

SMU

Office of
the Provost



Transformative



2023 PROVOST REPORT



To guide us in reaching our goals, my primary areas of focus through 2025 remain:

- **Academic excellence**, which for SMU means a focus on student outcomes at every step in the journey: recruit, retain, graduate and employ.
- Research and scholarly/creative excellence, most notably by achieving and sustaining **Research One status** as measured by the Carnegie Classification system.
- Meeting the remaining goals for academics in the **2016–2025 Strategic Plan**.
- Implementing and supporting **inclusive excellence initiatives** to be true to our belief that “every Mustang is valued.”



Scan the QR code on the cover with the camera on your phone or mobile device to activate the WebAR (web-based augmented reality) app. Once you’ve launched the app simply point your camera at the cover of this report for a transformative 4D experience!

“SMU’s lofty aspirations for even greater academic quality continue their transformation from exciting plans to inspirational reality. In this 2023 Provost Report, I am pleased to share the great progress we have made over the past year and to provide a glimpse of what lies ahead.”

Reaching our goals will complete SMU’s transformation into a premier research and teaching university with impact, which began in 1959 with the creation of our first Ph.D. program in economics.

As you will see throughout this year’s report, SMU’s progress toward enhanced academic quality occurred in all three of our key domains – students, faculty and staff. In terms of our students, the demand for an SMU degree remains very strong. We continue to recruit a broad range of the highest achieving students at near-record levels and from increasingly diverse backgrounds who intend to change the world around them. This year’s strong and sizable class of incoming faculty was shaped to align with, and complement,

areas of established strength within SMU’s accomplished faculty. And, new hires to academic leadership positions are providing fresh ideas in complementary fashion with our high-performing team. Time and again over the past year, these gains have been affirmed and supported, in transformational ways, by SMU’s generous donors, most notably through *SMU Ignited*, our University’s \$1.5 billion capital campaign.

This report is organized around these four priorities. The content that follows is a representative illustration of the ways that working together to achieve our goals for greater academic quality will continue to transform us.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth G. Lobo".

Elizabeth G. Lobo
Provost and Vice President
for Academic Affairs



SMU leads the Texoma Semiconductor Tech Hub

Core to SMU's research excellence strategy is the ability to convene interdisciplinary research teams – fueled by our investments in data science and supercomputing – to address complex societal challenges. The Texoma Semiconductor Tech Hub, an SMU-led proposal developed by a 41-member consortium of industry, venture capital, university, educational and government entities, is only the most recent example of what “research with impact” can look like for SMU.

On October 23, President Biden announced the designation of 31 regional tech hubs across the country out of nearly 400 applications. Our proposal, to enhance the Southern Oklahoma/North Texas (Texoma) semiconductor ecosystem by establishing the Texoma Semiconductor Tech Hub, was the only submission in Texas to receive tech hub designation and was one of only 11 tech hubs to qualify for a tech hub strategy development grant.

In short, the Texoma Semiconductor Tech Hub will:

- Establish a series of agile fabrication labs (fablets) across the 29 counties in the Texoma region to design, build and test semiconductors.
- Leverage our region's established supply chain infrastructure to serve as a semiconductor distribution hub for the entire country.
- Tap into industry partnerships and investments, in the form of venture capital, to spark further innovation that will result in new – and profitable – intellectual property.
- Develop commercialization councils to link entrepreneurs, venture capitalists and industry representatives throughout the value chain.
- Create new workforce development opportunities around this emerging technology that are informed and responsive to industry's evolving workforce requirements.



SMU presence in Pegasus Park

SMU is expanding its opportunities for collaboration in innovative biotech research by joining Pegasus Park, a 23-acre mixed-use office campus for biotech firms and nonprofit organizations within minutes of downtown Dallas and the UT Southwestern Medical District. SMU will have next-generation office and laboratory space to host faculty researchers from a wide array of disciplines – including biology, chemistry, computer science, engineering, education and business.

Top North Texas healthcare facilities and several nonprofit organizations – including UT Southwestern, Health Wildcatters and the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) – have already secured space at Pegasus Park. Researchers from other universities, industry experts, and entrepreneurs and venture capitalists located on the campus offer opportunities ripe for collaboration.

