

CME Group Foundation Scholars

2026-27 School Year

Brandon Alvarez

Brandon Alvarez will be a sophomore at Stevens Institute of Technology, majoring in Finance. He grew up in Chestnut Ridge, NY and graduated from Don Bosco Preparatory High School. His interests include playing soccer, investment banking, investing his money, traveling, spending time with family, and learning from others. His career goals are to break into investment banking and start his own private equity firm.



Cindy Ambriz

Cindy Ambriz will be a senior at Illinois Institute of Technology, majoring in Computer Science. She grew up in Little Village and graduated from World Language High School. Her interests include promoting STEM education, community advocacy, and mentorship. Her career goal is to become a software engineer focused on building inclusive technologies that empower underserved communities.



Mateusz Boksa

Mateusz Boksa will be a junior at DePaul University, majoring in Finance. He grew up in Schaumburg, and graduated from Schaumburg High School. His interests include soccer, tennis, and the stock market. His career goal is to become a Wealth Manager and help families plan for their financial future.



Tristan Caldwell

Tristan Caldwell will be a senior at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, majoring in Information Science. He grew up in Bolingbrook and graduated from Plainfield East High School. His interests include designing, creating digital experiences, and playing music. His career goal is to gain hands on business experience in the IT industry.



Aracely Candelaria

Aracely Candelaria will be a sophomore at Stevens Institute of Technology, majoring in Business. She grew up in North Bergen and graduated from County Prep high school. Her interests include community involvement, exercising and spending quality time with loved ones. Her career goal is to pursue a role in credit risk analysis within the financial services industry.



Leslye Carrasco

Leslye Carrasco will be a graduate student in Accounting at University of Illinois Chicago. She grew up in Cicero and graduated from J. Sterling Morton East High School. Her interests include experimenting with new pastry recipes and learning languages. Her career goal is to become an auditor to ensure financial transparency and eventually open her own café.



Brenda Castro-Macias

Brenda Castro-Macias will be a senior at Loyola University Chicago, majoring in International Business and Accounting. She grew up in Monee, Illinois, and graduated from Crete-Monee High School. Her interests include weightlifting, soccer, volunteering, and traveling. Her career goal is to become a corporate attorney specializing in mergers and acquisitions, with a focus on private equity.



Reena Das

Reena Das will be a junior at Illinois Institute of Technology, majoring in Computer and Cybersecurity Engineering. She grew up in Chennai, South India and graduated from Shree Niketan High School. Her interests include talking to incoming college students, writing in her diary, learning new words, and surfing opportunities available. Her career goal is to work as a cybersecurity analyst, and then start a high school or learning center.



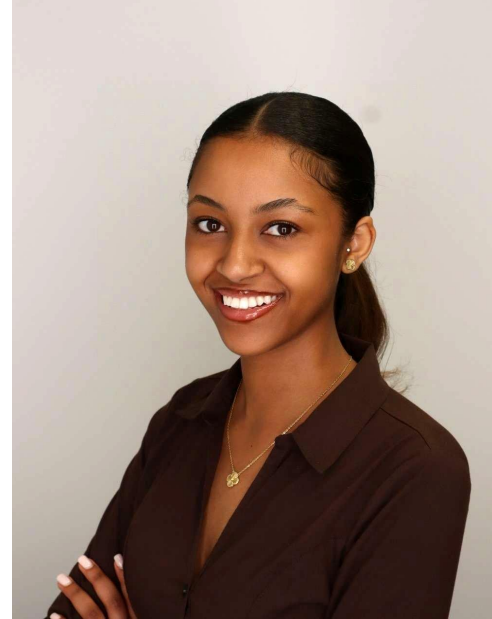
Tiara Davis

Tiara Davis will be a junior at Illinois Institute of Technology, majoring in Business and Information Technology. She grew up on the south side of Chicago and graduated from Curie High School in 2011 and Kennedy King College in May 2026. Her interest includes spending time with her children, dancing, enhancing technical skills and yoga. Her career goal is to become a business/data analyst.



Christian Engida

Christian Engida will be a senior at DePaul University, majoring in Computer Science. She grew up in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and graduated from Andinet International School. Her interests include painting, exploring new places, spending time in nature, making meaningful memories with family, and entrepreneurship. Her career goal is to become a software engineer, build impactful technology products, and eventually launch her own startup while helping expand access to technology and education in Ethiopia.



