

Weekly Update | October 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, 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 provost@smu.edu. Previous newsletters are available [here](#).

You may notice a structure change in today's newsletter. After more than three years, and in response to feedback from readers, we have changed the newsletter's outline this week to align with our priority areas. Thus, today's update falls into four categories: 1) Fall 2023, 2) Academic Excellence (with a heavy focus on outcomes across the complete student lifecycle), 3) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 4) Inclusive Excellence.

We hope this change can provide even greater visibility into academic affairs at SMU, and thank you for your ongoing interest and support.

Fall 2023

Fall Executive Board meeting recaps

Meadows School of the Arts

On Tuesday, I joined President Turner and Sam Holland, Algur H. Meadows Dean, for the Meadows School of the Arts' 2023 Executive Board meeting. During my remarks, I reviewed SMU's undergraduate and graduate enrollment outcomes for fall 2023, updated board members on the 2024 *US News and World Report* rankings outcomes, and announced Neena Imam's appointment as the inaugural Peter O'Donnell, Jr. Director of the O'Donnell Data Science and Research Computing Institute.

Perkins School of Theology

On Wednesday, I joined President Turner for the Perkins School of Theology's Executive Board meeting. My remarks included undergraduate and graduate enrollment outcomes for fall 2023, Perkins' proposals to expand offerings in Dallas, Houston and beyond through the online modality, and announced Neena Imam's appointment as the inaugural Peter O'Donnell, Jr. Director of the O'Donnell Data Science and Research Computing Institute.

October Faculty Senate meeting

I attended Wednesday's Faculty Senate meeting and shared information about data we use as we plan faculty hiring and provided an update on my meeting last week with Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) provosts now that we will be joining the ACC on July 1, 2024. I came away from that meeting encouraged by the resources the ACC provides both to support academics and to promote academic collaborations between member schools. I will share more information in my remarks during the 2024 Spring General Faculty meeting.

Call for applications: Scott-Hawkins Lecture Fund

On Monday, the Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute (DCII) sent out a call for applications to utilize the Scott-Hawkins Lecture Fund for Spring 2024 events.

DCII is interested in proposals for speakers or events that can appeal to a broad interdisciplinary audience of students and faculty. Please [submit proposals here](#) before the Friday, October 20, 2023 deadline.

Questions about the fund or the application process should be addressed to Dr. Scott Norris, Interim Director of the Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute, at snorris@smu.edu.

University Testing Center closed for Fall Break

The [University Testing Center](#) (UTC) will be closed on Monday, October 9, and Tuesday, October 10, for Fall Break. Testing will resume on Thursday, October 12.

The UTC, located in Clements Hall, provides service to our students, instructors, evaluators, and community partners. The UTC adheres to the [National College Testing Association's](#) (NCTA) Professional Standards and Guidelines, ensuring every assessment experience results in a fair and equitable outcome, and is certified by the NCTA.

Enhancing safety measures: New door lock installation update

SMU Aware [sent an email](#) on Tuesday to the SMU community about enhancing campus safety with new manual door locks in classrooms and related workspaces. These new door locks can be locked from the inside without a key to empower students, faculty, staff and guests in the event of an emergency. [Instructions on how to work the new device can be found here](#).

Facilities Management is coordinating the lock installation process with designated building managers to minimize disruption to classrooms and offices.

We appreciate your cooperation and understanding as we work to fortify SMU's safety measures. Thank you for your commitment to a safe and secure campus environment.

Academic Excellence

Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies' graduate students selected for Cold War Archives Research (CWAR) Fellowship

Graduate students Emma Armstrong and Rashida Shafiq have been selected for the prestigious [Cold War Archives Research \(CWAR\) Fellowship](#) for the 2023-2024 academic year. The fellowship is provided by the CWAR Institute at the Wilson Center in Washington, D.C. to train the next generation of cold war historians in archival research methods.

Congratulations, Emma and Rashida, on this significant accomplishment.

Cohort 2 “Data Science for Social Good” students invited to present at Southern Demographic Association

During summer 2023, the Office of Engaged Learning and the O'Donnell Data Science and Research Computing Institute welcomed 12 students from across the country to participate in SMU's second annual “Data Science for Social Good” program. The program was funded by a National Science Foundation (NSF) “Research Experiences for Undergraduates” (REU) grant.

Students engaged in a two-week data science boot camp, formed teams to tackle research projects, and concluded their experience by competing in the “Three Minute Thesis” competition. Students of the program have been invited to present their work at the [Southern Demographic Association](#) annual meeting in San Antonio, October 18-20, 2023.

Thank you to the faculty and staff who worked together to make this experience possible. Learn about each of the program's [faculty/staff members and how they supported this program here](#).

SMU celebrates 75 years of pro bono legal clinics in Dallas

[Dedman School of Law celebrated the 75th anniversary of its law clinics](#) this past week with various events throughout “Clinic Week,” including a keynote lecture by the president of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) Deborah N. Archer. The law clinics provide legal services for those in our community who cannot afford a lawyer and provide law students with what is typically their first experience working with a client. Throughout this week, law students have been given hours of pro bono legal services under the supervision of their faculty supervisors.

