southwestern University?

While several other colleges have launched similar programs, the Paideia® Program is the first to help students connect their in-class and out-of-class experiences by means of small seminar meetings with a single professor over the course of three years. It could be described as an "enriched liberal arts experience." The program is also unique in its emphasis upon students taking ownership of their respective fields of knowledge and presenting their knowledge to one another as well as their professors.

How exactly does the Paideia® Program work?

Students apply for the Paideia® Program in the spring of their first year, and then participate in the program during their sophomore, junior and senior years. Program participants are assigned to a seminar "cohort" of 10 other students from different academic areas. Paideia® seminars are organized thematically, ranging from such topics as "Social Justice and Social Action" to "Film and Politics."

Paideia® scholars work closely with their Paideia® professor and with one another, sharing readings and discussions of current issues, learning to make intentional connections between coursework and their experiences in and out of the classroom.

Twenty-seven Southwestern faculty members from 18 different disciplines currently serve as Paideia® Professors. These faculty members commit to the program for three years. Paideia® Scholars receive up to \$1,000 to help cover the cost of either their research or study-abroad experience. Paideia® Scholars earn up to six hours of upper-level elective credits and graduate with Paideia honors distinction.

What are the advantages of participating in the Paideia® Program?

Most students today are very major-driven and specialize only in a narrow field of study. The Paideia® Program offers students the opportunity to interact with students from different majors, learning from them about a variety of subjects as well as sharing with those same students the current state of their respective fields. Participants in the program all report that it has “stretched” them. Paideia® cohorts develop into “ad-hoc families” over time, and students develop closer relationships with faculty members than they would through the normal advising process. Graduates from the first three classes of Paideia® Scholars report that employers and graduate schools have expressed interest in and appreciation for the program. Paideia® Scholars also may apply for on-campus apartments in their sophomore year instead of their junior year.

How many students at Southwestern participate in the Paideia® Program?

A total of 269 students are participating in the program in 2009-2010.

For more information about the Paideia® Program at Southwestern University, visit <http://www.southwestern.edu/paideia/> or contact:

David Gaines
Program Director
512-863-1494
gainesd@southwestern.edu

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