Aylin Erdal

Aylin Erdal will be a senior at Stevens Institute of Technology, majoring in Business & Technology. She grew up in Green Brook, New Jersey and graduated from Watchung Hills Regional High School. Her interests include finance, python coding, hybrid training, nutrition, podcasts and fashion. Her career goal is to dive deep into the finance world and make an impact on the financial decisions of people that will bring them ultimate success.



Hafsa Feroz

Hafsa Feroz will be a senior at DePaul University, majoring in Computer Science with a concentration in Software Development and a minor in Data Science. She grew up in Skokie, Illinois, and graduated from Niles North High School. Her interests include software engineering, native AI engineering, and machine learning. Her career goal is to become a software engineer and develop innovative technology solutions that create a positive impact in people's lives!



Francisco Gomez

Francisco (Frankie) Gomez will be a senior at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, majoring in Finance. He grew up in Archer Heights and currently resides in Oak Lawn, graduating from Oak Lawn Community High School. His interests include going to the gym, reading, running, and cars. His long-term career goal is to build a successful career in finance, not only to create generational impact for his own family, but also to serve as a resource and mentor. He hopes to be a beacon of hope by breaking barriers, sharing knowledge, and inspiring others to pursue opportunities that may have once felt out of reach.



Shria Halkoda

Shria Halkoda will be a senior at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, majoring in Computer Science. She grew up in the northern Chicago suburbs and graduated from Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy. Her interests include connecting with others over shared passions for cars, couture, media, finance, and social entrepreneurship. Her career goal is to build her skillset as a machine learning engineer at an industry-forward tech company before taking the leap to start her own ML solutions firm servicing the small businesses in her community.



Abby Hernandez

Abby Hernandez will be a junior at University of Illinois Chicago, majoring in Accounting and Finance with a minor in Sociology. She grew up in Bensenville, Illinois and graduated from Fenton High School. Her interests include baking, playing saxophone, and attending her internship at the State Attorney's Office. Her career goal is to become an attorney.



Eman Hussain

Eman Hussain will be a sophomore at University of Illinois Chicago, double majoring in Accounting and Information Decision Sciences. She grew up in Bolingbrook, Illinois and graduated from Plainfield East High School. Her interests include tennis, bowling and spending time with family. Her career goal is to become an accountant and CPA-certified.



William Ileka

William Ileka will be a graduate student in Computer Science at DePaul University. He grew up in Lynwood, Illinois and graduated from T.F. South High School. His interests include programming, robotics, and gaming. His career goal is to become a software engineer.



Nataly Jimenez-Cruz

Nataly Jimenez-Cruz will be a graduate student in Machine Learning at Stevens Institute of Technology. She grew up in Lodi, NJ and graduated from Lodi High School. Her interests include discovering new music, exploring new places and working out. Her career goal is to create technology that solves real-world problems as an AI and machine learning engineer.



Hemam Kassahun

Hemam Kassahun will be a senior at DePaul University, majoring in Computer Science. She grew up in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and graduated from One Planet International School. Her interests include staying active, exploring Chicago, meeting new people, and discovering new opportunities to learn and grow. Her career goal is to use creativity and technology to solve meaningful problems and build innovative solutions that make a positive impact.



Khizer Khan

Khizer Khan will be a senior at DePaul University, majoring in Mathematics and Computer Science. He enjoys reading and writing, especially foreign literature. His long-term goal is to pursue a career in academia and research, where he hopes to contribute to meaningful work in mathematics and discovery while also teaching future students.



Diana Kopestynska

Diana Kopestynska will be a junior at Loyola University Chicago, majoring in Accounting and minoring in Spanish. She came from Ukraine at 7 years old, grew up in River Grove and graduated from Palatine High School. Her interests include exploring new hobbies and activities, painting, watching movies, and traveling. Her career goal is to make people's lives easier whether through financial guidance and accounting, or consulting.



Filip Lipovski

Filip Lipovski will be a junior at DePaul University, double majoring in Finance and Accounting. He grew up in Belgrade, Serbia and graduated from Chicago Math & Science Academy. His interests include sports, swimming, and working out. His career goal is to work his way through finance companies until he gets enough knowledge and resources to open his own hedge fund, or to become a CPA.



Shynecka Manderson

Shynecka Manderson will be a senior at University of Illinois Chicago, majoring in Information Decision Science. She grew up in Jamaica and moved here after high school. She attended Elgin Community College. Her interests include reading, painting and spending time with friends and family.



