



# MEET THE STAFF

## **GRACIE BALLARD**

**SLU Programs Completed as Student:** 101 (Orlando), 201, 301 (London, Oxford, Normandy), 401 (Greece)

**Years as Staff:** Full-time Staff Member with SLU

**Currently Doing:** Gracie currently serves as Program Coordinator for Student Leadership University. She assists in event planning and logistics for SLU 101, 201, and the Ambassador Program. Gracie enjoys traveling, visiting friends, and dancing. She is so excited to be a part of the next generation of students' SLU experience and see firsthand how God will use this journey to grow each of them as leaders.

## **ABBIE BLAIN**

**Completed as a Student:** 101, 201, 301 (London, Oxford, Normandy, Paris), 401 (Israel and Jordan)

**Years as Staff:** SLU 101 San Antonio (2019, 2023-2025), SLU 101 Winter Week (2023-2025), SLU 101 Orlando (2024), SLU 201 (2019, 2022-2025)

**Currently Doing:** Abbie has been involved with SLU for over ten years as a student, student ambassador and as a summer staff member. The lessons she has learned throughout her time at SLU are evident every day as she lives out her dream from the 101 Dream session of being a teacher! One of her favorite lessons she has learned throughout her time at SLU has been to identify one thing you have failed at each week to see what you can learn and grow from. There is always room for growth and no leader is perfect. Having grown up in Florida, she has a deep love for Disney and sunshine. She graduated from Cedarville University and is an elementary teacher in Nashville, TN. Abbie loves to travel and explore and was able to complete her student teaching in Vienna, Austria. Serving at SLU events is one of the most special opportunities for Abbie to invest in students and serve the next generation of leaders!

## **AUSTIN BRACCI**

**Years as Staff:** Full-time Staff Member with SLU

**Currently Doing:** Austin currently serves as the Executive Assistant for SLU. He is a team player passionate about reaching the current generation of students with the transformational news of the gospel. He is a father to two boys (Kanon and Noah). His passions are the local church, exercise, and woodworking. Austin received his bachelor's degree from Middle Tennessee State University in Organization Communication and his Master of Arts in Theology from Liberty University. He has spent more than 10 years in local church ministry doing everything from youth, college, and adult groups ministry. As a youth pastor, he personally benefited from SLU while attending a YPS and is excited to extend the impact of the ministry of SLU.

## **HANNAH DANIEL**

**SLU Programs Completed as a Student:** 101 (Orlando), 201, 301 (London, Oxford, Normandy, Paris), 401 (Israel & Jordan)

**Years as Staff:** SLU 101 San Antonio: 2 years (2017, 2019), SLU 101 Orlando Winter Week: 9 years (2018-2026), SLU 201: 5 years (2017-2019, 2021-2022), SLU 301: 3 years (2023-2025)

**Currently Doing:** Hannah serves as a Senior Policy Advisor focused on global health advocacy for World Vision, a global, Christian humanitarian organization. Prior to her time at World Vision, she was the Director of Public Policy for the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, representing the policy interests of Southern Baptists to government. She is originally from Tennessee where she studied economics at Union University. She currently lives in Washington, D.C. and is a small group leader at her local church. As a student at SLU, Hannah discovered her passion for advocating on behalf of the most vulnerable. She deeply cares about seeing the Church engage culture and politics with the Gospel and seeing students find their own God-given dreams.

### **KAITLYN FARLEY**

**Years as Staff:** Full-time Staff Member with SLU

**Currently Doing:** Kaitlyn moved to Orlando and joined the SLU team in 2024. She is passionate about providing opportunities for individuals to discover and embrace their unique calling. Her professional interests are driven by an enthusiasm for strategic marketing and creative problem-solving. As a true “I” on the DISC, you’ll likely find Kaitlyn with coffee in hand, humming along to her favorite songs, or making plans to explore new spots around town. She’s thrilled to be part of the SLU team and contribute to impacting the lives of students. Her hope is that every student and leader involved in an SLU program will leave feeling inspired, motivated, and prepared to make a difference for Christ.

### **NIKKI HOFFPAUIR**

**SLU Programs Completed as a Student:** SLU 101, 201, 301 (Israel)

**Years as Staff:** Full-time Staff Member with SLU

**Currently Doing:** Nikki is currently celebrating 27 years on staff with SLU! She started with SLU in 1998 as an intern and now serves as SLU’s COO where she oversees operations and program logistics for many aspects of the ministry. Nikki earned her bachelor’s degree in interdisciplinary Social Sciences from Florida State University in 2001 (best school in the ACC) and her Master’s in Public Administration from George Washington University in 2004. In between, she took a year to serve with AmeriCorps - teaching in the DC public schools. Nikki is known around the office for her superhero capes, #redbusbestbus, and machete collection and keeps herself entertained with her favorite hobbies: backpacking, camping, cooking, and playing with her two awesome kids, Mackenzie and Tucker. Nikki is married to her best friend, Brady Hoffpauir, and they are members of Carmel Baptist Church in Charlotte, NC.

### **ALEXIS LU**

**SLU Programs Completed as a Student:** 101 (Orlando), 201, 301 (London, Oxford, Normandy)

**Years as Staff:** Full-time Staff Member with SLU

**Currently Doing:** Alexis is from Albany, Georgia and got the opportunity to go to SLU 101 and 201 through her church, Sherwood, while there! She is a graduate from the University of Georgia with a Bachelor of Arts in English and a Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing. Alexis and her new husband, Peter, live in Atlanta, GA and love being active with friends and family! Alexis is passionate about the mission of SLU and is grateful for a front row seat in seeing how the Lord works in the lives of students through this ministry.

