

YEARBOOK 2025



ANDREA

Texas Tech University
Bachelor of Science in Architecture

BT



MICHELLE

University of Texas at Dallas
Bachelor of Science in Accounting

Congratulations to the Class of 2025!

This remarkable group of 83 first-generation college graduates is defined by extraordinary resilience and determination. They navigated the ongoing challenges of the post-pandemic world and the evolving landscape of higher education, yet remained steadfast in their pursuit of meaningful degrees that will shape their futures.

Many graduates are entering careers in engineering and accounting, while others are pursuing creative pathways such as photography and communications. Alongside these graduates, 27 additional students earned a certificate or associate degree this year and are advancing their postsecondary journeys with Breakthrough's guidance and support.

Whatever the road ahead holds, we are confident that these Breakthrough graduates will continue to inspire. We can't wait to see the incredible impact this extraordinary class will make in the years to come!

RENE

St. Edward's University

Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting

Becoming a college graduate has been an incredible milestone for Rene, and nothing meant more to him than seeing his parents proud of his achievement. While college wasn't always his initial plan, he now sees the wisdom in his parents' encouragement — *mom's always right*. Breakthrough empowered him by giving him special people to call his friends; most of his closest friendships were formed through the program, and they've supported him every step of the way.



Breakthrough gave me people who believed in me before I believed in myself.



SYMPHANIE

Prairie View A&M University

Bachelor of Science in Psychology

Symphanie is taking this year to focus on herself as she prepares to start her master's program and pursue her dream of becoming a clinical psychologist. Being a first-generation college graduate feels incredible for her and her family, especially after overcoming so many challenges.



[Breakthrough's] support shapes future leaders. Keep supporting Breakthrough — the next generation depends on it.

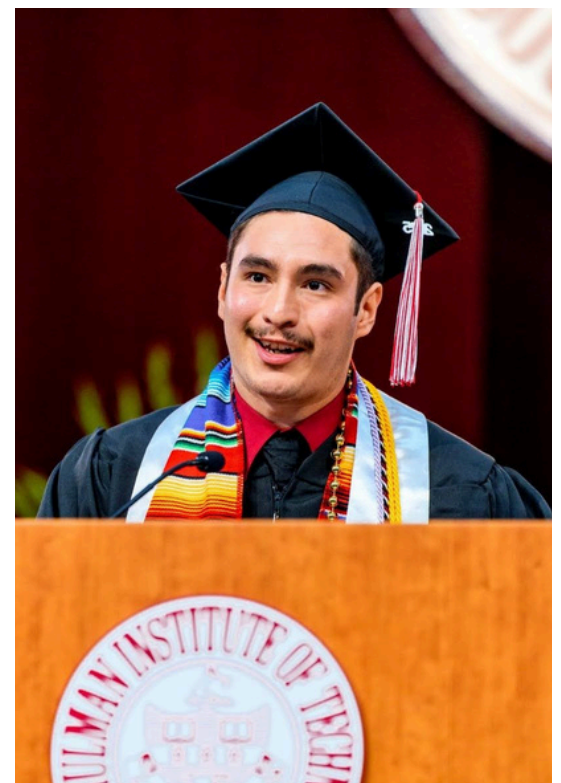


FREDDIE

Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Engineering

Freddie is pursuing a future in biomedical engineering with plans to work in prosthetics and rehabilitation technology. His long-term goal is to earn a master's in orthotics and prosthetics and eventually build a company focused on creating accessible, high-quality prosthetic devices for low-income communities. As a first-generation college graduate, this milestone represents years of sacrifice and resilience — not just for him, but for his entire family.

Freddie carries deep gratitude for the mentors and community who helped him get here, and he's ready to build a career rooted in innovation, purpose, and impact.



Becoming a first-generation Latino college graduate still feels surreal — it's proof that dreams that once felt out of reach really are possible. Standing on that stage felt like carrying my family's hopes with me and finally turning them into reality.

