

Weekly Update | April 6, 2023

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) Spring 2023, 2) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 3) News and Noteworthy.

Spring 2023

Welcoming admitted students to the Hilltop

As President Turner mentioned in [his message last Friday](#), we have finalized the remaining offers of admission to the students who will form our Class of 2027. The next four weeks are critical as these students and families have until May 1 to make their final college choice. We know that many of these students will return to campus, some multiple times, as they finalize their decision.

We all play a significant role in recruiting SMU's incredible students and each of you can make a difference. Please take a moment to wave, say hello or hold a door open when you encounter visitors on campus.

I would particularly like to thank the faculty and staff who participate in admission events each year. The welcoming experience you create is central to our highly successful recruitment success.

Provost participating in informal conversations with college/school faculty this spring

Next week, I have two more informal conversations scheduled with college/school faculty. On April 12 at 9:00 a.m. I will be meeting with faculty from the Meadows School of the Arts in Greer Garson Theatre, and on April 13 at 11:30 a.m. I will be meeting with the faculty from the Cox School of Business in Crum auditorium.

Thank you to the faculty who have participated and shared their perspectives during these insightful conversations. I continue to look forward to these meetings and having meaningful discussions with each school's/college's faculty. Please be on the lookout for information on subsequent visits, and I hope you will be able to attend.

Mid-Term Progress Reports (MPRs) completed at an all-time high this semester

This semester we had a record-setting 80.3% of faculty report mid-term grades, with over 90% of Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences and Lyle School of Engineering faculty making submissions. Submitting MPRs is a crucial step in the SMU in Four initiative, as it allows records offices, advisors, and academic support staff to identify and support students who may need additional help in certain academic areas. Staff will now reach out to students with two or more reported deficiencies and invite them to discuss academic support options, such as peer tutoring and meeting with their professors, that can help boost their academic performance.

Thank you to all the undergraduate-serving schools and colleges for coming together in this effort, and to the faculty who submitted MPRs.

Reminder: Call for applicants for 2023-2024 Provost Faculty Fellows

The [Provost Faculty Fellows Program](#) is currently taking applications from full-time faculty members to lead projects within the Office of the Provost that enhance our academic priorities. There are three open positions for the 2023-2024 academic year: 1) Graduate Assistantships Fellow, 2) SMU Internationalization Steering Committee Fellow, and 3) Communications and Research Infrastructure Fellow. Stipends and course reductions will be awarded to faculty selected for the program. Applications are due Friday, April 14.

Tate Lecture Series continues this week

On Tuesday, April 4 the Tate Lecture Series continued its 41st season by hosting Professors Robert P. George of Princeton University and Cornel West of Union Theological Seminary for an afternoon discussion with students at the Turner Construction/Amazon Student Forum and an evening presentation to the SMU community at the Jones Day Lecture. Professors George and West enriched our campus community by discussing ways to utilize reason and faith to rise above political polarization and divides. The next installment in the [Tate Lecture Series](#) is set for May 2.

Road to R1/Scholarly and Creative Excellence

Expedited postdoctoral hiring process to be instituted after this past year's success of the piloted process

During the 2022-2023 academic year, the University piloted a new process for hiring postdoctoral fellows (postdocs) that was developed with input from college/school dean's offices, Human Resources, International Student and Scholar Services, the Office of Institutional Access and Equity, the Office of the Chief Diversity Officer, department administrators, and overseen by the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies. This new process saw great success last year and will now be implemented University-wide. In this expedited hiring process, PIs/supervisors will work with their department administrators and postdoc hiring contacts in their college/school dean's office to manage postdoctoral recruitment and appointments. A step-by-step overview of the hiring process can be seen on the [Postdoctoral Affairs Website](#). For more information, contact Rob Pearson at pearsonr@smu.edu.

Fellowships Day

On Friday, April 14, the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies and the Office of Student Academic Engagement and Success (SAES) will be hosting [Fellowships Day](#) to increase awareness of external fellowship opportunities. This day will include multiple events, the details of which can be found below, that are open to SMU students and faculty members. If you have questions about any of these events, please feel free to reach out to Dr. Rachel Ball-Phillips (rmball@smu.edu), Director

of Graduate Fellowships and Awards, or Dr. Brandon Miller (bgmiller@smu.edu), Assistant Dean for University Honors Program and Fellowships.

Graduate Fellowships Panel

Hear from recent awardees from different disciplines about the experience of applying for and receiving external funding.

12:30 - 1:30 p.m., Harold Clark Simmons Hall 207.

Fulbright Launch

Undergraduate and graduate students are invited to learn about the [Fulbright student program](#) and how to get started on their Fulbright applications.

2:00 – 3:00 p.m., Harold Clark Simmons Hall 117.