Faculty who utilize SMU’s space at Pegasus Park will participate in research, development and entrepreneurial activities under the SMU Institute for Computational Biosciences at Pegasus Park. Multiple SMU centers will work under the institute, including the Center for Drug Discovery, Design, and Delivery, the planned Center for Computational Genomics, the AI Institute for Precision Health and the Center for Metaverse Immersive Technologies for Health Sciences.

Additionally, SMU’s state-of-the-art high-performance computing system will be connected to Pegasus Park through a 100-gigabyte fiber link, extending big data capabilities within the biotech ecosystem.



ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Our first priority area is academic excellence with a focus on improving SMU’s ability to recruit, retain, graduate and employ a broad and diverse range of outstanding students.

We have experienced very high enrollment in fall 2023 for the fourth year in a row, with a total population of nearly 12,000 students (7,127 undergraduate; 4,727 graduate). However, we recognize that recruiting outstanding students is only the first step in an academic journey.

At SMU, we are reimagining support structures – from recruitment through employment – that reflect our dedication to outcomes. To achieve the outcomes our students and their families expect requires a commitment to results across the entire student life cycle. What follows are some of the most encouraging outcomes we were able to report this past year:

Recruit



- Exceeded 16,000 applications for the second year in a row and fifth consecutive year of increase.
- Incoming first year class sustained average HS GPA above 3.7 and 32 average ACT score
- 13% Pell eligible (a 44% increase since 2020).
- Law school LSAT median record-setting 164.

Retain



- 2 percentage point increase for Pell students first year retention.
- 8 percentage point increase for first-year students identifying from two or more races.
- 2 percentage point increase for students in academic communities.

Graduate



- Improved six-year graduation rate by nearly one basis point.
- Improved Pell student four-year graduation rates by 4 percentage points and six-year graduation rates by 2 percentage points.
- Improved first-gen four-year graduation rates by 2 percentage points.
- 14% increase in Ph.D. conferrals in 2023.
- 10% increase in all doctorate conferrals in 2023.

Employ



- 93% of SMU’s graduate students and 85% of undergraduates were employed, enrolled in additional education, pursuing military service or volunteering within six months of graduation. (Knowledge rate = 80%)
- Median starting salary for graduate students: \$85,000. (Maximum = \$700,000)
- Median starting salary for undergraduate students: \$70,000. (Maximum = \$200,000)



“SMU’s Common Curriculum gives students, like myself, the opportunity to take an interdisciplinary approach in our education. The professors from my Human Rights, Spanish, and Educational Studies degrees have helped me link materials through the varying classes and apply them to real-world issues. The University’s approach to learning set me up for a full-time position at an extremely competitive investment banking firm despite not having a business degree.”

“Enriching is the word best suited to describe my SMU experience. It has not only helped me grow, but it has also equipped me with tools with which I can approach my future goals in writing and publishing effectively.”

Guadalupe Roman knows firsthand the power of outcomes to help her reach her goals. A senior majoring in human rights and a member of the University Honors Program, Guadalupe has already landed a job with Goldman Sachs post-graduation.

The same is true for Seth Villa, whose grit and determination have allowed him to pursue his studies despite significant challenges. Seth took a year off as a sophomore to get a full-time job in support of his family. A University Scholar studying English, Seth has applied to leading programs to pursue his Ph.D. in English post-graduation.



A focus on outcomes at every step of the journey.

SMU’s focus on outcomes drives us to recruit the best and the brightest students. Outcomes drive our strategy to retain and graduate these students. But SMU’s commitment to outcomes doesn’t end at commencement. We, and our students, understand that the ultimate value of an SMU degree rests with the employment opportunities unlocked by each student’s academic journey.

NADER JALILI

Mary and Richard Templeton Dean of the Lyle School of Engineering

On March 1, 2023, Nader Jalili joined SMU as the inaugural Mary and Richard Templeton Dean of the Lyle School of Engineering.

Jalili came to SMU from the University of Alabama, where he served as professor and head of the mechanical engineering department for four years. While at the University of Alabama, Jalili led a significant increase in external research awards and enrollment as well as the creation of the Alabama Initiative on Manufacturing Development and Education, designed to better prepare future highly skilled workers through a convergence of education, research and service.

Over the course of a stellar research and teaching career, he has been the recipient of more than 30 international, national and institutional awards for his research, leadership, teaching and service.