ALLYSON

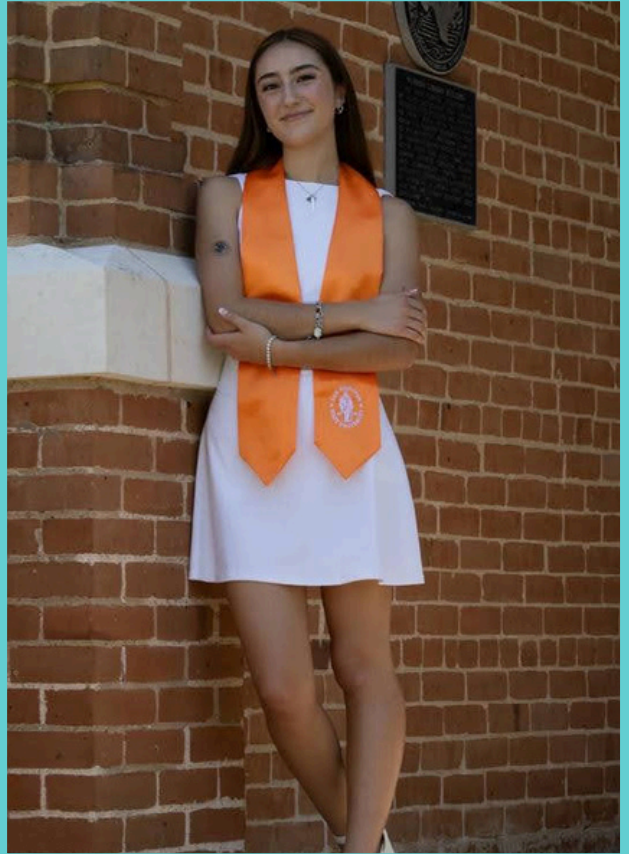
Sam Houston State University

Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice

Allyson feels incredibly proud to be a first-generation college graduate. Her experience has allowed her to guide her sister through her own college journey. Allyson credits Breakthrough's support with helping lay the foundation for her success and says she wouldn't be where she is today without it.



Thank you [to everyone who has supported] Breakthrough! It is such an amazing organization, and it has been so rewarding to be a part of this [experience].



RYIANNA

St. Edward's University

Bachelor of Arts in Social Work

Ryanna is now a proud 8th-grade algebra teacher committed to helping young people grow. She plans to pursue graduate school and a future career in trauma-informed care. After 12 years with Breakthrough, she hopes to give her students the same steady support she once received.



Breakthrough didn't just support me through school—they supported my life. I'll never forget my [advisor] in my living room every Friday, helping me push through FAFSA, waivers, and what felt like mountains of paperwork. [Breakthrough] was there through grief, imposter syndrome, and moments I felt like disappearing. Support like this is rare, and it changed my life and my family's future.

VICTORIA

The University of Texas at Austin

Bachelor of Science in Communication & Leadership

Victoria plans to continue growing her work in advocacy and is exploring roles in public service and government. She hopes to pursue a master's program in Washington, D.C. or California as her next big step. She feels proud of who she's become and knows that becoming a first generation college graduate will transform the trajectory of her family.

Victoria says Breakthrough was a steady source of guidance from the moment she joined, giving her the tools, resources, and sense of belonging she needed to succeed. In today's climate, she believes Breakthrough's presence is more important than ever — a pillar of support for students and families across Austin.



At every step we could rely on [Breakthrough] for holistic support, and because they were cheering me on, I could walk into any room with confidence.

