

## Weekly Update | February 17, 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

#### **Fiscal Year (FY) 24 Budget Conversations resume this week**

FY 24 budget deliberations continued this week with another key meeting. On Thursday, I met with President Turner; Dr. Harold Stanley, Vice President for Executive Affairs; Chris Regis, Vice President for Business and Finance; and Ernie Barry, Associate Vice President for Budgets and Finance, to review our remaining budget requests for academic affairs. This week's focus was on college/school-level requests.

As a reminder, our requests for Academic Affairs align with the three-year investment strategies for academic excellence, research excellence, inclusive excellence and the 2016 – 2025 Strategic Plan, as well as the faculty/staff resources required by the schools to support these goals as outlined during last month's General Faculty Meeting.

Deliberations will continue for the next few weeks, with plans to finalize FY 24 budget recommendations by mid-March for presentation to the Board of Trustees during their May 2023 meeting. We will provide additional updates in future newsletters.

#### **Board of Trustees February meeting preview**

Next week, I will have two opportunities to provide Academic Affairs updates to members of SMU's Board of Trustees.

### **Committee on Academic Affairs**

During Thursday's committee meeting, I will review our three-year strategy for undergraduate academic excellence – including how this strategy aligns with our inclusive excellence and strategic plan goals – in greater detail. We have invited several SMU undergraduates to share via video their perspectives about how scholarships and programming, made possible through the Opportunity SMU fund, make a SMU degree attainable.

I will also review our three-year strategy for research excellence and have invited Stephen Arrowsmith, Hamilton Chair in Earth Sciences and Associate Professor in Dedman College's Roy M. Huffington Department of Earth Sciences, and one of his doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers, to provide a real-life example of how research teams are better able to pursue research with impact.

Dr. Arrowsmith is one of SMU's 133 endowed chairs, and we have established a target of 160 for substantially funded endowed chairs and academic positions within our 2016 – 2025 Strategic Plan. I will reiterate the power of funding endowed chair positions to recruit and retain faculty.

I will conclude the meeting by introducing SMU's newest deans – Mike McKee, Dean *ad interim* of the Perkins School of Theology and Nader Jalili, Dean of the Bobby B. Lyle School of Engineering.

### **Full Board**

In Friday morning's meeting, I will share a consolidated version of my presentation to the Committee on Academic Affairs.

### **Quarterly Black Unity Forum meeting today**

Today, President Turner and I joined with Chief Diversity Officer Dr. Maria Dixon Hall and Vice President for Student Affairs Dr. K.C. Mmeje to provide our quarterly update to SMU's Black Unity Forum (BUF). In addition to submitting a report on this quarter's progress toward fulfilling SMU's commitments in response to the BUF Action Plan, I shared responses to questions received in advance from forum members concerning: 1) improving support for Black students in enrollment services and admissions, 2) increasing recruitment efforts for Black faculty (tenure/tenure track, teaching and professional faculty, and deans), and 3) affirming SMU's stance on academic freedom in light of upcoming Supreme Court and legislative decisions concerning affirmative action.

### **Provost to participate in informal conversations with college/school faculty this spring**

Over the course of the spring semester, I will be visiting the college/schools for informal conversations open to all their faculty. The purpose of these meetings is to listen and to engage in conversation with no set agenda. My first visit is planned in the Lyle School of Engineering on Friday, March 3. Be on the lookout for information on subsequent visits, and I hope you will be able to attend.

### **Please encourage students to apply for the Hegi Internship program**

The Hegi Family Career Development Center is calling for applications for three internship programs and asks that you encourage undergraduate students from all majors, class years and levels of experience to apply for one of these exciting programs (application links provided below):

#### **The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Internship program**

The program that was created in 2020 in partnership with SMU's Black Unity Forum is designed for students with diverse backgrounds and matches students to one of Hegi's partner organizations. The pay is \$15/hour, and the typical internship runs ten weeks from June 5 – August 11.

### The Engage Dallas Internship program

This Program offers students career readiness experience through community partners associated with Engage Dallas, a place-based community engagement initiative within SMU's Residential Commons. The pay is \$15/hour, and the typical internship runs ten weeks from June 5 – August 11.

### The Cooper McElvaney Internship program

This Internship Program is facilitated by the Office of the Chaplain to bring together people of diverse beliefs and perspectives to build community. The pay is a \$2,000 stipend, and the typical internship runs ten weeks from June 5 – August 11.

Students apply into one of these three internship programs, rather than for a specific internship, and the application consists of a resume, cover letter and a brief questionnaire that helps facilitate placement.