In his research, Jalili has been principal investigator (PI) or co-PI on more than \$17 million in external funding, including grants from the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Department of Defense in the domain of vibration, control and robotic-based manufacturing. He is the author or co-author of more than 350 peer-reviewed technical publications, including 135 journal papers, two textbooks, five book chapters and two U.S. patents.

Jalili is also serving as a fellow of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, where he has chaired numerous society committees and edited several engineering academic journals.

We look forward to Jalili's work at the Lyle School, which is already benefiting from his innovative leadership that brings resources of engineering education and research to undergraduate and graduate students, industry partners and community outreach programs.

As part of their investment in the Lyle School, the Templetons allocated \$15 million to support engineering education and research, providing endowment and operational support for strategic initiatives such as postdoctoral fellowships and research and financial assistance for doctoral and undergraduate students.

An additional \$5 million was allotted to endow and name the school's dean position, in which Jalili serves. With the naming of the Lyle School's dean position, SMU now has donor-supported deans in all of its eight degree-granting schools.

The Templetons' gift also created the new Mary and Richard Templeton Engineering Excellence Program, aligning with the strategic initiatives of the Lyle School. The program includes support for:

- Postdoctoral fellowships to increase the school's research capacity and output, supporting the University's rise into the category of universities with the highest research activity.
- Scholarships for doctoral candidates who boost research and become the next generation of engineering leaders and problem solvers.
- Undergraduate scholarships that enable SMU to attract the brightest engineering students and meet more of their financial need so students graduate in a timely manner.
- Research support for initiatives that show substantial promise to become sponsored projects.
- Mary and Richard Templeton Centennial Chair in Electrical Engineering, which supports an outstanding faculty member and researcher who designs sophisticated technology.



The Lyle School of Engineering aspires to increase its long-standing premier status in the region and to raise its national profile. Lyle has a dedicated executive board, faculty and staff who have for years fostered a culture of engineering excellence and innovation. Under Dean Jalili's leadership, we are well positioned to advance Lyle's reputation both within the academy and industry and to expand our impact in line with SMU's aspirations for even greater academic excellence.



2022 was a historic year for SMU faculty in terms of research productivity as measured by awards and expenditures. And 2023 has demonstrated our ability to sustain and expand on last year's outstanding accomplishments. To highlight a few key accomplishments from the 2022–2023 academic year:

- External research expenditures showed a 38% year-over-year increase and was also 36% higher than our previous three-year average.
- For the second year in a row, faculty from all of SMU's academic units received a research award this year.

Augmenting SMU's research impact through faculty cluster hires:

Taking the recommendation of faculty-led task forces and working in consultation with the deans, SMU advertised a data science cluster hire consisting of 12 faculty positions in fall 2022. Nine of these new faculty joined SMU's ranks this fall, supplementing our continually expanding core of existing data science faculty from across the University to position SMU for even greater impact in the years to come.

SMU-led consortia receives national Tech Hub designation from Biden-Harris administration

As noted previously in this report, in October, the Biden-Harris administration, through the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA), announced the designation of 31 Tech Hubs in regions across the country. This is the first phase of the new Tech Hubs program, which is an economic development initiative designed to drive

regional innovation and job creation by strengthening a region's capacity to manufacture, commercialize and deploy technology that will advance American competitiveness. The program invests directly in burgeoning, high-potential U.S. regions and aims to transform them into globally competitive innovation centers.

The SMU-led proposal for a Texoma Semiconductor Tech Hub, developed and endorsed by a 41-member consortium of colleges, universities, researchers and government, received official Tech Hub designation on a Zoom call with the White House.

This is an incredible validation of SMU's aspirations – and recent investments in infrastructure, faculty and staff – to develop a big data ecosystem, supported by next-generation technology to engage the disciplines across campus in the pursuit of research with impact.

Wins of this magnitude align with SMU's aspirations to be the region's premier research university and galvanize support in our quest for R1 status. And what makes this so special is that we are pursuing these research goals with SMU's spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship.



Together, the O'Donnell Data Science and Research Computing Institute and the Lyle School's Initiative for Digital Innovation in Engineering and Computer Science will elevate SMU's standing as a premier global research institution. They will foster collaboration with peer institutions and national partners and provide SMU students with dynamic opportunities to study in several specialized fields. Additionally, the O'Donnell Institute and the Initiative for Digital Innovation will help SMU attract, support and retain outstanding faculty who conduct significant interdisciplinary research.