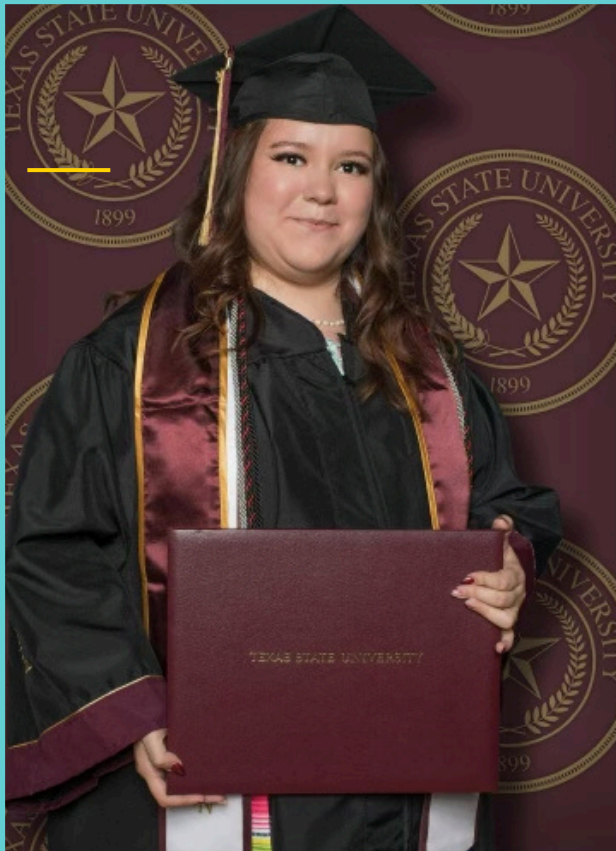
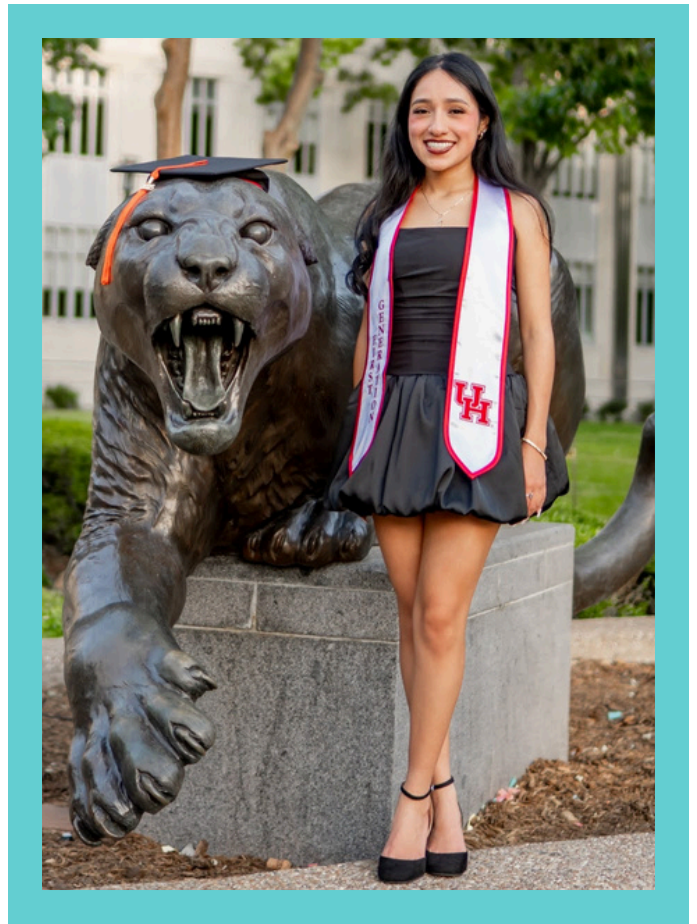
ANGEL

University of Houston

Bachelor of Science in
Computer Engineering Technology

After graduation, Angel set out to begin her career in automation. After attending multiple info sessions and career fairs, she found her place at Wood, where she now works as an automation engineer on the consulting team in Houston, focusing on oil and gas. Angel shares that becoming a first-generation college graduate has been life-changing for her, and she's incredibly proud of the opportunities she's earned and the resilience it took to get here.

“Everyone in Breakthrough truly wants to help our community, and I'm deeply grateful for all the support—especially from [my advisor] David. I can't imagine where I'd be in my career without his guidance.”



MARIA

Texas State University

Bachelor of Arts in Photography

Maria is focused on starting her career by saving for a car and gaining experience to take on photography opportunities. She's ready to build her skills and take the next steps toward her goals. Becoming a first-generation college graduate reminds her that she can accomplish anything she sets her mind to. She's proud of her achievements and grateful for the support she received along the way.

“Breakthrough will always be my family. Graduating would not have been possible without their support, and after more than ten years with Breakthrough, they truly have become a second family to me.”



ROFIAT

Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology

Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering

Rofiat plans to begin her career in mechanical engineering, focusing on research, development, and design. She hopes to keep growing her skills and eventually return for her master's degree so she can stay at the forefront of innovation. Becoming a first-generation college graduate has been incredibly rewarding, and she is proud to reach this milestone for herself and her family.

