

## Weekly Update | February 2, 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 send your ideas to this [email address](#). 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 three categories: 1) Spring 2024, 2) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 3) News and Noteworthy.

## Spring 2024

### **Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 budget meetings underway**

FY 25 budget deliberations resumed with a key meeting this week. On Thursday, the deans and I met with representatives from the President's and Vice President's Offices to review and discuss FY 25 budget requests for the entire university. Central to Academic Affairs' FY 25 budget is a recalibration and reallocation of a series of three-year investments approved in FY 24 to support our research excellence and academic excellence initiatives. We will provide additional updates in future newsletters.

### **Meeting recap: Annual meeting of the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Collective**

Today, Chief Diversity Officer Maria Dixon Hall hosted the annual meeting of the AAPI Collective and invited me to provide updates on topics occurring since the group's previous meeting, including: hiring progress for the Urban Research faculty cluster hire, SMU's efforts to develop more inclusive

curricular assignments, retention rates for both SMU's AAPI and first-generation students, and SMU's strategies to recruit AAPI students.

### **Recommendation Letter Writing Workshop**

Faculty are invited to join the Moody School Fellowships Office and the Office of Faculty Success for a recommendation letter writing workshop this upcoming Monday, February 5, at 10 a.m. in Frances Anne Moody Hall, room 241. This session features information on writing recommendation letters for graduate students, writing recommendation letters for colleagues, and using AI to draft recommendation letters. Faculty will walk away with information about the best practices in letter writing and support tools.

Register for the workshop [here](#).

### **Materials from Graduate Student Success Day**

Thank you to everyone who participated in SMU's annual Graduate Student Success Day, which was hosted by Dean Robin Poston and the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies on Monday, January 29. The event included a talk by special guest [Dr. Lillian Eby](#), distinguished research professor and chair of the Industrial-Organizational Psychology Program at the University of Georgia, on research-driven best practices in graduate mentoring. Dr. Paige Ware, Associate Provost for Faculty Success, moderated a faculty panel on helping graduate students persist to graduation. For those who were unable to attend, a [Box folder with a recording of Dr. Eby's talk and PowerPoint presentations](#) from all sessions is available with SMU log-in credentials.

### **Staying safe during Flu-season**

Influenza (flu) is on the rise at SMU and the surrounding county. The number of flu cases and other respiratory illnesses at the Dr. Bob Smith Health Center has skyrocketed over the past two weeks. Please take preventive actions that can protect you and others from circulating influenza viruses. This includes washing your hands often, avoiding close contact with individuals who are sick, and getting vaccinated.

This season's flu vaccine is well-matched to the viruses that are most common and should offer good protection from severe illness. The Dr. Bob Smith Health Center provides flu shots at no charge to the campus community and no appointment is necessary.

If you do experience flu-like symptoms or test positive for the flu, please prioritize your well-being by staying home. Students should refrain from attending classes until their fever temperature drops below 100.5 degrees for at least 24 hours.

### **Outstanding Graduate Student Instruction Award nominations now open**

To support graduate students who wish to pursue teaching, SMU allows a select number to gain teaching experience during their Ph.D. by instructing laboratory sections and co-instructing classes with experienced faculty. To recognize the graduate student instructors' and teaching assistants' contributions to the teaching of SMU undergraduates, the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies and the Office of Student Academic Engagement and Success sponsors the Outstanding Graduate Student Instruction Awards. The Moody School presents two of these awards annually, each including a \$1,000 prize. In recognition of the very different ways graduate students can contribute to the teaching of SMU undergraduates, one award is granted to a graduate student whose primary teaching experience has been as a course's instructor of record, and one award is

granted to a graduate student whose primary experience has been as a teaching assistant, lab instructor, or similar role.

Both departments and programs, including independent programs, may nominate one graduate student for consideration each year. [Nominations should be submitted here](#) by the department chair or graduate program director by Friday, February 16.

Questions can be directed to Dr. Alan Itkin at [aitkin@smu.edu](mailto:aitkin@smu.edu), Senior Assistant Dean of Moody School.

## Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

### Universities Research Association (URA) hosted Annual Council of Presidents Meeting

This week I attended the Universities Research Association's (URA) Annual Council of Presidents Meeting and Policy Forum in Washington D.C. on behalf of President Turner. The URA is an academic consortium that focuses on federal laboratories and laboratories operating on federal projects, and the annual gathering allows the opportunity to discuss how universities can propel the U.S. forward to achieve our national aspirations. I particularly enjoyed the opportunity to hear from U.S. House Representative Bill Foster and Eric Lin, CHIPS Research and Development Program Interim Director, and to contemplate key learnings for SMU's Texoma Semiconductor Tech Hub.