Major research investments to further our impact

In August, SMU announced a \$30 million gift from the O'Donnell Foundation to endow SMU's Data Science and Research Computing Institute and the Lyle School of Engineering's Initiative for Digital Innovation.

The gift includes endowment and operational gifts in two areas:

- \$15 million for the O'Donnell Data Science and Research Computing Institute, which launched in 2020 and serves as the hub for students and researchers across the campus and community who access the SMU supercomputing system and data science resources. The gift will provide endowment and operational funding for:
 - Technology and hardware that will be used by faculty across the University.
 - Seed funding for faculty who employ data science approaches and show promise of securing long-term external funding.
 - Two endowed professorships that will each provide two years of support for faculty in a wide variety of disciplines.
 - An endowed associate director position to manage the institute's internal operations and enable the Peter O'Donnell, Jr. Director to focus on building interdisciplinary initiatives and external research partnerships that employ data science methods.
- \$15 million for the Initiative for Digital Innovation in Engineering and Computer Science in the Lyle School of Engineering, which will further strengthen interdisciplinary research and teaching across engineering fields. Operational and endowment support will go to:
 - Three endowed positions for department chairs, the first such positions in the history of SMU:
 - Mechanical engineering.
 - Computer science.
 - Electrical and computer engineering.
 - Four additional endowed professorships.
 - Support for Ph.D. students and postdocs who will contribute to research projects led by the endowed faculty.

NEENA IMAM

Peter O'Donnell, Jr. Director of the O'Donnell Data Science and Research Computing Institute (DSRCI)

On October 9, 2023, Neena Imam became the inaugural Peter O'Donnell, Jr. Director of the O'Donnell Data Science and Research Computing Institute. SMU launched a national search for the Peter O'Donnell, Jr. Director and was able to attract a pool of exceptional candidates – thanks in particular to two transformational gifts from the O'Donnell Foundation that have been used to endow this leadership position (\$2 million) and the operating funding for this institute (\$15 million).

Imam comes to SMU from NVIDIA, the accelerated computing leader that invented the GPU, where she served as director of strategic research engagement (North and Latin Americas). At NVIDIA, she led teams of academic researchers to enable the development of GPU-accelerated and artificial intelligence and machine learning (AI/ML) applications.

Imam started her career at Oak Ridge National Laboratory after earning her doctoral degree in electrical engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology. She served as a distinguished research scientist and later as the deputy director of research collaboration, computing and computational sciences at the laboratory for more than 20 years. During this time, she authored and co-authored more than 90 scientific publications focusing on high-performance computing as well as next-generation microelectronics and Post-Moore computing.

From 2010 to 2012, Imam served as the Science and Technology Fellow for U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander in Washington, D.C., assisting the senator in the reauthorization of the America COMPETES Act intended to promote U.S. competitiveness in STEM fields. She also assisted in the introduction of the first exascale computing legislation (S. 3459).

A senior member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), Imam has been an IEEE officer for multiple years and is the founding chair of the Accelerated Scalable Computing and Analytics chapter of the Association for Computing Machinery.

The Peter O'Donnell, Jr. Director is a key University position that will greatly impact and support SMU's commitment to data-focused education and next-generation computational research. With Imam leading the O'Donnell Data Science and Research Computing Institute, we know that SMU is well positioned to grow our big data, artificial intelligence and machine learning ecosystem, allowing the University to further our goal of conducting research with world-changing impact.



Neena Imam brings an exemplary depth of skills and experiences to SMU at a time of tremendous momentum around data science, high-performance computing and artificial intelligence. We look forward to her leadership and partnership in our quest for even greater academic and research excellence.



Like the preceding two five-year plans (1996–2000 and 2001–2005) and the 10-year plan (2006–2015), our 2016–2025 Strategic Plan: Launching SMU’s Second Century is grounded in the vision and values embodied in SMU’s Master Plan of 1963.

To enhance the fundamental strengths of the University – faculty, staff, students and the resources for instruction, research and service – SMU has implemented many major advances during the past 20 years, led by its strategic plans. These plans have guided two major gift campaigns, *The Campaign for SMU: A Time to Lead* (1997–2002) and *SMU Unbridled: The Second Century Campaign* (2008–2015), and now serve to guide the \$1.5 billion *SMU Ignited: Boldly Shaping Tomorrow* capital campaign which launched on September 17, 2021.

