

**State of the University Address  
August 23, 2017**

**As we begin SMU's 103<sup>rd</sup> academic year, it's great to have you back on the campus to be fully energized for the academic year. Hopefully, you were able to take a break as well as get some delayed work completed. It seems that summers are shorter and the campus is busier each year during this period of time. However, as always, it is uplifting to be a part of a new academic year with all the excitement that first year students, transfer students, and incoming graduate and professional students bring along, with meeting new colleagues that joined us over the summer.**

**Sunday evening, the Provost and I had the opportunity to host the new faculty members joining us for this year. It is always interesting to see who the Search Committees in your various departments have attracted to join us. It is an impressive group, and I know you will all help them get underway smoothly in their new environment.**

**In addition, we have had a very busy spring and summer of recruiting several new administrators to campus that I have asked to attend this meeting so that you will have a chance to identify them and greet them afterward and at other times. I would ask each to stand as I give a brief introduction of them to you.**

**Stephanie L. Knight, is the new Dean of SMU's Annette Caldwell Simmons School of Education and Human Development. Stephanie comes to us from Pennsylvania State University where she was Associate Dean. She received her doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Houston.**

**Matthew B. Myers is the new Dean of SMU's Cox School of Business. Matt has been Dean at Miami University of Ohio and received his Ph.D. in Marketing and International Business from Michigan State University.**

**Kenechukwu (K.C.) Mmeje is SMU's new Vice President for Student Affairs. Dr. Mmeje goes by K.C., he came to us from Loyola**

**University in Chicago and earned his doctorate in educational leadership from the University of Southern California.**

**Michael Hites is SMU's new Chief Information Officer. Michael comes to us from the University of Illinois with his Ph.D. in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering from the Illinois Institute of Technology.**

**Larenda Mielke will be the first person to hold the position of Associate Provost for Continuing Education. Larenda came from the University of Virginia and holds an MA in Cross-cultural Education from Wheaton University as well as an Executive MBA from Washington University in St. Louis.**

**Please join me in welcoming our new administrative colleagues.**

**I would like to thank those of you who attended the Convocation ceremony on Sunday evening. This is always an important part of getting the semester underway for new undergraduates, both first-year and transfers, who process thru Dallas Hall into the Main Quad**

**on their way to McFarlin Auditorium symbolizing their entrance into the University community. We have a video of this event and my address on our webpage. I tried to layout five skills that I suggested they strengthen or develop during their time here in addition to the work on their academic majors and minors.**

**I want to thank Congressman Pete Sessions again for encouraging Dr. Francis Collins, the Director of the National Institute of Health, to accept our invitation to receive an honorary degree and give the spring Commencement address. His revision of Paul Anka's "I Did It My Way" to "I Did It Their Way" has received over a million views since we posted it, making it the most viewed posting in our history. In addition, his address itself is worth reviewing, if you were not present to hear it.**

**In my Annual Fall State of the University address, I usually spend most of my time on events and projects that are anticipated to unfold during the coming academic year, and we will get to a few of these. However, first I am sure all of us feel burdened by the events that occurred in Charlottesville, on the campus of the University of Virginia, and other**

**similar events that are rumored to be planned for the coming weeks and months. Once again, conflicts between constitutional rights are having to be debated and resolved in ways that those of us who came of age in the 60's and early 70's would have hoped not to see again. Review of past Supreme Court decisions regarding freedom of speech and the right to assemble are all being carefully scanned. However, one conclusion that must shine clearly in whatever haze might be created by the debate is a clear denunciation of racism, anti-Semitism, and hate. The values of the University: freedom of inquiry, freedom of speech, the value of all humanity, and the commitment to create a supportive community among those of diverse backgrounds are antithetical to the motivations displayed in Charlottesville. The religious values on which this University was founded, centered on the teachings of Jesus, are totally opposite to any efforts to defend racism, anti-Semitism, and hatred.**

**Throughout this year, it is important that we maintain close contact with our students within the broader University community so that conversation, debate, and opportunities for developing mutual respect are plentiful. We must live our values. Although the campus is subject to all of the rights and constitutional protections, being a private institution**

**provides us with more input on what occurs on campus, guided by our own policies and procedures regarding the right to designate time and place with proper recognition of concern for public safety, particularly on our private campus.**

**In times like these, our constitution principles that have always held our country together and preserved basic human rights are under pressure from multiple directions. Freedom of speech has always been one of the cornerstones of our democracy and provided major protections of minority groups, whether they be based upon racial, religion, political ideology, or on sexual orientation. When these rights are not honored, bad things happen such as internment camps for Japanese citizens during World War II and the many horrifying experiences of African-Americans across decades and centuries. Therefore, how we vigorously oppose anti-Semitism, racism, and hatred while honoring constitutionally-protected rights is a challenge that American citizens have had to navigate before across our history with varying levels of guidance from the Supreme Court. During these conflicted times, we must walk that sometimes legally thin line as we oppose the worst of humanity while upholding the rights**

**that exemplify the best ideals from human history, even when they appear to be in service of those exhibiting abhorrent attitudes.**