This [Box folder](#) contains marketing materials, including print fliers, Instagram posts, and newsletter materials that can be shared with students to promote these internship programs. For questions, please contact Matt Nadler, Assistant Director for Employer Relations, at [mnadler@smu.edu](mailto:mnadler@smu.edu) or 214-768-3376

## Road to R1/Scholarly and Creative Excellence

### SMU leaders visited Washington D.C. to advocate for SMU earmark proposals

Last week, Suku Nair, Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer, and I joined executives from Clark Hill – SMU's federal government relations advisors – to put forward 24 proposals for funding at the federal level as a part of the U.S. Congress' FY 24 earmark and/or appropriation process. With logistical support from the Clark Hill team, Suku and I were able to meet with 16 Texas congressional leaders and with staff members for two other offices, from both sides of the aisle, to advocate for SMU's faculty research proposals as well as our current NSF Engines Type 2 proposal. Thank you again to the 40+ faculty teams who participated in this year's earmark process. SMU made a strong showing this year, thanks to our great faculty, and we remain hopeful to achieve some level of funding in the FY 24 budget cycle.

### Research and Innovation Week, March 20-25

[Research & Innovation Week](#) is SMU's annual showcase and celebration of the outstanding research being done by SMU students and other members of our community. This year's events will take place **March 20-25** and include a keynote talk, undergraduate and graduate poster sessions, a panel on "Graduate Education and the Future of Research in North Texas" featuring faculty at SMU and other North Texas universities, and the Master of Fine Arts Qualifying Exhibition.

Please encourage undergraduates, graduate students, and postdocs who are conducting research at SMU to be a part of this exciting event by participating in the poster sessions, which will take place on **Tuesday, March 21** (undergraduate poster session) and **Wednesday, March 22** (graduate and postdoc poster session), from **2-5 p.m.**, in the **Hughes-Trigg Student Center Ballroom**. You can find more information, as well as the link to register for the poster session, on the [Research and Innovation Week website](#).

### Incubator@SMU transitioning to the Office of Research and Innovation

Since 2019, the Incubator@SMU has been housed in SMU's Office of Engaged Learning. Beginning in late spring 2023, the Incubator@SMU will report to Suku Nair, Vice Provost for Research and Innovation. This change will allow for an increased focus on tech transfer, R&D and commercialization in line with our innovation goals.

I would like to thank Jennifer Ebinger, Director of the Office of Engaged Learning, and Camille McCallum, Assistant Director of Entrepreneurship Programs, for the tremendous progress they have made in fostering

entrepreneurship at SMU during their time overseeing the Incubator@SMU. Following the transition of the Incubator to the Office of Research and Innovation, Jennifer and Camille will continue to promote best practices that facilitate Undergraduate Research and Capstone Projects such as the Engaged Learning Fellowship and Engaged Learning Starter Award. They will also continue to provide infrastructure and support for Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) and maintain operations for Undergraduate Research Assistantships, the Summer Research Intensive, and the Journal of Undergraduate Research. Finally, they will continue to support the Mustang Mentors program and Clinton Global Initiative University (CGIU).

## Key leadership searches underway or completed

### Data Science Institute Director

Last week, I [appointed a search committee](#) for SMU's inaugural Peter O'Donnell Jr. Director of the Data Science Institute with plans to fill the position by the end of the spring 2023 semester. Suku Nair, Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer, has agreed to chair 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.

### Lyle School of Engineering Dean

On January 11, 2023, SMU [announced](#) Nader Jalili as the next dean of the Lyle School of Engineering effective March 1, 2023. Dr Jalili joins SMU from the University of Alabama, where he has been Professor and Department Head in Mechanical Engineering since 2018.

## News and Noteworthy

### Honoring MLK's historic visit to SMU

It's hidden history for most people that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke at SMU in 1966. The University will honor that seminal moment in SMU history and unveil a Texas Historical Commission marker at a special event at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 21, at McFarlin Auditorium. The evening will feature music; remarks by SMU President R. Gerald Turner, Dallas Mayor Eric Johnson, the Rev. Richie Butler and students, past and present, who helped make the historical marker a reality. This event is open to everyone and admission is complimentary. Please register [here](#) or see the infographic below for more details.



**Preserving  
the Moment**

Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s historic visit to SMU in 1966

**Tuesday, February 21, 2023, 6:30 p.m.**  
MCFARLIN AUDITORIUM • SMU CAMPUS

Complimentary admission, registration required

**SMU**

[smu.edu/plaquededication](https://smu.edu/plaquededication)

## SMU's Meadows Museum names a new director

This week, [SMU announced](#) that it has named Amanda W. Dotseth as the next Linda P. and William A. Custard Director of the Meadows Museum. Dotseth, who will be the first female Director of the Meadows Museum, served as the Director *ad interim* and Curator of the Museum since the passing of its previous director, [Mark A. Roglán](#), in 2021.

## SMU hosts Austin Symposium of Molecular and Structural Dynamics (ASMD)

Beginning today and continuing through Monday, February 20, SMU will be hosting the 28<sup>th</sup> ASMD conference. SMU's Computational and Theoretical Chemistry Group (CATCO) organizes this annual conference, and we are pleased to have the group's proceedings on our campus this year for the first time. My thanks to Dr. Elfi Kraka, Professor and Chair of Dedman College's Department of Chemistry, for her leadership overseeing this high-profile international event.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth G. Loba, PhD

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Southern Methodist University

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

**World Changers Shaped Here**