These campaigns provided crucial enhancements to the entire campus, including new buildings and endowments for scholarships, academic programs, faculty positions and the campus experience. These fundraising successes have also generated great momentum for SMU’s distinction as a global institution growing in quality and impact. This year marked major milestones and advancements in three of SMU’s schools as well as our library system.

Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies

SMU celebrated the dedication of Frances Anne Moody Hall, the new home of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies, on September 15, 2023. The 44,000-square-foot, three-story building – named for SMU trustee and Moody Foundation Chairman and Executive Director Frances Anne Moody-Dahlberg ’92 – provides valuable resources for SMU graduate students, who comprise more than 40% of the student body. Moody Hall and the Moody School are supported by a \$100 million gift from the Moody Foundation – the largest gift in SMU history.



Moody Hall has been designed to serve the modern pedagogy that is part of the vision for the Moody School. It provides state-of-the-art seminar and classrooms, as well as collaborative and quiet spaces for graduate research, writing and study. In addition to offices for the Moody School leadership, Moody Hall houses the SMU Office of Research and Innovation.

Update on the Cox School of Business renovations

On May 6, 2022, SMU broke ground on the two-year \$140 million renovation project for the Cox School of Business. Now, more than a year later, SMU is excited to see how far the project has come and that the project is still scheduled to complete on time in May 2024.

This planned renovation and expansion will allow the Cox School of Business to further its goals and scope, sparking new developments and taking on new challenges to place it prominently and competitively on the world stage. These new and updated facilities will foster education excellence and



Moody Hall and the Moody School are supported by a \$100 million gift from the Moody Foundation – the largest gift in SMU history.

SMU celebrated the dedication of Frances Anne Moody Hall, the new home of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies, on September 15, 2023.

collaboration among students and faculty, allowing Cox to continue to compete with the highest-level business schools in the nation.

The Cox School renovation and expansion was made possible by SMU's generous donors, including David B. Miller '72, '73, Carolyn L. Miller and The David B. Miller Family Foundation. The Millers have made a \$50 million commitment to SMU, half of which was earmarked for the Cox School project. This was, at the time of receipt, the largest alumni gift in the history of the University and a historic commitment to the Cox School.

Meadows School of the Arts

G. Marlyne Sexton Institute for Musical Theatre

Philanthropist and Broadway producer G. Marlyne Sexton has made a \$15 million gift to SMU Meadows School of the Arts to create a specialization in musical theatre that will prepare graduates for a lifetime of leading roles. The gift provides endowments for both the new G. Marlyne Sexton Institute for Musical Theatre and the G. Marlyne Sexton Director of Musical Theatre – and operating funds that enabled their work to begin during this 2023–2024 academic year.

The Sexton Institute for Musical Theatre will provide an education in one of the most popular and distinctly American forms of performance art. Musical theatre students enrolled in the program will participate in cutting-edge productions and gain valuable training and expertise from internationally recognized faculty and performers. The institute will offer one of the few comprehensive training programs for performers and technicians available in a vibrant United States city. Students will be able to obtain a BFA in theatre with a specialization in musical theatre, in addition to existing concentrations in acting and theatre studies.

The endowment support for the Sexton Director of Musical Theatre will enable SMU to hire a dedicated leader who will shepherd the creation of the curriculum and all facets of the competitive musical theatre program.

Rees-Jones Library of the American West

SMU is the recipient of a major gift from Jan and Trevor D. Rees-Jones '78. The couple is giving a significant portion of the expansive Rees-Jones Collection consisting of thousands of items – including rare books, manuscripts, maps, photographs and ephemera – and \$30 million to create the Rees-Jones Library of the American West and endow the library and its collections.



Cox renovations – SMU broke ground on a \$140 million renovation and expansion project designed to train students for a collaborative and technologically integrated world.

With a diverse array of thousands of works created as early as the 17th century, the Rees-Jones Collection features everything from the rarest first editions to quotidian examples of ephemera, including:

- Nearly all the major color plate folios published on the trans-Mississippi West during the 19th century.
- Albums of masterworks by pioneering photographers.
- Many unique and highly significant manuscript maps, as well as landmark sheet maps, atlases and foldout maps in books.
- Correspondence and documents from major historic figures.