Breakthrough was a steady guide throughout her journey — helping her navigate applications, financial aid, and the challenges of attending school out of state. That support helped her graduate debt-free and showed her family what's possible.

As I step into my professional career, I want to express my deepest appreciation to Breakthrough and its community of supporters. Their guidance, resources, and encouragement have helped me jump-start this next chapter.

FERNANDA

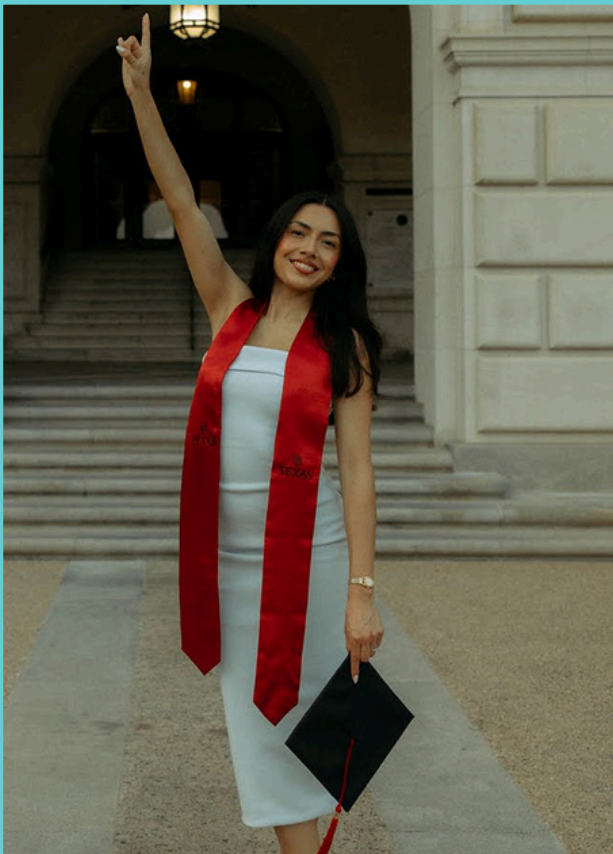
St. Edward's University

Bachelor of Arts in Social Work

Fernanda is excited to keep growing in the social work field as she continues gaining hands-on experience while taking a gap year. Becoming a first-generation college graduate is deeply meaningful to her — a reminder of her family's sacrifices, her own resilience, and the communities that shaped her. As she prepares for graduate school and a future serving individuals and families, she carries immense gratitude for Breakthrough.



Breakthrough believed in me before I believed in myself — their support helped me grow, push forward, and become the first-generation graduate I am today.



JENNIFER

The University of Texas at Austin

Bachelor of Science in Public Relations

Jennifer recently stepped into her new role as a Marketing and Communications Specialist, and is excited to keep growing in public relations and storytelling. Becoming a first-generation college graduate feels incredibly rewarding for her — a milestone she worked toward for years not just for herself, but for her family and everyone who supported her.



[Being in Breakthrough], I learned how to navigate challenges, believe in myself, and chase goals that once felt out of reach.



JESÚS

St. Edward's University

Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs

Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University

Bachelor of Science in International Relations

Jesús is excited about what comes next. Inspired by his experience as an AmeriCorps Teaching Fellow with Breakthrough, he now plans to get certified to teach social studies in Texas, keep studying Japanese and Indonesian, and eventually pursue a dual master's program in Japan and Korea so he can become an international teacher or professor.

Jesús feels deeply affirmed and grateful for his educational experience. He credits Breakthrough's advisors for guiding him, checking in even while he was in Japan, and helping his family understand the college process.



Graduating from two universities in two different countries is something I never thought was possible — and I am forever thankful to Breakthrough for helping me surpass what I once believed I couldn't achieve.



CHRISTIAN

Texas State University

Bachelor of Science in Public Relations

Christian is excited to begin building his career in public relations, especially in hospitality and food-related industries where he can work directly with clients and grow his real-world experience. As a first-generation college graduate, he feels proud to have pushed through challenges for himself and his family.

Breakthrough supported him through financial, academic, and personal obstacles, making the journey feel possible — for him and for his parents.



