



SMU

Steven C. Currall

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Office of the Provost

21 October 2016

TO: Amit Basu, Carr P. Collins Chair in MIS, Professor and Chair, Information Technology and Operations Management, Cox School of Business
Mark Chancey, Professor of Religious Studies, Dedman College
Fred Chang, Director of the Darwin Deason Institute for Cyber Security, Bobby B. Lyle Endowed Centennial Distinguished Chair in Cyber Security, and Professor in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering
Nathan Cortez, Adelfa Botello Callejo Endowed Professor of Law in Leadership and Latino Studies, and Associate Dean for Research, Dedman School of Law
Andrew Graybill, Co-director of the William P. Clements Center for Southwest Studies, and Professor and Chair, Clements Department of History, Dedman College
Randall Griffin, University Distinguished Professor and Professor of Art History, Meadows School of the Arts
Thomas Hagstrom, Professor of Mathematics, Dedman College
Leanne Ketterlin Geller, Professor, Texas Instruments Endowed Chair in Education, Director of Research in Mathematics Education and Director K-12 STEM Initiatives, Caruth Institute for Engineering Education, Simmons School of Education and Human Development
Zhong Lu, Shuler-Foscue Chair in Geophysics and Professor of Earth Sciences, Dedman College
Duncan MacFarlane, Associate Dean for Engineering Entrepreneurship, Bobby B. Lyle Centennial Chair in Engineering Entrepreneurship, and Professor of Electrical Engineering, Lyle School of Engineering
David Meltzer, Henderson-Morrison Professor of Prehistory in Anthropology, Dedman College
Daniel Millimet, Professor of Economics, Dedman College
Sukumaran Nair, University Distinguished Professor, and Professor and Chair of Computer Science and Engineering, Lyle School of Engineering
Evelyn Parker, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Susanna Wesley Centennial Professor of Practical Theology, Perkins School of Theology
Ryszard Stroynowski, Professor of Physics, Dedman College
Nick Tsarevsky, Associate Professor of Chemistry, Dedman College
Pia Vogel, Professor of Biological Sciences, Dedman College

FROM: Steven C. Currall, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

RE: Revised Charge to Provost's Task Force on Scholarly Research and Creative Impact

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the Task Force on Scholarly Research and Creative Impact. Your important work will influence the future of our university for decades to come.

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The first goal of SMU's *Second Century Strategic Plan, 2015-2025*, is to "Enhance the Academic Quality and Stature of the University." The University's scholarly research and creative impact constitute the foundation of the University's academic quality and stature.

SMU aims to cement its position as the leading global research university for the North Texas region. As the most highly-ranked university in the region, we are currently positioned like no other institution to fulfill that role. Without a doubt, our biggest challenge is to dramatically expand our research footprint. SMU must also be a stronger catalyst for regional economic prosperity. Leveraging our existing strengths (e.g., high performance computing, interdisciplinarity), SMU has a window of opportunity during the next several years to further establish our position as the leading global research university in the region. If we do not seize that opportunity now, another university in the region will do so.

What do we mean when we refer to "scholarly research and creative impact?" Impact is defined in terms of *awareness* among, and *influence* on, the University's stakeholders such as members of the academic community (e.g., administrators, professors), funding agencies (federal and state), governmental leaders (legislators and regulators), sources of philanthropic support (foundations and individuals), members of the business community, current and prospective students, and alumni.

Awareness of SMU research and creative activity is generated by: (1) articles in academic journals and proceedings, (2) books, (3) presentations or speeches at conferences and/or workshops, (4) creative works in the visual or performing arts, and (5) career success of our alumni, visiting faculty, and post-docs. Awareness is further evinced by, for example, faculty and alumni major awards (e.g., Nobel Prize, National Academies, fellowships in learned societies), research output metrics such as citation counts of SMU publications, and media coverage.

Influence of SMU research and creative activity involves changing the perceptions, decisions, and actions of members of stakeholder groups. Influence occurs when SMU research and creative activity changes, for example: (1) federal or foundation research funding decisions, (2) public policy and/or regulatory decisions, (3) artistic trends or genres, (4) technical and/or building standards, (5) healthcare practice, and (6) for-profit and non-profit organization programs. Influence may also be reflected in the success of companies started as a result of research by SMU faculty members and their intellectual property.

The University is looking to the Task Force to provide vital *faculty-led* guidance on how to strengthen our scholarly research and creative activities. Faculty leadership in this endeavor is crucial; the most creative and innovative strategies for the future will come from you and other faculty colleagues.

I ask that the Task Force address the following topics:

1. What areas of excellence should we pursue that will help SMU distinguish and differentiate itself from our peer institutions?
2. What are key interdisciplinary themes that serve to both: (1) coalesce faculty from across the campus and (2) contribute to society by addressing grand global challenges?
3. How can collaborations with other regional, national, or international institutions be fostered and utilized?

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4. How do we capitalize on our existing strengths, such as our current programs and our location in North Texas?
5. What criteria should be used to measure the success of SMU scholarly research and creative impact and how should those criteria be used to prioritize investments in scholarly research and creative activities?
6. What are the impediments to enhancing research and creative impact by SMU?
7. What is the role of knowledge/technology transfer activities such as incubation and innovation centers?

In addition to the deliberations among yourselves, I urge you to consult closely with, and seek information from, Jim Quick, Associate Vice President of Research and Dean of Graduate Studies and Michael Tumeo, Director of Institutional Research. Also, I encourage you to engage with a small number of selected individuals outside SMU to seek their thoughts and guidance. Individuals with national and international prominence could provide valuable input.

Please submit your final report to me by 15 March 2017. My office will supply the necessary staff support so that you and the others on the Task Force can do the creative thinking yet not be encumbered by administrative minutiae of drafting the text of the Task Force report, etc.

Again, thank you for agreeing to serve on the Task Force. The impact of your work will be felt by the SMU community for decades to come.

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

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