

## Weekly Update | December 2, 2022

**Elizabeth G. Loba, Ph.D. Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs**

Dear Faculty and Staff,

These weekly updates will serve as a tool to keep you informed and engaged with SMU's Academic Affairs division as, together, we work toward achieving the goals that fall within our four priority areas through 2025: 1) Academic Excellence/ *US News and World Report* top 50, 2) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, 3) 2016 – 2025 Strategic Plan and 4) Inclusive Excellence.

If you have suggestions for what we should include in future communications, please send your ideas to this [email address](#). Previous newsletters are available [here](#).

Today's update falls into three categories: 1) Fall 2022, 2) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 3) News and Noteworthy.

### Fall 2022

#### Board of Trustees Meeting Recap

Yesterday and today, I had two opportunities to provide Academic Affairs updates to SMU's Board of Trustees.

##### Committee on Academic Affairs

During Thursday afternoon's committee meeting, I reviewed cost estimates to significantly advance our goals for both academic and research excellence and to advance, respectively, in the U.S. News and World Report and Carnegie rankings. These revised cost estimates were made possible through my leadership team's efforts throughout 2022 to establish a three-year budget model that reflects our current understanding of revenues and expenses across that timeframe.

I hope you will attend the general faculty meeting on Wednesday, January 18, where I plan to review these estimates in greater detail.

##### Full Board

On Friday morning, I shared a condensed version of my presentation to the Committee on Academic Affairs and provided an update on fall 2023 enrollment.

#### Degree Planner Coming Fall 2023

To aid undergraduate Common Curriculum students in their progress toward degree, the SMU in Four team is leading the development of [a new tool called Degree Planner within my.SMU](#). This tool will help students and advisors develop and sequence a personalized path to on-time graduation. The new tool will launch later this semester, but you can watch this [video](#) for a preview.

#### SMU offers Flu Shots at the Dr. Bob Smith Health Center

Vaccination can help you minimize your chance of getting the flu. We encourage all SMU students, faculty and staff to get their flu shot. Click [here](#) for more information on available options.

## Reminders from Previous Weeks

### Invitation to Participate in December Commencement

Please access the [December Commencement RSVP](#) webpage by end of day today to let us know if you will attend the December ceremony and participate in the academic procession. Clark Hunt '87, chairman and CEO of the Kansas City Chiefs and FC Dallas and member of SMU's Board of Trustees, will be the commencement speaker.

Prior to the ceremony, there will be a faculty breakfast beginning at 7:45 a.m. in the Miller Champions Club in the Miller Event Center, directly inside the entrance to the Coliseum on Binkley Avenue. [If you want to attend the breakfast, please RSVP by clicking here](#). The deadline to RSVP for the breakfast is **Friday, December 9th**, by 4:00 p.m.

## Road to R-1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

### Call for President's Partners Grants

The President's Partners Program was inaugurated by SMU's President, R. Gerald Turner, to support teaching and research efforts by faculty and staff. All full-time faculty and staff are eligible to apply for grants of up to \$5,000. These grants fund equipment that enhances the work of faculty and staff in furthering our commitment to the SMU experience. This can include materials related to teaching and research or administrative and support supplies. Applications should be submitted to the Provost's Office at [facultysuccess@smu.edu](mailto:facultysuccess@smu.edu) no later than Friday, December 16<sup>th</sup>. Each application will be reviewed by a committee comprised of faculty and staff. Application instructions and a cover sheet template can be found [here](#).

### Sam Taylor Fellowship Call for Proposals Announced

All full-time faculty are encouraged to apply for awards of up to \$2,000 through the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. Information about the award parameters, eligibility requirements, and the application process can be found at <https://www.gbhem.org/sam-taylor-fellowship-fund/>. This award was established by the late Sam Taylor to fund continuing education and development of faculty members at United Methodist-related colleges and universities in Texas. All faculty applications are submitted as one institutional packet with letters of support from the deans and the president of the university, per the guidelines of the GBHEM; therefore, the internal SMU deadlines for the award are Friday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, for applications to be submitted to the respective deans' offices, and Friday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, for the full application to be submitted to the Office of the Provost at [facultysuccess@smu.edu](mailto:facultysuccess@smu.edu). Questions about the process and final submissions should be directed to [facultysuccess@smu.edu](mailto:facultysuccess@smu.edu).

### Key Leadership Searches Underway

#### Dean, Lyle School of Engineering

This week, search committee members and I conducted interviews with ten semifinalists. After deliberations, we have narrowed the field to five finalists who will come to campus over the next two weeks for in-depth interviews. Our plan remains to name a new dean by early 2023.

## News and Noteworthy

### SMU Chief Diversity Officer Receives the 2023 Education Champion Award

Congratulations to Maria Dixon Hall, Chief Diversity Officer, on receiving the 2023 Education Champion Award from the U.S. Congress and the Congressional Award Foundation. This prestigious award is given to a member of the private sector who is making a difference in the lives of the young people they support.

### **SMU Faculty Member Shares Expertise on Student Loan Debt Relief with NPR and Diverse Issues in Higher Education**

Higher education expert Dominique Baker, Associate Professor in the Simmons School of Education's department of Education Policy and Leadership, told [NPR](#) that Federal Family Education Loans (FFEL), recently eliminated from the student loan debt relief program, are still federal loans carried by the precise borrowers the Biden debt relief program intended to help. She also told [Diverse Issues in Higher Education](#) that the recently posted simple and accessible application for debt relief conforms to best practices.

### **SMU Faculty Member Shares Research Insights on Infrastructure Deserts with D Magazine**

Barbara Minsker, Bobby B. Lyle Professor of Leadership and Global Entrepreneurship in the Lyle School of Engineering's department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, is becoming a go-to expert on Dallas' infrastructure deserts. [D Magazine](#) covered her role on a Dallas Media Collaborative panel discussing modern redlining in Dallas. [The magazine](#) also cited her research in support of a plan to build parks and trails in Oak Cliff.

### **Dallas Media Covers the Appointment of SMU's Inaugural Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer**

On November 18, [SMU announced the appointment of Suku Nair as Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer](#). This story was also covered in [D Magazine](#) and [Dallas Innovates](#).

Sincerely,



Elizabeth G. Loba, PhD

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Southern Methodist University

<https://www.smu.edu/provost>

**World Changers Shaped Here**