Fellowships Celebration

Celebrating students who have applied for external fellowships and faculty members who have supported students in their fellowship applications. [RSVP here](#).

3:30 – 5:00 p.m., Scholar's Den, Clements Hall.

Reminder: Request for Proposals – SMU/Bush Institute post-doctoral program

The [SMU/Bush Institute post-doctoral program](#) was established in 2022 in partnership with the George W. Bush Institute to encourage collaborative research between the two institutions and to increase the number of post-doctoral fellows at SMU. We are funding three more post-doctoral positions for the 2023 academic year. Funding is limited to one year (12 months) per post-doctoral fellow, and preference will be given to proposals that are able to provide a second year of funding for the requested postdoctoral fellow and to proposals from Principal Investigators (PIs) at the rank of Assistant Professor.

All SMU tenured and tenure-track faculty are eligible to submit proposals and to serve as PI. All faculty, including teaching and professional (non-tenure track) full-time faculty, may serve as co-PI on proposals and awards. One proposal may be submitted per year per PI. There are no restrictions on the number of proposals on which a faculty member can serve as co-PI. Proposals must be submitted by April 14 to provost@smu.edu in 11-point or greater font and not exceeding two, 8.5. x 11 pages in length.

Key leadership searches underway

Peter O'Donnell Jr. Data Science Institute Director

The search committee, chaired by Dr. Suku Nair, Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer, is scheduling regular working committee meetings with their next step being to develop the position description that will inform the search. Be on the lookout for additional information in subsequent newsletters. Continued thanks to Peter Moore for serving as Data Science Institute Director *ad interim* until our new director arrives.

News and Noteworthy

Undergraduate sophomore awarded prestigious Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship

Joshua Ange, a second-year President's Scholar, majoring in Physics and Mathematics, with minors in Computer Science and English, has been awarded the prestigious [Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship](#). The Goldwater Scholarship encourages the country's most promising undergraduate scientists to pursue careers in natural sciences, mathematics, and engineering research and is considered the preeminent award of its type in these fields.

Ange has been mentored in cosmology and instrumentation research by SMU faculty members Dr. Joel Meyers, Assistant Professor, and Dr. Robert Calkins, Research Assistant Professor, both in

Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences' Department of Physics. He recently appeared as first author of the article, "[Characterization of XIA UltraLo-1800 Response to Measuring Charged Samples.](#)" which was published in the *Journal of Instrumentation* in January 2023.

Students and faculty interested in learning more about the campus application process for the Goldwater Scholarship should contact Dr. Brandon Gray Miller, Assistant Dean for University Honors Program and Fellowships, at bgmiller@smu.edu.

Hispanic Theological Initiative's (HTI) Open Plaza celebrates the beginning of National Poetry Month with selected poems written by SMU faculty member paired with works of visual art

10 poems by Rev. Dr. Harold J. Recinos from his January 2023 book "The Looking Glass: Far and Near" have been selected with pairings of visual art by Charles Demuth and Jacob Lawrence in celebration of National Poetry Month. The collaboration of poets and artists pairing visual works of art with poetry is a tradition that Rev. Dr. Recinos finds inspiring. He has chosen works of art by artists that his favorite poets, William Carlos Williams and Langston Hughes, worked with during their lifetimes. [Read Rev. Dr. Recinos' works and view paired paintings here.](#)

Master's in Data Science Program hosted its eighteenth Immersion and Capstone Symposium this past March

Last month, the Master's of Science in Data Science (MSDS) Program hosted its 18th Immersion and Capstone Symposium. The event brought together students, faculty, and Data Science Advisory representatives from the business community, who evaluated 10 capstone presentations. The presentations covered diverse research topics, including enhancing lower limb prostheses functionality through machine learning, modeling U.S. Supreme Court cases using natural language processing, and optimizing university fundraising.

The symposium also featured Rameez MeeraSahib, Global CTO & Head of Data Analytics, Artificial Intelligence and Internet of Things Products and Solutions at Micro Focus, as a guest speaker. Attendees participated in a panel discussion exploring the implications of ChatGPT. The Immersion and Capstone Symposium is held each semester, with the next symposium planned for mid-July.

Bridwell Library to host the Codex Sassoon, the earliest most complete known Hebrew Bible

The [Codex Sasson](#), a Hebrew Bible approximately 1,100 years old, is scheduled to be exhibited at the Bridwell Library April 18-20. The Codex is the earliest and most complete Hebrew Bible extant and provides the basis of biblical translations used today by Jews and Christians. Admission is free and open to the public, but tickets are required. Register for [tickets here](#).

After the Bridwell showing, the holy book will be sent to auction at Sotheby's in New York. The exhibition marks the first public appearance of the Bible in the United States, following recent exhibitions in London and Tel Aviv.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth G. Loba, PhD

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Southern Methodist University

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

World Changers Shaped Here