

List of Student Bios and Headshots



Adaobi Nwatu

Adaobi Nwatu is an interdisciplinary researcher and storyteller pursuing a B.Sc. in Data Science for Political Science and Journalism at American University. Working at the intersection of media, technology policy, and public interest innovation, Nwatu specializes in using data visualization and analytics to humanize complex information and inform ethical decision-making. Nwatu aims to bridge the gap between technical complexity and public understanding; ensuring the stories of marginalized and underserved communities are backed by the empirical evidence needed to drive modern policy and structural change.

Nwatu has previously worked with the Sine Institute of Policy & Politics as a 2025 Student Polling Advisor, 250+ Sine Student Associate for Kwame Alexander, and Sine Steward for the 2025 Distinguished Lecturers Series and Solutions Summit.



Sophia Foulds

Sophia Foulds is a sophomore student at American University majoring in C.L.E.G. and minoring in Writing and Rhetoric. Foulds is also a part of the SPA Honors Program. Foulds has worked with Sine before, earning a certificate in Innovative Communication and serving as a Co-Lead Student Associate. In addition to Sine, Foulds has also worked with the BlackPrint at AU, and is an avid volunteer, recently volunteering at National History Day in

DC and formerly serving as the General Education Coordinator for the non-profit Learn with Genie, volunteering for mental health organization HoCoMonumental and promoting equity through the Howard County Student Committee for Equity. Foulds plans to become a lawyer one day and continue to advocate for her community. In her off time, you'll often see her reading or writing something!



Alison Cherry

Ali Cherry is a sophomore at American University pursuing an interdisciplinary major in C.L.E.G. (Communications, Legal Institutions, Economics, and Government) as well as a minor in Spanish Studies. She is a Raleigh, North Carolina native drawn to American University and Washington, DC for the unapologetically passionate people on campus and in the city. Her personal passion is to improve the lives of those who need it most, and she aims to use the skills gained in the classroom, and through engagement with groups like the Sine Institute, to defend and bolster the rights and support systems for marginalized or otherwise struggling communities. She has served as a Sine Steward and a Student Associate for Sine Fellow Anna Palmer and is a recipient of Sine's Collaborative Leadership Certificate. Ali is also a Program Associate for American University's Impact Scholars Program, Secretary of the Habitat for Humanity Club, and Vice President of the Club Gymnastics Team. She hopes to translate the leadership skills, empathy, and grit she has gained from these experiences to pursue a career in the government and nonprofit sectors. She is considering continuing her studies at a law school to defend the legal rights of those in need, pursuing a career organizing the operations of a nonprofit business, or combining the efforts and representing a nonprofit as an in-house lobbyist or attorney. As Ali continues exploring such careers and building the skills of an effective changemaker, she also enjoys volunteering, reading, running, and traveling with friends and family.



Sydney Haughton

I was born and raised in New York, alongside my younger brother and sister. My goals and aspirations are to work on Capitol Hill in environmental policy. In my spare time, I volunteer with the EcoReps and intern on Gloria Nauden's campaign. I am passionate about law, environmental science, and linguistics.



Jackson Kreiner

Jackson Kreiner is a senior at AU majoring in International Studies through the Global Scholars Program. A member of the Sine Institute since his freshman year, he has since served as a Sine Steward, a Co-Lead Associate for Sine Fellow Anna Palmer, and received the Sine Collaborative Leadership Certificate as well. Elsewhere on campus, he is the director of the Spirit and Traditions Board, an Under-

Director of Delegate Experience for AmeriMUNC, an Orientation Leader through NSFP, and a staff writer for the Pericles Institute. Additionally, he holds a Student Administrative role for the Department of Politics, Government, and Economics (PGE) within the School of International Service, acting as a liaison between the PGE leadership team and the student population. Jackson's academic interests lie in foreign policy and global economics, with a regional focus on Europe. In the future, Jackson hopes to find work in these fields, with the goal of attending graduate school and obtaining a Master's degree in a related topic. In his free time, Jackson loves to listen to music, read, and can be found studying or socializing at a local coffee shop!



Karthik Babu Karthik Babu is a sophomore in the American University Honors College, double majoring in Legal Studies and Political Science. Karthik has previously been involved with Sine, having completed the Collaborative Leadership Certificate Program and serving as a Student Associate for 250+ Fellow Kristen Soltis Anderson. Additionally, he is also the Social Media Manager for American University Amnesty International and for the Center for Advocacy and Student Equity at American University. For the last two summers he worked

as a legislative intern for Massachusetts State Representative James Arciero of the Second Middlesex District.



Sara Carney

Sara Carney is a recent AU graduate and PR professional. She graduated in May 2026 with a PR and Strategic Communications Major and Political Science Minor. She is currently an associate at LIFT Enterprises, and has experience in social media strategy, nonprofit work, broadcast media, and community engagement in Washington D.C.



Gabby Wong

Gabrielle Eleazar Wong is a rising Junior double majoring in International Relations and Data Science. She has been working with the Sine Institute since her Freshman Spring, being a student associate for two fellows and serving several other roles. With a commitment to serving with and for her community, Gabrielle is the President for the undergraduate council for the School of International Service and also works as an AU Ambassador/campus tour guide.



Maya Heller

Maya Heller is a freshman at American University studying PR & Strategic Communications with an interest in political communications. She works as Social Media Manager for D.C. Attorney General Brian Schwalb's reelection campaign and is passionate about ocean protection policy and empowering women in the political space.