Jason Mascarenhas

Jason Mascarenhas will be a senior at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, majoring in Accountancy and Data Science. He grew up in Buffalo Grove and graduated from Adlai E. Stevenson High School. His interests include volunteering, traveling, and trying new foods, in addition to being an avid R&B music fan. His career goal is to become a C-Suite executive who expands access to financial literacy to communities in need.



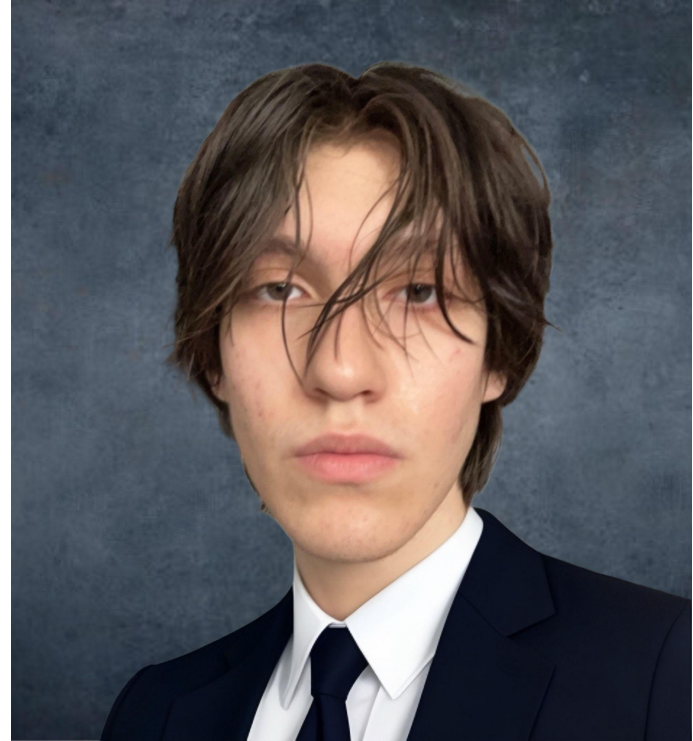
Yvette Mensah

Yvette Mensah will be a senior at Loyola University Chicago, majoring in Accounting and Information Systems & Analytics. She grew up in Chicago and graduated from Loyola Academy. Her interests include exploring new cultural foods, learning new coding skills and spending time in nature. Her career goal is to become a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and promote financial literacy to those in need.



Luis Miranda

Luis Miranda will be a senior at University of Illinois Chicago, majoring in Finance and Information Decision Science. He grew up in Chicago and graduated from Lane Tech College Prep High School. His interests include trading assets such as stocks, commodities, currencies, and options. His career goal is to become a full-time trader and market analyst.



Joaquin Morales

Joaquin Morales will be a junior at Loyola University Chicago, majoring in Finance and Information Systems. He grew up in Oak Lawn, Illinois and graduated from Marist High School. His interests include playing soccer, watching the Chicago Cubs and investing. His career goal is to become a CFO of a Fortune 500 company.



Valeria Pintor

Valeria Pintor will be a junior at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, majoring in Finance. She grew up in Brighton Park and graduated from Back of the Yards high school. Her interests are swimming, cats, and reading romance books. Her career goal is to be in wealth management or banking.



Martyna Piorek

Martyna Piorek will be a junior at Loyola University Chicago, majoring in Finance. She grew up in Park Ridge and graduated from Maine South High School. Her interests include ballroom Latin dance, yoga and baking. She hopes to pursue a career involving real estate, finance, and law.



Jozef Progri

Jozef Progri will be a sophomore at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, majoring in Finance & Accountancy. He grew up in Oak Forest, Illinois, and graduated from Oak Forest High School. His interests include playing soccer and spending quality time with family and friends. His career goal is to be a Transaction Advisory Consultant.



Tereza Progri

Tereza Progri will be a Master's in Finance Candidate at University of Illinois Chicago. She grew up in Oak Forest, Illinois and graduated from Oak Forest High School. Her interests include exploring new cafes, going on runs, and reading. Her career goal is to become a strategy consultant!