Breakthrough was the biggest blessing I could've asked for. I'm so blessed and honored to have been part of this amazing organization.

EMILY

Texas State University

Bachelor of Science in Education

Emily is excited to become a bilingual elementary teacher. Being a first-generation college graduate makes her feel proud and grateful. Breakthrough empowered her to believe in her potential, push through challenges, and show her family what's possible through education.



Breakthrough is truly the best! They've supported me through every step not just academically, but in life. I'm so thankful for this community and everything they've done for students like me.

MICHELLE

St. Edward's University

Bachelor of Arts in Social Work

Michelle often describes her journey through college as shaped by resilience, faith, and determination, embracing the unique experiences of being a first-generation college student. Through every hardship, she kept moving forward, and Breakthrough became a steady source of guidance and emotional support. Now, she's focused on pursuing her master's degree and a future in therapy so she can help children and families the way she once needed help herself.



Breakthrough helped me every step of the way. [Breakthrough] supported me when I struggled, checked in on my family, and never let me feel alone. You don't realize how much support you have until [you have completed the program], and now I can feel that loss — in a good way — because it shows how much [Breakthrough] was really there for me. I'm proud to call myself a college graduate, knowing how hard I worked and how hard I pushed myself to get here.

MARTIN

Texas A&M University

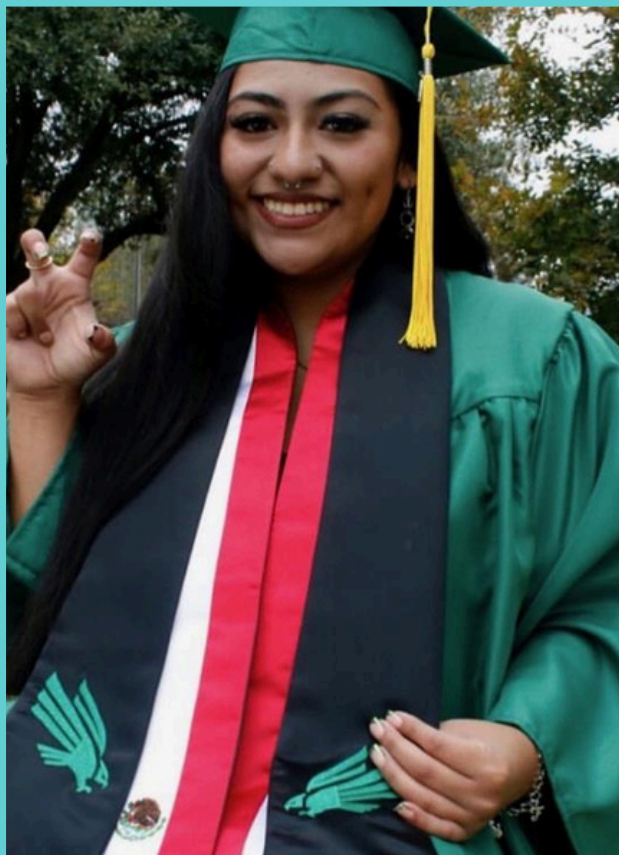
Bachelor of Science in Economics

Martin plans to keep building his career in data and is excited to finally move forward without the financial stress that shaped his college years. Graduating feels like a long-earned win.

He shares how Breakthrough was essential in helping him stay focused — connecting him to resources, guiding him through financial aid, and supporting him every step of the way.



Joining Breakthrough was the greatest decision I ever made for my academic journey.



