Dear Colleagues:

As the autumn 2016 semester draws to a close, I wish to share with the campus community an update on developments in the Office of the Provost (Academic Affairs) during the past year. Periodically, I will send similar updates, akin to an occasional newsletter, to provide information on planning, appointments, projects, and policies.

On a Personal Note

When the opportunity to serve as your Provost arose, I considered it as not simply a job, but a calling to embrace! It is an honor and privilege to serve SMU. Having joined SMU in January 2016, I am deeply grateful to each of you, including the Provost search committee and Faculty Senate, for helping me feel welcomed during this first exciting year. My wife, Cheyenne, is also indebted to the SMU community for helping her transition to Dallas be both warm and welcoming.

I thank President Turner for bringing me into SMU’s leadership team, and I am keen to work in concert with him to advance SMU to ever increasing levels of excellence. Harold Stanley, formerly Provost ad interim and now Vice President for Executive Affairs, was gracious in helping me with the transition to my new role, as well as being a resource on many matters critical to the academic life of this great University. Professor Linda Eads, former Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs, offered sage advice and judgment. Fellow Vice Presidents have also been extremely supportive and informative. SMU’s nine Deans are energetic and innovative leaders of their units. I’ve been deeply touched by the spirit of collegiality with which they
work with each other and with me.

One of the great strengths of our University is the close-knit community that exists among faculty, staff, students, trustees, alumni, and friends. Of the five universities where I have served previously, SMU has the strongest and most cohesive community. Recently, President Turner and I have reaffirmed our commitment to the shared values that form the fabric of the SMU community, which allow us to simultaneously embrace freedom of expression and sensitivity to the unique perspectives of each person affiliated with our University. Along those lines, much of my energy as Provost is focused on ensuring that the SMU community fosters a stimulating and inclusive environment for faculty and a student experience that shapes each person’s intellectual, social, cultural, spiritual, and physical capabilities. Those are themes that I emphasized in my remarks at the 2016 Convocation entitled “A Letter to the Class of 2020” (http://www.smu.edu/Provost/Pages/AboutProvost).

Listening Tour

On 20 January 2016, I delivered an address to SMU’s General Faculty Meeting emphasizing the “auspicious” future of our University (see: http://www.smu.edu/Provost/Pages/AboutProvost). Having now been at SMU for nearly one year, I believe more than ever in the auspiciousness of SMU because I have had the privilege of meeting you during my “listening” visits to each college, school, library, and several centers/institutes. To be an even more constructive partner for all of you, I endeavored to educate myself about SMU by spending over 80 face-to-face hours visiting your facilities and meeting with faculty, staff, and students. I have been inspired by the brilliance of our faculty members’ world-class scholarship and creative activity, dedication to teaching excellence for both undergraduates and graduate students, and generous service rendered to SMU, professional associations, non-profit organizations, government, and business.

As an update, following are key developments in the Office of the Provost since January 2016.

Appointments

Several existing positions in the Provost’s Office have come available due to individuals retiring or departing from SMU. The following appointments involve replacing incumbents, not adding new additional positions. The appointments are listed below in chronological order of announcement.

Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management

In February, I announced Wes Waggoner as SMU’s new Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management. (Wes filled the position vacated by the departure of Stephanie Dupaul.) Based on an
international search, Wes is the ideal leader to take SMU forward into the future regarding recruitment of an even more diverse, and ever-stronger academic student body. Read more at: https://www.smu.edu/News/2016/wes-waggoner-22feb2016

Dean of Perkins School of Theology

A comprehensive search led to the appointment of Professor Craig Hill as Dean of the Perkins School of Theology. Previously, Craig was executive director of the Doctor of Ministry and Master of Christian Practice programs at Duke Divinity School and held church positions such as director of Christian Education at First United Methodist Church, Meriden, Connecticut. Read more at: https://www.smu.edu/News/2016/perkins-new-dean-14april2016

Dean of Simmons School of Education and Human Development ad interim

Professor Paige Ware, former chair of the Department of Teaching and Learning in the Simmons School of Education and Human Development was appointed as the Dean ad interim of the Simmons School. Paige also served as director of the Simmons School’s Ph.D. program. Read more at: https://www.smu.edu/News/2016/simmons-interim-dean-25april2016

Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs

I believe that faculty members are the lifeblood of our University. Therefore, there are perhaps no more important decisions made in Academic Affairs than those involving faculty recruiting, development, promotion, and tenure. During spring of 2016, we oversaw 30 promotion and tenure cases. My partner in this process was Associate Provost Linda Eads, who in summer of 2016, retired to return to teaching in Dedman School of Law after several years of extraordinary service as Associate Provost.