This gift will strengthen the University's reputation as a vital place for education and research related to the American West now standing among leading institutions with special collections devoted to the history of the American West, such as the University of California at Berkeley and Yale University. In addition to the related American history holdings in the SMU DeGolyer Library, the Rees-Jones Collection will build on the University's long-standing excellence in research, teaching and cultural appreciation of the American West benefiting other academic departments across the University, such as the William P. Clements Center for Southwest Studies and the Clements Department of History. Both include faculty and students who study issues related to the development of the southwestern United States, borderland issues such as immigration and the contributions of the American Southwest to the American economy.

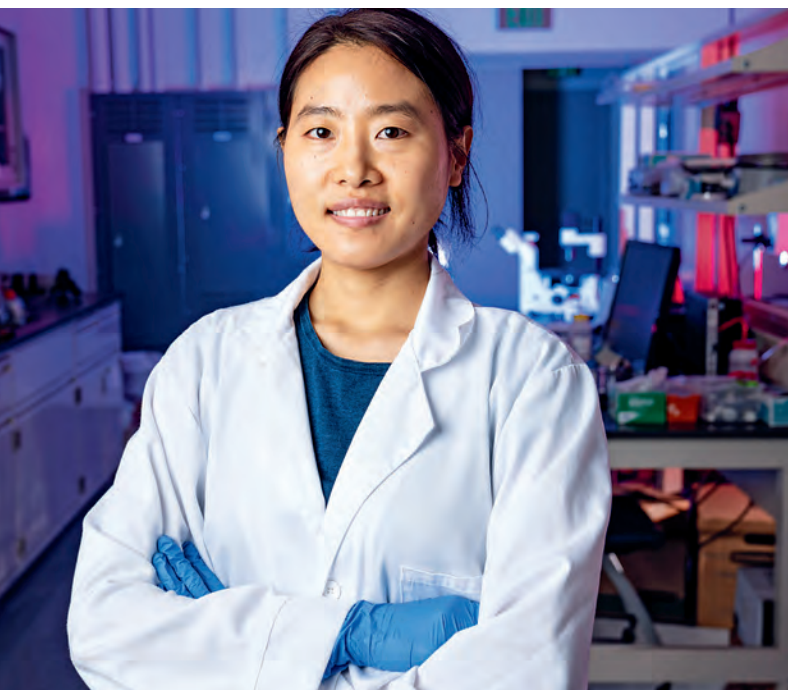


Designed as a hub for innovative interaction, Frances Anne Moody Hall boasts cutting-edge technology, interdisciplinary spaces, as well as offices, conference rooms and study rooms to facilitate faculty-to-student collaboration as well as student-to-student collaboration, allowing for a seamless fusion of teaching, learning and research.



INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE INITIATIVES

The initiatives that support SMU’s inclusive excellence goals echo many of those listed above, particularly in the areas of academic excellence and research excellence, but with a focus toward recruiting, retaining and developing faculty and students from underrepresented populations.



Academic excellence:

Spotlight/feature on Khengdauliu Chawang '24, Ph.D. student in the Lyle School of Engineering

SMU graduate student Khengdauliu Chawang has developed a miniature pH sensor that can tell when food has spoiled in real time. The flexible pH sensor is only 2 millimeters in length and 10 millimeters wide, making it possible to incorporate the sensor into current food packaging methods, such as plastic

wrapping. Industries typically use much bulkier meters – roughly 1 inch long by 5 inches tall – to measure pH levels, so they are not suitable to be included in every package of food to monitor its freshness.

Roughly 1.3 billion metric tons of food produced around the world go uneaten every year, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Nearly 40% of food – approximately 150 billion meals – is wasted in the United States, according to Feeding America estimates.

Creating the device was personal for Chawang, an electrical and computer engineering graduate student who is originally from Nagaland, a remote region in India where the population relies heavily on agricultural crops.

“Food waste in Nagaland means undernourished children and extra fieldwork for the elderly to compensate for the loss,” Chawang said. “The need to prevent food waste motivated me to think of a device that is not expensive or labor-intensive to develop, is disposable and can detect freshness levels.”

The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers’ (IEEE) Big Ideas competition at the 2022 IEEE Sensors Conference honored Chawang with the Best Women-owned Business Pitch for her invention, which she built with the support of J.-C. Chiao, the Mary and Richard Templeton Centennial Chair and professor in the Lyle School’s Electrical and Computer Engineering Department.