Mary Spector, Associate Dean for Experiential Learning, and Jason P. Nance, Judge James Noel Dean of Dedman School of Law, have co-authored an [op-ed that was published in the Dallas Morning News](#) to commemorate Dedman Law's 75 years of offering clinics that generate experiential student learning outcomes and provide care for our community.

Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

Reminder: Call for proposals – University Research Council (URC) Travel and Research Grant

Proposals for the University Research Council's (URC) Research and Travel Grant Program for AY 2023 – 2024 are due by 5 p.m. on October 11, 2023. The URC will be accepting proposals from full-time research-active faculty, both tenure track and teaching/professional (non-tenure track), as well as faculty emeriti. Two proposals will be selected to receive grant funding. Travel grants may be awarded up to \$10,000 and research grants may be awarded up to \$15,000.

Additional information is available in the [original announcement](#) and on [the URC website](#). Please contact LaGail Davis in the Office of Research and Innovation at lagail@smu.edu if you have questions.

Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences anthropologist researches the roles climate and human land use play in Pacific Island wildfires past and present

Professor Christopher Roos from the Department of Anthropology in Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences has published his latest research in the journal [Nature Ecology and Evolution](#), which shows that Fiji grassland fires predate human settlement by thousands of years and therefore climate is an undervalued part of the equation. While human-driven activity can result in wildfires, climate activity, such as lightning strikes can also be a key contributor.

Read more about [Professor Roos' research experience here](#), and click [here](#) to read his published paper.

Lyle School of Engineering faculty member working with transportation nonprofit Feonix Mobility Rising and other universities to research and improve health disparities in Dallas and Detroit

Professor Janille Smith-Colin from the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering in the Lyle School of Engineering is part of a team that has just received a \$6 million award from the [National Institutes of Health \(NIH\) ComPASS](#) program to improve health disparities in the major metropolitan areas of Dallas and Detroit.

Through this grant, led by non-profit [Feonix - Mobility Rising](#), Smith-Colin and colleagues from Texas A&M, the University of Michigan and Michigan State University are investigating whether improved transportation in both cities can lead to better health outcomes for people with chronic medical conditions, especially women with high-risk pregnancies.

Learn more about the [Dallas/Detroit program and associated research here](#).

A new chapter for the Southwest Review (SwR)

The [Southwest Review](#), SMU's quarterly literary magazine founded in 1915, is looking forward to ushering in a new chapter as they prepare for their centennial. Under the direction of Greg Brownderville, editor-in-chief of *Southwest Review* and professor in Dedman College of Humanities and Science's Department of English, the magazine will launch *Frontera*, an arts and cultural festival, in Dallas on April 12–13, 2024.

The festival will feature an international lineup – a hemisphere-spanning mix of U.S. and Latin American writers and artists – who have previously appeared in *Southwest Review*. On the evening of Saturday, April 13, *they will host* author Barry Gifford, a long-time contributor to the magazine, for

a screening of David Lynch's adaptation of his novel *Wild at Heart*. Additionally, the magazine is working with Gifford to publish a book featuring his art.

This is an exciting time for the *Southwest Review*, and I am grateful for its heritage and look forward to what the team will be able to accomplish in the years ahead.

Inclusive Excellence

National Book Award author and activist to speak at the SMU Gilbert Lecture Series

National Book Award author, mental health and LGBTQ+ activist, Andrew Solomon, will be speaking at October's installment of the Gilbert Lecture Series. Dr. Solomon is a professor of psychology at Columbia University Medical Center and former President of [PEN American Center](#). His best-seller, *Far from the Tree: Parents, Children, and the Search for Identity*, won the National Book Critics Circle Award and has become a documentary film. His memoir, *The Noonday Demon: An Atlas of Depression*, won the National Book Award. Solomon holds a Ph.D. in Psychology from Cambridge University, an M.A. in English from Cambridge, and a B.A. from Yale. He writes regularly for *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Travel & Leisure* and many other publications.

The Gilbert Lecture Series October lecture will be held on Thursday, October 12, 2023, at McCord Auditorium in Dallas Hall. The event will start with a reception at 4:30 p.m. with the lecture and book signing to follow at 5 p.m.

New Provost Faculty Fellow for Equity and Inclusion

I am pleased to welcome Francesca Go, Assistant Department Chair, Director of Assessment and Accreditation and Associate Professor in the Department of Teaching & Learning at Simmons School of Education and Human Development, to our current cohort of Provost Faculty Fellows. As a fellow, Dr. Go will be focused on Equity and Inclusion. She will support initiatives this year such as the rollout of new promotion guidelines for teaching and professional faculty, workshops with the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity, and gathering faculty input on issues related to inclusive excellence.

Congratulations, Dr. Go, and welcome to the Office of the Provost.

Sincerely,



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Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Southern Methodist University
<https://www.smu.edu/provost>

World Changers Shaped Here