Professor Doug Reinelt was named as our new Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs. His leadership is informed by his experience as a long-time chair of the Department of Mathematics in Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences. Doug has held a variety of other leadership positions on campus including, most recently, President of the Faculty Senate. Read more at: https://www.smu.edu/News/2016/douglas-reinelt-named-smu-associate-provost-14june2016

Assistant Provost for Strategic Initiatives and Director of Student Retention ad interim

Ebonii Nelson was appointed as Assistant Provost for Strategic Initiatives and Director of Student Retention ad interim (Tony Tillman held the position previously). In her duties as Assistant Provost, Ebonii will further propel SMU’s initiatives focused on student success,
retention and outreach to at-risk students. Read more at: 

The following two appointments were for new positions: (1) Provost’s Senior Advisor for Campus Cultural Intelligence Initiatives, which is a temporary part-time role to provide leadership for SMU’s diversity and inclusion programs and (2) the Associate Provost for Curricular Innovation and Policy, which is a campus-wide role overseeing curricular matters.

**Provost’s Senior Advisor for Campus Cultural Intelligence Initiatives**

Professor Maria Dixon Hall of the Meadows School of the Arts has been appointed as the Provost’s Senior Advisor for Campus Cultural Intelligence Initiatives. Maria will have strategic oversight of an emerging initiative designed to cultivate a campus culture that equips our faculty, staff, and students to effectively engage today’s culturally complex world. Her leadership is key to SMU’s efforts to promote diversity and inclusion. Read more at: https://www.smu.edu/News/2016/maria-dixon-hall-22july2016

**Associate Provost for Curricular Innovation and Policy**

Professor Peter Moore, an advocate for liberal studies, was named as Associate Provost for Curricular Innovation and Policy. Peter’s experience at SMU includes serving as department chair in Mathematics and twice as Dean ad interim of Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences. His most recent SMU experience includes serving as Associate Dean for General Education in Dedman College. Peter will serve as the Chair of the Educational Policy Committee and Academic Program Evaluation Committee. Read more at: https://www.smu.edu/News/2016/peter-moore-28sept2016

**Faculty Hiring, Promotion, and Tenure**

Forty-five permanent, full-time faculty were hired during 2015-2016, including six professors, two associate professors, 16 assistant professors, and 21 non-tenure track faculty. Senior faculty were formerly at institutions such as University of Illinois – Urbana Champaign, University of Minnesota, Drexel University, Hofstra University, and Lehigh University. Among the new faculty hires, there are 56% females, 44% males, and 29% from under-represented minorities (7% Black or African American, 11% Hispanic, and 11% Asian). In 2016, there were 12 newly tenured professors (promoted to associate or full professor), including 83% males and 17% females and 33% under-represented minorities (18% Black or African American, 8% Hispanic, and 8% Asian). Six tenured professors were promoted to full professor, including 33% males and 67% females, 50% of whom
were under-represented minorities (50% Asians).

Task Forces

General Education Review Task Force

In response to a Faculty Senate resolution passed in January 2016, the General Education Review Task Force was formed to: (1) complete a study of the University Curriculum (UC), both UC-2012 and UC-2016 and (2) formulate recommendations for improvements. The Task Force is ably co-chaired by Associate Provost Peter Moore and Professor Mickey Quiñones of the Cox School of Business. We expect that approval by appropriate SMU deliberative bodies (e.g., Faculty Senate, SMU faculty, Board of Trustees) will be completed no later than 31 May 2018, in time for the new curriculum to be launched no later than the autumn of 2020. Read more at: https://www.smu.edu/Provost/Pages/Default/AboutOffice/Committees

Task Force on Scholarly Research and Creative Impact

In October, I invited 17 SMU faculty members to serve on the Task Force on Scholarly Research and Creative Impact. Chaired by Professor Fred Chang of the Lyle School of Engineering and co-chaired by Professor Pia Vogel of Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, the task force will provide vital faculty-led guidance by recommending ways for SMU to strengthen its scholarly research and creative activities to advance the University’s position as the leading global research university in North Texas. Read more at: https://www.smu.edu/News/2016/research-task-force-16nov2016

New Web Site for the Provost’s Office

You are invited to visit the upgraded and updated web site for the Provost’s Office. We will continue to update and refresh this site so that it is helpful to our academic community: http://www.smu.edu/Provost/Pages/Default

Again, thank you for your support and incredibly warm welcome to the SMU community. I wish you and your family happiness, health, and peace during this Holiday Season.

Sincerely,

Steven C. Currall, Ph.D.
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
David B. Miller Endowed Professor
Professor of Management and Organization
Professor of Psychology
Professor of Engineering Management, Information, and Systems