FRANCIS

University of North Texas

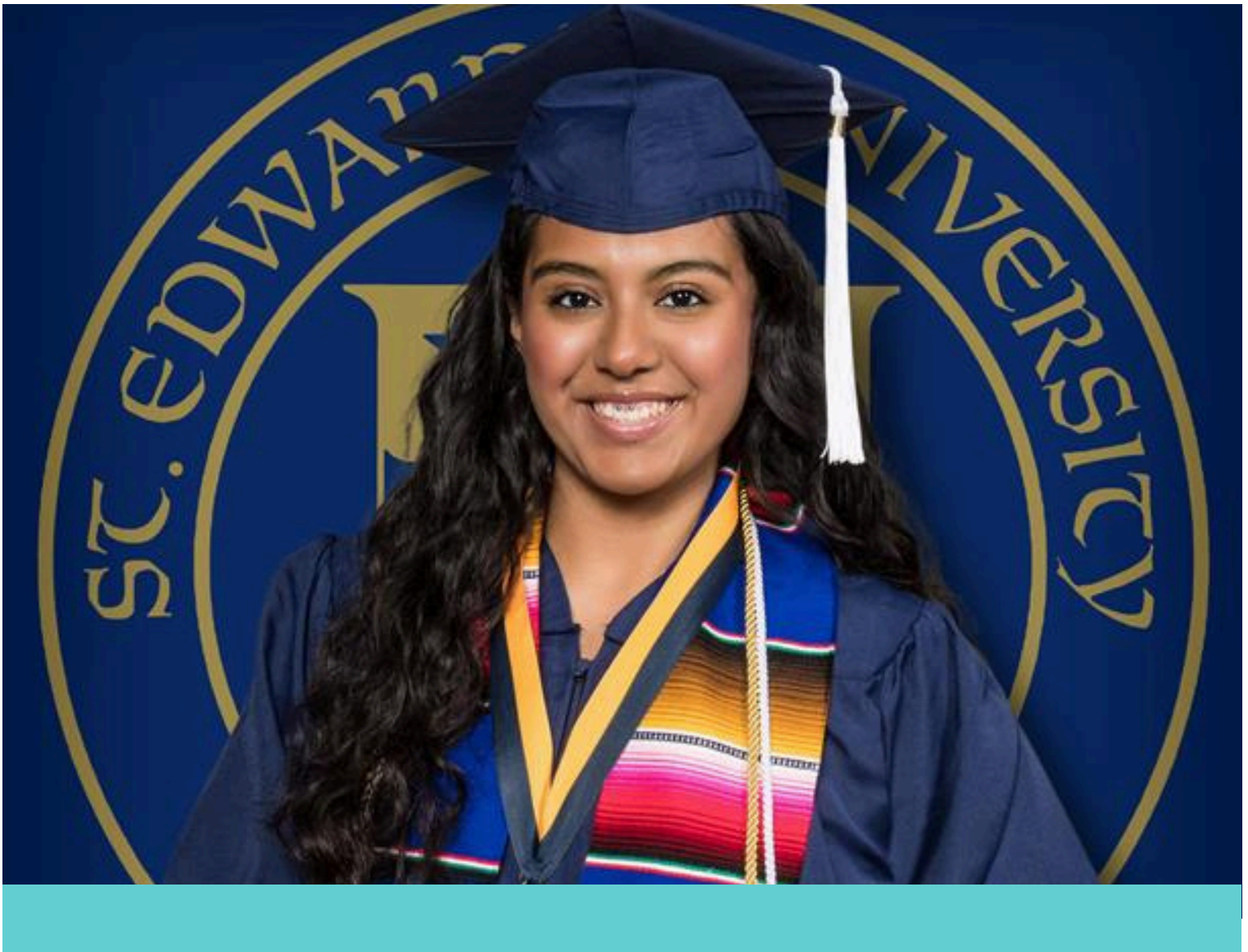
Bachelor of Arts in Media Arts

Francis built confidence, community, and strong mentorship through Breakthrough — support that stayed with her through college and every challenge along the way.

Now, she's excited to step into film production and freelance creative projects, using her skills to tell meaningful stories and grow in a field she loves. She feels deeply grateful for the people who believed in her and helped her reach this moment.



I didn't just find mentors at Breakthrough — I found a community that helped me dream bigger and showed me I was capable of so much more.



BRANYA

St. Edward's University

Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice

Branya is stepping into her future with pride and determination after overcoming many barriers to become a first-generation college graduate.

She's driven by her goal to serve her community as a homicide detective, and she carries with her the resilience, hard work, and sacrifice that got her through the last four years.

Breakthrough helped me when I needed them the most. I'm blessed to have an organization that took care of me so I could succeed. They gave me all the resources and motivation I needed, so I never had a reason to quit my education. I overcame so many barriers, and the pride I feel today comes from knowing how hard I worked for this moment.



EXPLORE MORE STORIES



View this yearbook digitally and browse past Breakthrough yearbooks to celebrate even more graduate journeys.

