

Weekly Update | April 26, 2024

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 [submit your ideas through this form](#). Suggestions received before noon on Tuesday will be reviewed and considered for publication in that week's Friday newsletter. Others will be held until the following week. Previous newsletters are available [here](#).

Today's update falls into four categories: 1) Spring 2024, 2) Academic Excellence, 3) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 4) News and Noteworthy.

Spring 2024

Recap: Executive Board Meetings

This week, I had three opportunities to provide Academic Affairs updates to school executive boards – one to members of the Simmons School of Education and Human Development Executive Board, one to members of the Dedman School of Law Executive Board, and one to the Lyle School of Engineering Executive Board.

Simmons School of Education and Human Development Executive Board

On Tuesday, April 23, I met with the Simmons School of Education and Human Development Executive Board and presented two information items. The first topic was SMU's fall 2024 enrollment projections, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, with a particular focus on strategic growth in graduate enrollments and the contributions of the Simmons School. I concluded with updates on the search for our next Elisabeth Martin Armstrong dean of Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences.

Dedman School of Law Executive Board

On Wednesday, April 24, I met with the Dedman School of Law Executive Board and presented similar items with a focus on the law school's contributions to graduate enrollments.

Lyle School of Engineering Executive Board

This morning, I met with the Lyle School of Engineering Executive Board and presented similar items tailored to the engineering school.

Farewell reception for Tom DiPiero, inaugural Elisabeth Martin Armstrong of Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences

On Tuesday, April 23, President Turner and I joined with community members to honor the career and legacy of Tom DiPiero, the inaugural Elisabeth Martin Armstrong Dean of Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences.

As of May 31, after 10 years of service, Dean DiPiero will conclude his deanship. SMU and Dedman College have benefited greatly from his leadership, and his contributions will be remembered, and missed, for years to come. Please join me in thanking Dean DiPiero for his commitment to the University and congratulating him on a job well done.

Preparing for spring semester's end and close of academic year

As the spring semester and academic year approach their close, I would like to bring several important dates to your attention.

- Tuesday, April 30, will be the last day of classes. Please note that classes on this day will follow a Friday class schedule.
- Wednesday, May 1, will be a reading day with no classes or exams scheduled.
- Thursday–Wednesday, May 2–8 will be examination days, although no examinations will be scheduled on Sunday, May 5.

Please note that grades are due 72 hours after the final exam for each course section and should be posted to my.smu.edu. For example, if you teach three different sections, you will have three different due dates. Each section has its own 72-hour deadline.

Even when using end-of-term assessments other than exams, final grades are due 72 hours after the time the final exam would have been administered. [Check the final exam schedule here.](#)

Passover holiday

The Passover holiday, celebrated by the Jewish community, takes place this year on April 22–30. April 23–24 and April 29–30 are observed as holy days, during which observants typically are unable to attend class or go to work. Faculty may receive requests for excused absences on April 23, 24, 29, and 30, and we ask for your consideration for our Jewish students.

Hilltop Excellence Awards

Last Friday, April 19, the annual [Hilltop Excellence Awards](#) recognized outstanding members of the SMU community. Each spring, the Division of Student Affairs hosts the awards ceremony and distributes awards to students, faculty, staff, trustees, and volunteers, who have been nominated by their peers, colleagues, professors, and mentors.

Congratulations to this year's award nominees and winners – your contributions make our campus a vibrant center of discovery, learning, and service. Thank you to Student Affairs for hosting these awards and ensuring we take time to recognize some of our most exemplary and inspiring people.

[View a recording of the event here.](#)

Academic Development of Student-Athletes (ADSA) send second academic feedback request

The Academic Development of Student-Athletes (ADSA) program at SMU is committed to collaborating with faculty to ensure student-athlete success. To achieve this goal, ADSA solicits feedback twice per semester by directly emailing faculty who have student-athletes currently enrolled in their courses. Feedback requests are emailed from ADSA@smu.edu. Through this collaborative process, ADSA aims to provide early intervention and support for student-athletes facing academic challenges.

Thank you to our faculty for your continued partnership with SMU, through ADSA, in supporting student-athlete success.

Student Academic Engagement and Success to host feedback and listening sessions regarding Honors Convocation and other Celebration of Excellence week activities

Student Academic Engagement and Success (SAES) has scheduled three feedback and listening sessions throughout the summer to hear from faculty and campus partners about Honors Convocation and other Celebration of Excellence week activities. SAES invites SMU faculty and staff who are involved in year-end academic activities to attend and provide feedback on the successes and challenges of different aspects of these events. Many of these academic events provide celebration and tradition for our participating students and SAES values your perspective on ensuring these events are enjoyable for all. SAES wishes to thank all those who are involved in making these significant events happen and all those who are able to make time to attend one of the sessions.

Session One: In-person

Date: May 21

Time: 4–5 p.m.

[Registration link for session one](#)

Session Two: Zoom

Date: June 13

Time: 3:30–4:30 p.m.

[Registration link for session two](#)

Session Three: Zoom

Date: July 25

Time: 11 a.m.–12 p.m.

[Registration link for session three](#)

Academic Excellence

Two undergraduate students receive the Department of Defense's Boren Scholarship

Funded by the U.S. Department of Defense's National Security Education Program, the [Boren Scholarship](#) cultivates the next generation of national security leaders by providing scholarships of up to \$25,000 for 12-52 weeks of [critical language study](#) in an immersive environment abroad. Recipients agree to work for the federal government for at least one year in return for their scholarship.

