

## Weekly Update | March 8, 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 two opportunities to provide Academic Affairs updates – one to members of the Perkins School of Theology Executive Board and one to members of the Meadows School of the Arts Executive Board.

#### *Perkins Executive Board*

On Wednesday, March 6, I met with the Perkins School of Theology Executive Board and presented three information items. The first topic was SMU's February 29 submission of our Texoma Semiconductor Tech Hub proposals totaling \$73.4 million – the largest grant submission in SMU's history – to the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). I concluded with updates on our two current dean searches, 1) Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences and 2) Perkins School of Theology. Additional information on these searches can be found in the "Academic Excellence" section below.

#### *Meadows Executive Board*

On Thursday, March 7, I met with the Meadows School of the Arts Executive Board and presented three topics. I began with an update on SMU's Texoma Semiconductor Tech Hub proposal

submissions. Second, I gave a faculty hiring update, emphasizing our ability through this year's 76 active searches to increase SMU's full-time faculty headcount to near-record pre-pandemic levels. I closed with an update on the Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences dean search, details of which can be found in the "Academic Excellence" section below.

### **Recap: Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Budget Meeting**

After months of deliberations, the FY 2025 budget process concluded on Tuesday, and I have now shared the status of all FY 2025 budget requests with my leadership team. Pending the Board of Trustees' approval in May, these changes will go into effect on June 1, 2024.

Beginning in FY 2024, Academic Affairs transitioned into a three-year (FY 2024, FY 2025, FY 2026) budget cycle and we have maintained a three-year budget outlook this year (FY 2025, FY 2026, FY 2027). Approvals, however, are only for the current fiscal year, FY 2025. Having future-year budget estimates allows for greater planning and the strategic ability to pivot investments as needed in future years. My thanks to the deans and associate provosts for their hard work developing and maintaining Academic Affairs' three-year budget prospectus.

### **2023 Provost Report published**

I am pleased to announce that the 2023 edition of the Provost Report, *Transformative*, is currently [available online](#). Each calendar year, I compile a report featuring some of the most important and strategic academic affairs news. This report focuses on our four priority areas 1) Academic Excellence, 2) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, 3) 2016 – 2025 Strategic Plan and 4) Inclusive Excellence, highlighting the progress we have made in each area during the 2023 calendar year. Be sure to print out a copy of the 2023 report's cover page and use your phone to scan the QR code for an interactive and immersive experience!

### **Weekly Update newsletter electronic submission form now available**

To simplify and streamline story submissions to the Weekly Update newsletter, my office has developed an [electronic submission form](#), hosted through Qualtrics, that will help requestors submit the information needed to ensure timely and accurate content. A link to this short form will be available in the intro of each newsletter, as well as online on the [Provost Communications](#) webpage.

If you have any questions, please contact Beryl Hellinghausen at [mhellinghaus@smu.edu](mailto:mhellinghaus@smu.edu).

### **Important dates: Spring Break**

As a reminder, next week, March 11-15, is spring break for SMU students. Students will return to campus and resume their regular schedules on Monday, March 18. For those able to take some time away next week, I wish you a safe and relaxing break.

## **Academic Excellence**

### **Update: Perkins School of Theology dean search**

In this week's Perkins Executive Board meeting, I shared the news that the search committee will be narrowing the applicant pool down to a minimum of three finalists over the next few weeks in order to conduct on-campus interviews in April. Hugo Magallanes, associate dean for academic affairs, will

become Perkins dean *ad interim* on June 1 at the conclusion of Bishop McKee's appointment on May 31.

My thanks to the search committee for their steadfast commitment to filling this strategic leadership position.

### **Update: Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences dean search**

The search committee for the next Elisabeth Martin Armstrong Dean of Dedman College held their first meeting yesterday, March 7. In that meeting, I charged the group and answered preliminary questions.

Committee Chair Robin Poston, dean of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies and associate provost for Graduate Education and C.V. O'Boyle, our executive search consultant met with Dedman College stakeholders over the past three days to inform the position description that will guide our search.

Be on the lookout for additional information in subsequent newsletters.

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

### **Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences faculty member releases new novel**

Professor Samantha Mabry, lecturer in Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences' Department of English published her fourth novel for young adults, [Clever Creatures of the Night](#). The novel was released on Tuesday, March 5, by the Algonquin Young Readers imprint of Hachette Book Group.

There will be an official launch event at [Interabang Books](#) on Wednesday, March 13, at 6 p.m., where Professor Mabry will be in conversation with Vanessa Quilantan, a music and culture writer for the [Dallas Observer](#).

## **News and Noteworthy**

### **Department of Education Policy and Leadership chair selected as American Council on Education Fellow for 2024-2025**

The [American Council on Education](#) (ACE) announced that Michael Harris, Ed.D., professor and chair of the Department of Education Policy and Leadership at Simmons School of Education and Human Development and Faculty Senate president has been named an [ACE Fellow](#) for the 2024-2025 academic year. Professor Harris was nominated for the fellow program by senior administration at SMU.

Fellows spend their academic year immersed in the study and practice of leadership through placements at other higher education institutions along with retreats, interactive and virtual learning opportunities, and observation of senior officers at host institutions. After their year-long fellowship,

fellows will return to their home institutions with new knowledge, skills and a network of peers across the country and abroad.

### **SMU Tech CxO Excellence Program's first cohort gets press from local Dallas news outlet**

SMU Tech CxO Excellence Program, created in partnership with the Tech CxO Launchpad and SMU Continuing and Professional Education (CAPE), began its first class this February. The four-month program offers a curriculum focused on leadership, cybersecurity and financial planning designed for students ready to move into C-level positions. Local media outlet, [Dallas Innovates](#) recently covered the new program in a glowing piece lauding the program's innovative curriculum.

Sincerely,



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