Julia Cucchiara

Julia Cucchiara is a co editor in chief editor at the American University undergraduate law review, Juris Mentem, where she has combined her passion for law and journalism through her attention to detail and strong writing skills. As a Dean's List political science and journalism student at American University who hopes to become an attorney, she has gained additional experience interning at the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office in Maryland and the Morris County Prosecutor's Office in her home state of New Jersey. Julia's top honors include being inducted into the Pi Sigma Alpha national honor society of political science and working as a student

associate for the Sine Institute of Policy and Politics. In her spare time, Julia enjoys spending time with friends and playing the piano.



Sonya Purcell

Sonya Purcell is a Junior at American University double majoring in Applied Mathematics—with a specialization in Mathematics of Intelligence Systems—and Data Science for Political Science. Driven by the mission of leveraging data science and technology to inform more effective societal and political policy, her work focuses on quantitative research, statistical modeling, and empirical policy analysis. Building on her experience as a Sine Institute Student Advisory Board member throughout 2025, she is eager to continue contributing data-driven perspectives to

the Institute's research initiatives.



Judith Vanboven

Judith Vanboven is a first-year Political Science master's student in the School of Public Affairs at American University, whose path to public service has been anything but ordinary. Born in Ghana, West Africa and raised in Raleigh, North Carolina, Judith brings a rich, multicultural perspective to everything she does. She earned dual bachelor's degrees in criminal justice and psychology from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, where serving as Senior Class President helped her discover her true calling, a commitment to social justice, civic engagement, and public service that has guided her ever since.

Now at American University, Judith serves as the School of Public Affairs Graduate Student President, channeling her energy into building a stronger and more connected student community to create a sense of belonging within the program. Her role as a Student Associate with the Sine Institute of Policy & Politics has proven to be a transformative chapter in her journey here at AU. Working alongside Maria Teresa Kumar, Judith has gained invaluable hands-on experience at the intersection of civic leadership and political engagement. Her research into Voto Latino gave her a front-row seat to the vital conversations happening around voting rights, civic participation, and the policies shaping the lives of Hispanic communities across the country, which deepened her eagerness to be part of the solution.

What drives Judith, above all else, is people. She's a collaborative leader and an aspiring public servant who believes in the power of an inclusive and equitable democracy, which she's actively working to cultivate each and every day. God willing, Judith hopes to build a career in politics and public policy where she can advocate for marginalized communities, spark civic participation, and lead transformative lasting change. She believes that every community deserves a seat at the table and a voice in the decisions that shape their lives. She is dedicated to being that voice, and inspiring others to use theirs.



Ibrahim Bah

Ibrahim Bah is a rising third-year student in the Global Scholars Program in the School Of International Service. His academic interests include migration, human rights, and development. He also serves as the co-editor in chief for American University's foreign policy think tank, the Pericles Institute, and previously served as the Global Scholars Program Associate.



Juliette Sanchez

Juliette is a rising senior at American University studying Communications, Legal Institutions, Economics & Government. She is also part of the Politics, Policy & Law Scholars program at American University, a three-year accelerated bachelor's degree. Additionally, Juliette is obtaining her masters in Policial Communication through the combined BA/MA program. Juliette is from Sparta, NJ, has two younger sisters who are some of her best friends, and enjoy crafting and making jewelry.



Ridha Rayani

Ridha is a rising junior at American University from Tampa, FL, double-majoring in Justice & Law (Criminal Justice concentration) and Public Relations & Strategic Communications. She is a part of the Lincoln Scholars program pursuing a certificate in Political Thought and a Student Fellow for AU President Alger's Civic Life Initiative, where she helps foster dialogue and civic engagement on campus.

On campus, she is involved with The Eagle (Online Managing Editor), Juris Mentem Undergraduate Law Review (Staff Editor), the AUSG Elections Committee (Communications Team), WVAU (Radio DJ), and works with the SOC Communications Office as an Online Communications Assistant. Ridha also contributes to the student-led nonprofit Task Force for Democracy, where she manages their digital presence and strategy. Most recently, she joined the AU Sine Institute as both a Student Advisory Board member and a Lead Student Associate for Anna Palmer. Currently, she is interning with the Juvenile Division at the State Attorney's Office for the 13th District of Florida. Looking ahead, Ridha hopes to attend law school and ultimately become a U.S. Attorney, driven by her commitment to equitable justice. In her free time, she enjoys watching films, reading, and discovering new music.



Pomai Chang

Pomai Chang is a second-year Honors student majoring in Interdisciplinary Studies: Communications, Legal Institutions, Economics, & Government (CLEG), with a minor in History. At American University, he has continued his passion for politics and government on the E-board of the AU College Democrats. Pomai was further appointed as a Civic Life Fellow to promote civic dialogue and serves in various other leadership positions in the American University International Relations Society. He has also remained connected to his home of Hawaii by

serving on the E-board of the AU Hawaii Club. Beyond school, Pomai has interned with multiple elected officials and has been a champion for advocacy through leading the Hawaii State Youth Commission and the Climate Future Forum. Outside of school and work, he enjoys learning Chess, playing video games with friends, and has an adventurous palate.



Jack Bratton

John "Jack" Bratton is a third-year law student at American University Washington College of Law. He is currently serving as the law clerk to Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer and has previously served as law clerk to the Senate Budget Committee and law clerk to Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. On campus, he is active in the SBA Senate, Legislation & Policy Brief, and American Constitution Society.



Ainsley Hoover

Ainsley is a Sophomore studying Data Sciences for Political Science. She's originally from St. Paul, MN. She was previously involved in the Sine Institute as a Student Associate and Sine Steward. During the fall semester, she will be Vice President of AU's American Statistical Association and Vice President of Voters of AU. For fun, she enjoys playing the oboe, going on walks, and reading.



Aidan Bryant

Aidan Bryant is a senior at Trinity University studying political science. This summer, he was part of the Washington Semester Program, where he interned at the Sine Institute of Policy and Politics. His interests include social policy and education policy.