Erik Jahveed (EJ) Rorem will travel to Dushanbe, Tajikistan for the 2024-2025 academic year to continue his study of Persian. He is majoring in political science and statistics and is a member of the Dedman Scholars Program, Tower Scholars Program, and University Honors Program. He also holds the SMU record for the number of U.S. Department of State Critical Language Scholarship awards at three.

Simon Saberon, a second-year business analytics and supply chain major and U.S. Army ROTC cadet, will spend the fall 2024 semester in Taiwan furthering his knowledge of Chinese. As a testament to his dedication, Simon has already completed the requirements for his Chinese minor. Simon's trip next semester will build on previous immersive experiences in Taiwan sponsored by the [Department of Defense's Project GO](#). He was also selected as a recipient of this year's [Critical Language Scholarship](#).

Undergraduate students seeking to learn more about Boren and other awards for international study, research, and travel should contact Dr. Brandon Gray Miller (bgmiller@smu.edu), assistant dean for University Honors Program and Fellowships.

Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

Maguire Chair Symposium to be held on May 2

Professor Steve Long, Cary M. Maguire University Professor of Ethics, invites the SMU community to attend the upcoming [Maguire Chair Symposium](#) on Thursday, May 2, from 5–7 p.m. in The Great Hall of the Elizabeth Perkins Prothro Hall building.

This year's symposium, The Uses of Idolatry, will be delivered by Dr. William T. Cavanaugh, professor of Catholic Studies and director of the Center for World Catholicism and Intercultural Theology at DePaul University. To register for this free and open event, [please click here](#).

Reminder: Faculty Research Acceleration Grants application deadline

Applications for the O'Donnell Data Science and Research Computing Institute's (ODSRCI) Faculty Research Acceleration Grants are due on May 3, 2024, at 5 p.m. Applications should include confidential letter(s) of support written by the applicant's department chair(s) along with a [completed proposal template](#) and be submitted to Dr. Neena Imam, Peter O'Donnell, Jr. director of the ODSRCI, at nimam@smu.edu by the deadline.

More details about the grant and [proposal submissions details are available here](#).

Reminder: Call for applications for Associate Vice Provost for Research

On April 10, [I sent a message](#) to faculty calling for nominations and applications for an associate vice provost for research (AVPR). The AVPR will work closely with the vice provost for research and chief innovation officer (VPR/CIO) and the Office of Research and Innovation (ORI) team on a variety of initiatives related to sponsored projects, research integrity, compliance, and technology transfer and commercialization. They will support activities to promote research and grant writing, organize regular meetings with SMU's associate deans, and organize principal investigator meetings.

All SMU tenured faculty at the rank of professor who have demonstrated success in research and external funding are eligible to apply or be nominated. Applications and nomination letters should be submitted to my office via email to Daniel Eady (deady@smu.edu) no later than May 3, 2024.

News and Noteworthy

Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences faculty member wins Distinguished Book Award

Research Assistant Professor Lecturer Andrea Laurent-Simpson in the Department of Sociology at Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences has won the 2023 [Distinguished Book Award from the American Sociological Association's Section on Animals and Society](#). Her winning book, *Just Like Family: How Companion Animals Joined the Household*, was published by the New York University Press in 2021.

Lyle School of Engineering featured as April's cover story in Higher Education Digest

The [Higher Education Digest](#) featured Lyle School of Engineering as their cover story for April's issue. The story was a six-page spread about the Lyle School and the innovations the school has underway.

Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute's (DCII) Ninth Annual Faculty Book Fest

The DCII is hosting the annual Faculty Book Fest. This event celebrates SMU faculty and staff who published books in the 2023 calendar year.

The event will be held in the Dallas Hall Rotunda on May 1, from 4–5 p.m. Refreshments will be provided, and signed books will be raffled to attendees. [RSVP here](#).

Congratulations to our faculty and staff who published books last year.

SMU's Office of Engaged Learning Honors Student Research and Faculty Mentors

Last week, during SMU's [Celebration of Excellence Week](#), the Office of Engaged Learning hosted its annual Undergraduate Research Luncheon to commend undergraduate students' research and creative inquiry achievements and the faculty members who have supported these endeavors over the past year. Professor Jessie Marshall Zarazaga, director of the Sustainability + Development Program and the Initiative for Spatial Literacy (GIS@SMU) in the Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering at Lyle School of Engineering, and Professor Mark Allen, senior lecturer and creative program director in the Division of Advertising at the Meadows School of the Arts were

honored with the Excellence in Mentoring award for their unwavering commitment to the educational and professional growth of their undergraduate students.

CIA Director participates in roundtable discussion with SMU students

Last Thursday, 15 SMU undergraduates and 15 SMU graduate students had the opportunity to engage with William J. Burns, Director of the CIA, in a roundtable discussion. The discussion was moderated by Matthew Wilson, associate professor of political science, and David Kramer, executive director of the George W. Bush Institute, was also present. The discussion took place in the Jamie Gilmer Williams Reading Room in Frances Anne Moody Hall. Topics included the role of the CIA in American intelligence-gathering, advice for careers in intelligence, and democracy and conflicts abroad. Director Burns was visiting the SMU campus as the keynote speaker for the [Forum on Leadership](#) at the George W. Bush Presidential Center.

Sincerely,



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