Disha Rana

Disha Rana will be a junior at Stevens Institute of Technology, majoring in Finance with a 4+1 Accelerated Master's Program in Business Analytics and AI. She grew up in Passaic, New Jersey and graduated from Passaic Academy for Science and Engineering. Her interests include dance, singing, tennis, golf, bowling, and cooking. Her career goal is to consult for businesses in underserved communities, helping create economic opportunity in the places that need it most.



Felix Romero

Felix Romero will be a senior at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, majoring in Computer Science and Electrical Engineering. He grew up in Bridgeview, Illinois, and graduated from Amos Alonzo Stagg High School. His interests include technology, software and hardware development, volleyball, fitness, and spending time with friends and family. His career goal is to use his technical skills to develop meaningful and innovative technology while continuing to grow as an engineer.



Melise Sever

Melise Sever will be a junior at Stevens Institute of Technology, majoring in Computer Science. She grew up in North Arlington and graduated from Noble Leadership Academy. Her interests include baking, gymnastics, mathematics, driving, and exploring new places. Her career goal is to be a Quantitative Trader.



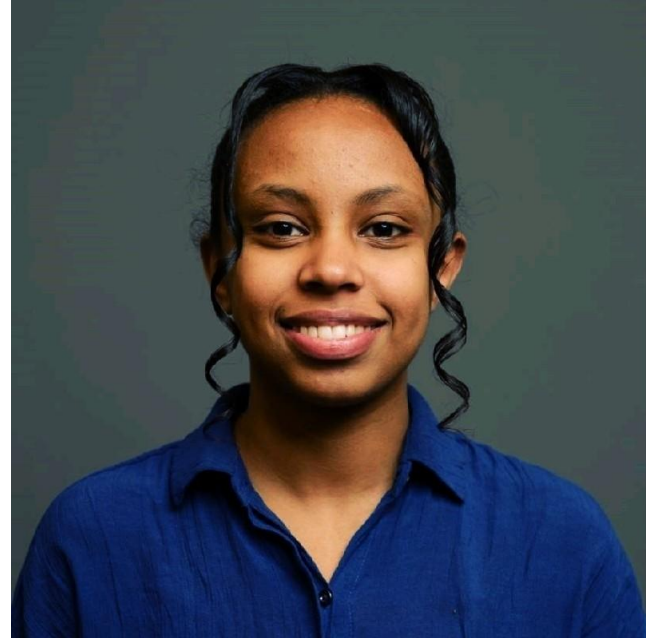
Iman Sheikh

Iman Sheikh will be a graduate student in Accounting at University of Illinois Chicago. She grew up in Elk Grove Village and graduated from James B. Conant High School. Her interests include volunteering, coding, and traveling. Her career goal is to become a CPA and work at one of the Big 4 accounting firms.



Fiker Yonathan Shimels

Fiker Yonathan Shimels will be attending her 5th year at DePaul University, majoring in Accounting, Data Science, and Computer Science. She grew up in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and graduated from Ethio-Parents' High School. Her interests include guitar, piano, drums, soccer, basketball, cooking, gardening, reading and chess. Her career goal is to become a CPA and make a significant contribution to the field of accounting and analytics.



Miya Shlapak

Miya Shlapak will be a junior at Loyola University Chicago, majoring in Accounting. She grew up in Buffalo Grove and graduated from Adlai E. Stevenson High School. Her interests include reading, skiing and knitting. Her career goals are to work at a well-respected firm where she can make meaningful impacts by helping others, continue to grow professionally, and find enjoyment in the work she does.



David Valverio

David Valverio will be a senior at University of Illinois Chicago, majoring in Accounting with a minor in Finance. He grew up in Addison, Illinois, and graduated from Addison Trail High School. His interests include playing tennis, videography, and going to the gym. His career goal is to pass the CPA and go into public accounting at one of the Big Four Companies.



Piotr Wawrzyniak

Piotr Wawrzyniak will be a sophomore at DePaul University, majoring in Finance. He grew up in Chicago and graduated from Taft High School. His interests include soccer, investing, and aviation. His career goal is to help people make informed financial decisions, improving their financial well-being and long-term success.



Makayla Young

Makayla Young will be a junior at University of Illinois Chicago, majoring in Accounting, Finance, and Criminology, Law, and Justice. She grew up in Springfield, Illinois and graduated from Springfield Southeast High School. Her interests include service and volunteering, especially at women's shelters. Her career goal is to ultimately provide financial literacy classes to battered women to help their situations and to become a Women's Protection Adviser (WPA), positioned within UN peacekeeping missions.



