

My name is Erica McFarland. I am a twenty-two-year-old Capricorn from Missouri City, Texas. Growing up, I always had a deep admiration for public service, educational enrichment, and leadership. I am a senior at The University of Texas at San Antonio and a 2019 *magna cum laude* graduate of Hightower high school. As a Public Health major with a concentration in Health Promotion and Behavioral Science and a minor in Communications, I thoroughly enjoy helping, aiding, and educating others to achieve true happiness through health and well-being. Upon graduation, I plan to pursue a master's in Maternal and Child Health and a Ph.D. in the future. I aspire to be a leader in the advancement of human well-being by promoting health awareness and health literacy. Providing service that exceeds expectations, presenting knowledge that improves human well-being, and developing progressive marketing and innovative technology leads to success and true impact in the field of public health. I believe one of my life's purposes is to help people. I identify with servant and transformational leadership with the mission of shaping the environment by influencing or persuading others.

Throughout my academic career, I have accumulated over two hundred volunteer hours. Campus and community involvement have heightened my passion for helping people and raised my awareness of my people skills. Being a student at UTSA has aided me in my personal growth and professional development. My character has tremendously developed and I believe this is rudimentary to the foundation of womanhood. Making favorable impressions, being articulate, and developing systematic approaches allows me to fulfill my purpose by expressing my strengths and talents to aid. The success of others is an active motivator in my life. I have experience providing a means for student expression and assistance in school affairs and activities, giving opportunities for student experience in leadership, and encouraging students. Leading with integrity and optimism, while creating motivational environments allows me to shape my environment by overcoming opposition to accomplish future results. A commitment to the discipline of leadership development is a lifetime journey.

I am the first recipient of the UTSA 2021-2022 Spirit of the Roadrunner award (Ms. UTSA) and the 2022 Jane Findling Award at UTSA. I serve as a Senator in the Student Government Association and the President's Student Advisory Council. I am an ambassador for the University Technology Solutions Bold Career Program and the UTSA Ambassador Organization. I am a member of the Spirit Advisory Board, V.O.I.C.E.S, the UTSA Honors Alliance, and other honor societies. As an Ambassador and a mentor for UTSA, I embrace the responsibility of raising brand awareness, promoting, influencing, inspiring, motivating, and implementing marketing strategies. Holding leadership positions allows me to fulfill my purpose by expressing my strengths and talents for the betterment of my well-being and community well-being. Some of my talents and skills include: photography, leadership, public speaking, adaptability, community service, maturity, enthusiasm, emotional stability and grace under pressure. Leadership is a choice and it is also a journey. I have experience with multiple organizations and programs here at UTSA, such as UTSA Academic Advising, UTSA Career Center, UTSA Recreation Center, First Year Experience Program, Rising Researchers, UTEACH, Women of Honor, Black Student union, African Students Association, My Sister's Keeper, and the First-Year Experience Program.

As a UTSA McNair Scholar and a UTSA Najim Center Scholar, I am deeply devoted to improving the health and holistic well-being of others. With an altruistic spirit and a great appreciation for motivational environments, I dedicate the majority of my time outside the classroom volunteering and serving in leadership roles that augment my college experience. I recently conducted research analyzing college students' mental health effects due to social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a member of the McNair Scholars Program, I gained experience writing research proposals and producing other academic deliverables, and I presented my research at academic conferences. My platform at UTSA focused on Amplifying Well-being and the Eight Dimensions of wellness. Mastery experience concerning my own mental health and well-being inspired my platform. A lack of guidance concerning the art of becoming also inspired my platform. Working through this platform heightened my passion for helping people and advanced my commitment to public service. I gained a heightened sense of appreciation for personal development within the human experience. I've collaborated with Wellbeing Services on campus to help other students understand the dimensions of well-being and develop skills to promote their own success.

As a first-gen student, I aim to play an active role in a more ideal world. Through my involvement in campus groups and student organizations, I've been able to expand my connections, develop leadership skills, and amplify my well-being message to benefit our San Antonio community. I firmly believe that collaboration, education, and inclusion is the best way to develop a strong leadership presence. My wish is to leave these imprinted in the field of public health. I've gained so much more than I ever would have imagined from being involved on campus and supporting the San Antonio community. Over time, I have learned to take on challenges and channel them into positive practices that can help people around me. That journey has transformed into more than my own story. I have discovered that compassion and empathy contribute to building trusting connections. It is through relationships that we function as a society. I believe that it is a great honor to continue the rich tradition of African American royalty in Fiesta.