### Lyle School of Engineering faculty member awarded grant from U.S. Air Force to address quantum computer cybersecurity risks

Professor Klyne Smith from the Department of Computer Science at Lyle School of Engineering and security company, [SENTRIQS](#), have been awarded a [\\$110,000 grant](#) from the [U.S. Air Force](#) to address cybersecurity challenges posed by quantum computers. SENTRIQS, which offers cybersecurity solutions that protect against quantum-powered attacks, has created an ultra-secure, highly efficient messaging and collaboration platform that delivers quantum-safe communications for businesses and government organizations. Professor Smith will provide valuable industry insights to research and identify potential military use cases for the SENTRIOS technology, along with introductions to military prime contractors who have an interest in participating in future Small Business Technology Transfer projects.

### SMU Human Trafficking Data Research (HTDR) Project researchers partnered with University College Dublin to publish new research

A team of researchers from SMU, including Yuhyeong Jang, Raanju R. Sundararajan and Elizabeth Wheaton-Paramo, and Wagner Barreto-Souza from the University College Dublin used data from SMU's Human Trafficking Data Warehouse to [conduct research that was recently published](#) in the [Empirical Economics](#) journal. The team used count time series regression modeling to explain the effects of economic factors on federal sex trafficking-related convictions in the U.S. This paper adds to the growing body of research being done within the ground-breaking [SMU Human Trafficking Data Research \(HTDR\) Project](#). Research being done through the HTDR project will support law enforcement agencies, researchers and policymakers in ending human trafficking in the U.S.

## News and Noteworthy

### Associate Dean at the Simmons School of Education and Human Development invited to serve on Board on Science Education committee for PreK-12 STEM Education Innovations

Associate Dean for Research and Outreach at Simmons School of Education and Human Development, Anthony Petrosino, has recently been invited and has accepted the invitation to serve as a member of the [Board on Science Education committee on PreK-12 STEM Education Innovations](#). This board is a part of the [National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine](#) and seeks to identify and understand any “research gaps or factors that impede or facilitate widespread implementation of new initiatives at local, regional, and national levels.”

Dr. Petrosino’s board appointment will last until April 2025.

### Lyle School of Engineering dean honored with Diamond Award

Dean Nader Jalili, inaugural Mary and Richard Templeton Dean at Lyle School of Engineering won a Diamond Award for Academic Excellence in Education Leadership and Community Engagement at the [Not Alone Foundation’s annual gala](#) in Atlanta, GA this past weekend.

For the past 28 years, Dean Jalili has dedicated himself to instilling a passion for learning and innovation within young scholars from all backgrounds. In receiving the Diamond Award, Dean Jalili emphasized the importance of collaboration and called for a dedication to the values of equality, inclusive excellence, and human rights for shaping the future of education and inspiring the leaders of tomorrow.

### Poets & Quants names SMU undergraduate one of 2023’s Most Disruptive Business School Startups

[Jude Lugo](#), a junior at SMU’s Cox School of Business, has been named one of 2023’s Most Disruptive Business School Startups by [Poets & Quants for Undergrads](#) for his app [LectureLogger](#). His user-friendly app leverages QR code technology to support classroom attendance taking and the gathering of critical attendance data that will support students’ wellness and retention. Lugo initially gained funding for his project through the Office of Engaged Learning’s Big iDeas Pitch Competition.

### Perkins School of Theology professor publishes latest book of poetry

Perkins School of Theology professor Harold “Hal” J. Recinos has published his latest book of poetry [The Place across the River](#) in January 2024 through [Wipf and Stock Publishers](#). His collection of poems “addresses defective systems of culture, politics, religion, and social relationship with poetic discourse reflecting the predicament of the abandoned and rejected whose voices carry little social power.” *The Place across the River* has already received praise from other authors and reviewers.

### Dedman College English professor’s creative projects receive national coverage

Greg Brownderville, professor in Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences’ Department of English had his most recent creative projects [Fire Bones](#) and [Beekeeper Spaceman](#) featured in a

new episode of the [Arts & Letters podcast](#). [Feedspot](#) ranks Arts & Letters in the top ten social science podcasts in the world.

Congratulations to the many individuals highlighted this week for their accomplishments!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth G. Loba', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

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

**SMU.**

**World Changers Shaped Here**