Faculty spotlight:

**Janille Smith-Colin, Assistant Professor
of Civil and Environmental Engineering,
Lyle School of Engineering**

Janille Smith-Colin's research advances equity, sustainability and resilience with a specific focus on transportation systems planning and analysis. Her research group uses systems modeling and spatial analysis tools for planning and designing socially sustainable and resilient infrastructure, equity-based analysis of emerging transportation technologies, and research on transportation as a social determinant of health.



Faculty recruiting:

Urban research faculty cluster hire

Acting upon the recommendations of the Urban Research Cluster Task Force, SMU has launched eight faculty searches in fall 2023 to establish an urban research faculty cluster at SMU. Urban research involves systematically studying various aspects of urban environments, drawing upon fields such as urban planning, public policy, sociology, geography, economics, health sciences and more to address societal challenges.

This multi-faculty hire is the University's fourth cluster in recent years and contributes to SMU's ambitious program to develop large-scale collaborative projects in response to some of humankind's most daunting issues. This new and exciting

cluster is in addition to recent cluster hires in Earth Hazards and National Security (fall 2021), Technology-Enhanced Immersive Learning (fall 2021), and Data Science (fall 2022).

SMU's new urban research faculty cluster offers opportunities for rich interdisciplinary connections among new and existing SMU faculty. The cluster fosters research on cities and urbanization from local and global perspectives. SMU's location in DFW, the fourth largest metropolitan area in the country, is an ideal setting for studying the opportunities and inequities that individuals, groups and communities confront as they navigate and shape urban life.

16%

16% growth in full-time faculty of color

11%

11% growth in tenure/tenure-track faculty of color



The implementation of robust and leading-class search processes has augmented SMU's ability to attract diverse faculty in the last two years. Between 2021 and 2023, the total number of SMU faculty of color has grown 16% across all full-time faculty and 11% across tenured/tenure-track faculty. We hope that exciting opportunities, such as SMU's Urban Research Cluster, will continue to increase faculty diversity.

CONCLUSION

SMU continues to make steady advances toward its goal of becoming a premier research university with global impact.

Over the course of President R. Gerald Turner's nearly 30 years of leadership, our University has seen a remarkable rise in undergraduate quality, multiple incredibly successful fundraising campaigns, an expanding research footprint, and the development and implementation of an ambitious 2016–2025 Strategic Plan – in which many of the goals and objectives link directly to the steps required for SMU to reach our full potential.

In September 2021, SMU launched the \$1.5 billion *SMU Ignited* campaign and, at the time of publication, we have received more than \$1.2 billion in commitments. Through *SMU Ignited*, we will have a unique opportunity to see our lofty goals come to fruition.

Fiscal stewardship and the implementation of three-year strategic budgeting have enabled SMU to begin making some of the major investments needed to accomplish our goals for even greater academic excellence. This fall's search for 76 faculty and nearly 40 postdocs is indicative of the significant academic investments planned for the years ahead.

Thanks to the hard work of my leadership team of deans and associate provosts, and our dedicated faculty and staff, SMU is well positioned and reaching its goals for even greater academic quality. I look forward to the years ahead as we continue to refine and implement the plans that will propel SMU even higher.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth G. Lobo
Provost and Vice President
for Academic Affairs

SMU invited to join the ACC in 2024

The goal of SMU Athletics has been to reestablish it as a nationally recognized and relevant program that aligns seamlessly with our outstanding academic reputation.

In early September, we proudly accepted an invitation to join the Atlantic Coast Conference, one of the best in the nation.

This move to the ACC impacts the entire University as conferences bring together institutions with similar academic standards, research strengths and athletic excellence.

Starting in 2024–25, we will foster collaborations, share resources and engage in meaningful partnerships with top-ranked institutions in the conference, such as Stanford University, Duke University, UC Berkeley and the University of Virginia.



“ One of SMU’s longstanding goals has been to re-establish our intercollegiate athletic program to national prominence in a way that aligns seamlessly with our academic reputation and priorities. In September, SMU proudly accepted an invitation to join the Atlantic Coast Conference, one of the best in the nation. Starting in 2024, we will foster collaborations, share resources, engage in friendly competition (both on and off the field), and generate meaningful partnerships with top-ranked ACC institutions, private and public. Joining the ACC is an historic milestone in our institution’s history, the start of a new chapter in SMU Athletics, and affirms our current trajectory toward premier status amongst higher education institutions. ”

R. Gerald Turner — *SMU President*

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