

Facing the unknown: SMU student grapples with what her future might hold

At the far end of a row of white computers, Bella Stryker sat with one leg crossed over the other while she rhythmically typed with light blue oval-shaped nails in an Umphrey Lee computer room.

A junior at Southern Methodist University, Stryker is one of the many upperclassmen focused on their academics. In particular, economics and fashion media. Like many juniors at SMU, when asked if she knows what interests her the most, she responded with humor laced with uncertainty.

"I don't know yet, that is why I have a weird major combo," she said smiling.

However uncertain the future might look for her, there is an obvious passion within her for law and economics. She noted how her experience working at a PR firm abroad in London this past summer strengthened her admiration for the profession.

"One of my professors, Dr. Owen Hanley Lynch told me that I would be really good at a job in FinTech PR. So, I'm going to do it," she said.

When speaking about this possible career, her eyes lit up and she stared off at the half-cleaned whiteboards, almost as if imagining her future life.

Outside of school, she is extremely passionate about cooking and living a healthy lifestyle. Part of the reason why she has an intense love for healthy cooking is due to her childhood.

Stryker grew up on a farm in a small northern town in California called Loomis. There, her parents emphasized the privilege farm-to-table brings. This lesson became a central part of her identity and in how she chooses to live life.

"Farm-to-table means a lot to me. I don't like to go to the grocery store. It's weird," she said with a clear disgust.

Farm life gave her the opportunity to learn how to hunt for her food, which is a hobby she continues to do on her own. Today, she hunts salmon, bluefish, and tuna.

Eating healthy is not the only thing she takes pride in. Her commitment to working out six days a week has been a concrete hobby since she was seven. Currently, she is training for a half-marathon with her friends. She is looking forward to running it in December.

With so many distractions college life brings it can be difficult to wrap one's mind around the notion of becoming a real adult. Stryker doesn't want a career that chains her down.

"I don't want my job to be a chore," she said.

Stryker longs for a future that will provide her with the loving needs she grew up with; a big house, a big garden, and a big kitchen. For now, she will continue to focus on the present and cautiously wait for the future.