### **BRENNAN KRESS**

**SLU Programs Completed as a Student:** 101 (San Antonio), 201, 301, 401 (Israel & Jordan)

**Years as Staff:** SLU 101 San Antonio(2019, 2024), SLU 101 Winter Week (2020, 2023-2024) SLU 201 (2019, 2021-2025)

**Currently Doing:** Brennan Kress serves as pastor of Redemption Community Church in Stanton, TN just outside of Memphis. He also attends Southern Baptist Theological Seminary through an extension program in Jackson. When he's not studying, Brennan enjoys spending time with his wife Emmeline, as well as creative writing. His greatest take away from his SLU journey was learning to dream big dreams for the glory of God. He hopes to continue to serve students by encouraging them to pursue their dreams for the glory of God and His kingdom as other leaders in SLU did for him.

### **Tye Masters**

**SLU Programs Completed as a Student:** 101 (San Antonio), 201, 301, 401

**Years as Staff:** SLU 101 San Antonio: 2 years (2018-2019), SLU 101 Winter Week: 2 years (2019, 2025), SLU 201: 5 years (2017-2019, 2022, 2024), SLU 301: 2 years (2024-2025)

**Currently Doing:** Tye lives in Mobile, AL with his wife Hallie, whom he met in his first year staffing SLU 201 in 2017. He works as a Product Marketing Manager for a software company called Bentley Systems. In this role he works remotely, but has the pleasure of travelling to speak at conferences and trade shows as well. He loves to volunteer for SLU

events whenever he has a chance and is excited to return to SLU as a summer staff member this year! His experience at SLU, both as a student and as a staff member, has had such a significant impact on his personal and professional life and continues to impact how he operates each and every day.

### **MEIBY NODARSE-TORIBIO**

**SLU Programs Completed as a Student:** 101 (Orlando), 201, 301 (London, Oxford, Normandy, Paris)

**Years as Staff:** SLU 101 San Antonio (2017-2018), SLU 101 Winter Week (2018-2021, 2023), SLU 201 (2017-2019, 2021, 2023-2024)

**Currently Doing:** Meiby currently lives in Stuart, FL where she works as a licensed clinical mental health counselor and marriage and family therapist for 4KIDS of South Florida, a Christian non-profit foster care agency. Meiby is also part of the training department that provides domestic and international trauma informed care training to foster and adoptive families as well as churches, schools and other non-profits. Together, with 4KIDS she shares the vision that the church is the answer to the foster care crisis and is so honored that God allows her to work in a place where she can integrate her faith with ethical clinical practice. Meiby loves her husband and 14<sup>th</sup> month old baby boy. SLU has tremendously impacted the type of Christ follower, leader, and helper Meiby strives to be.

### **CAP SCOTT**

**Years as Staff:** Full-time Staff Member with SLU

**Currently Doing:** Cap is the Creative Director at Student Leadership University (SLU). He grew up in Alexander City, Alabama, where he first started serving in ministry as a worship leader. That path led him to Highlands College, where he discovered a love for creative storytelling and video production. Over the years, Cap has served in creative roles at Church of the Highlands, Lakepointe Church, and with ministries in Japan. While working in Birmingham, Alabama, he met his wife, Brittany. She likes to say she fell in love with him the moment he sang Flynn Rider's part in I See the Light from Tangled, her favorite movie. They got married in March 2025 ... honeymooning at Disney ... of course. When he is not working, Cap enjoys woodworking, 3D printing, cooking, and making videos under the persona: The Sacred Red, where he brings nostalgic childhood props like Poké Balls and Digivices to life. Cap and Brittany love going on walks, watching movies, visiting the Disney Parks, and collecting Lorcana cards together. Cap is passionate about using creativity to help the next generation discover their calling in Christ.

### **CLARA BETH SMITH**

**Years as Staff:** SLU 101 Orlando (2025)

**SLU Programs Completed as Student:** 101 (Orlando) 2024

**Currently Doing:** Clara Beth is a sophomore at Charleston Southern University in the fall, majoring in Public Health with a minor in Psychology. She is from Florence, SC. Clara Beth is involved on campus in some of the college ministries and has been a resident assistant since the fall of 2025. In her free time, she enjoys reading, baking, and traveling. She is excited to work at SLU 101 this summer because she loves working with students and helping them grow in their relationship with God!

### **KALEB SMITH**

**SLU Programs Completed as Student:** 101 Vision 2023

**Years as Staff:** SLU 101 Orlando (2025)

**Currently Doing:** Kaleb is a pre-law major and junior at CSU. He was born and raised in Savannah, Georgia and enjoys spending time with friends and family, watching podcasts. Kaleb is a musician and loves music, playing both the piano and bass guitar. He's excited to work with the SLU team to learn and grow as an individual and leader.

## **GEORGE WALL**

**SLU Programs Completed as a Student:** 101 (Orlando) 201, 301 (London, Oxford, Normandy, Paris,) 401 (Israel and Jordan)

**Years as Staff:** SLU 101 San Antonio (2021-2022), SLU 101 Orlando (2022), SLU 101 Winter Week (2023-2024), SLU 201 (2021-2025)

**Currently Doing:** George is a native of Americus, Georgia, and graduated from Mercer University with his BBA in Finance in 2023. He spent the last two years working for his fraternity, Beta Upsilon Chi (BYX) as an Expansion Consultant, where he led fraternity expansion and new chapter development. George is amped to be serving this summer because he knows firsthand the impact Student Leadership University can have on someone's life. From learning how to dream for God's glory in Orlando and D.C., to developing a deeper understanding of sacrifice and calling in Normandy, to walking where Jesus walked in Israel, George has been molded into who he is today through SLU's journey. Besides the practical leadership lessons, his favorite part of SLU is the opportunity to build meaningful, positive, and lasting relationships with other like-minded students and staff. George can't wait to meet all of you and is excited to watch how this week changes your life!