

Engineering students and faculty active in the Benedictine Scholars program  
(December 2017)

The Benedictine Scholars Program, headed by Dr. Floraliza Bornasal, Ph.D. as the faculty advisor, Angela Carlin (serving as the staff advisor), and Br. Nicolaus and Br. Luke as monastic representatives, strives to represent Benedictine values, lead, and to serve the community. The program includes highly motivated and skilled SMU students engaged in academics and service. One aspect of the program engages Scholars in a curriculum designed to facilitate engaged learning in the university's liberal arts tradition, involve students in service to the community, and challenge students to engage in reason and critical thought. Students also actively participate in many aspects of the community, from developing cohort projects connected to the school's Benedictine traditions and values to actively participating in various campus programs.

There are currently 34 total Scholars in the program spread across the different SMU majors, and 20 Scholars have already graduated. Of the currently enrolled Scholars, 12 are within the engineering program, with seven students majoring in civil Engineering, four students majoring in mechanical engineering, and one student majoring in computer science. Among the alumni, two Scholars graduated with degrees in civil engineering and four graduated with degrees in mechanical engineering. Scholars in the engineering program have illustrated high academic skills, with one alumni graduating with Cum Laude honors and three other alumni graduating with Magna Cum Laude honors.

In addition to strong academic skills, Benedictine Scholars have illustrated their commitment to the community through involvement in service projects and events. Past cohorts have completed projects dedicated to beautifying the campus and recording the history of the institution as part of the Benedictine Scholars Program. In addition to the cohort projects, students remain actively involved through individual pursuits. For example, in the past three years, two of the engineering Benedictine Scholars have served as leads or co-leads to workshops for the Boys and Girls Club STEM Workshop series on the SMU campus. This event entails students at SMU leading evening workshops that engage elementary and middle school students from local Boys and Girls Clubs in science, technology, mathematics, and engineering fields. Other Scholars regularly volunteer at such events, at local soup kitchens, and other community functions as a reflection of the Benedictine values of the program.