**One thing we can do is to recommit ourselves to increasing the sense of community on our campus, not only among our students but also among faculty and staff. It is much harder to dehumanize and objectify people who differ from us on some dimension of race, gender, political ideology, religion, or whatever, if we personally know such individuals and have opportunities to develop a common set of understandings for discussion with them. We live in a rapidly diversifying country where many cities, counties, and some states are either majority/minority or approaching this makeup. To navigate these changes in the composition of our country, we need to learn more about each other. Our students need to be able to work closely with students from around the world of different races, ethnicities, religions, and social attitudes that differences in heritage bring.**

**Over a year ago, Provost Currall and I asked Maria Dixon-Hall if she knew of any type of program that would help educate all of us to be more effective in understanding the backgrounds and cultural traditions of those with whom we are interacting. In other words, how could we become more culturally intelligent? We could find nothing in higher ed.**

**that matched our aspirations. Interestingly, Dr. Dixon-Hall found that the organization for members of the hospitality industry had uniquely worked to address these same goals. As you know, those who wait on us in restaurants, register us into hotels and motels, and provide all the related services are as diverse as any employment pool in the United States.**

**From this basic beginning, Dr. Dixon Hall and dozens of faculty, staff and students have been working to develop materials to help us learn more about each other, which will, hopefully, result in a greater sense of community that in our way helps to counter the destructive forces of racism, anti-Semitism, and hatred that have reared their ugly heads once again.**

### **Cultural Intelligence**

**That ability to function and manage effectively in different cultural contexts has been called cultural intelligence. It means having the information we will need to help us create and collaborate with colleagues and students wherever they are from, be they from Dubai or Detroit or Des Moines, or Monterey. For example, when is it appropriate to use the term “Hispanic” as opposed to “Latino or Latina” in describing people of**



**a Spanish-speaking heritage? Is it ever appropriate to ask a minority race or ethnic student to give opinions or answers as the official or prevailing view of all of that race or heritage rather than just their own opinion? Our rapidly diversifying world, city, country, and University simply require that we know more about each other in order to work and interact more effectively and civilly on a daily basis.**

**Over the fall semester we will continue developing and piloting CIQ@SMU, under the leadership of Dr. Dixon Hall. CIQ@SMU ultimately will serve as the informational and programmatic core that will help make Cultural Intelligence a practical part of life on the Hilltop. It will be an educational program that will provide information to enhance our practical skills in teaching, recruiting and interacting with our increasingly diverse community. It means having the opportunity to learn and develop the skills to build and maintain more effective relationships with culturally diverse colleagues and students or augment pedagogy that enhances the classroom and the academic success of all students. I hope you will be a part of this endeavor.**

**Over the next several weeks as pilot programs and information are rolled out, you will hear and see a great deal on campus about these efforts. Those of you interested in participating in this developmental time will have numerous opportunities to influence and shape this initiative if you desire. Just look for emails from the Provost, Dr. Dixon-Hall, or me.**

**As a country and a university community, we will work through this difficult time as we have its predecessors. I will continue to meet with groups of student leaders to underscore a positive tone from the Office of the President. But, where the rubber meets the road on any University campus is the relationship between you, our faculty, and our students. Regardless of the tone or tweets from Washington, or anywhere else, we need to continue to honor those values we hold dear: the pursuit of truth, the importance of civil discourse, freedom of speech and the profound value of all humanity. To paraphrase the sage of Oxford: The best of humanity must not only endure; it must prevail.**

## Campus Topics

1. Campus Displays: The recent internal discussions with some student organizations about preferred places to allow campus displays quickly moved from the discussion of student leaders and campus administrators to national organizations and blogs that had very little interest in knowing the facts that might negate their rants. Once conversations between student leaders and administrators were possible, a resolution was reached that upheld the basic goals of everyone involved. This kind of conversation, mutual respect, and compromise would be a case study for how this University has historically dealt with issues that arise but might be a good study for Congress.

2. Entering Students: One of the most awaited reports each year is the characteristics of our new students. Overall enrollment is 11,421+, 5,044 graduate, 6,377 undergraduate, I am happy to report—in advance of the census date, so these numbers aren't final, that we have an outstanding first-year class of 1,430 with an average ACT of 30. We have quickly become an ACT school with over a thousand [1,037] of these entering

students providing ACTs. Over 500 students provided SAT scores. (If you're doing the arithmetic, you've already realized a few provide both scores.) If we took the highest score of each student and the ACT scores were translated into SAT scores, the average SAT would be 1340 – 26 points higher than the previous year. Though the calculation is not an official score, it shows that with your active participation, we continue to make significant progress in recruiting quality students. The percentage of minority students is 25%, which is 1% less than last year. The percentage of international students is 7%, slightly higher than last year.

Transfer students number 297 with 41% being minority students which combined with 1<sup>st</sup> years averages to 28% of new students being minority. Within the first-year class, as well as among the transfers, approximately 50% are male and 50% female. Therefore, I congratulate Wes Waggoner and his staff in Admissions and Financial Aid on another successful year of recruitment, and I express my appreciation to those of you who are always available to meet with prospective students. As I have

said on many occasions, a growing number of students considering SMU, particularly the best and the brightest, want to meet with the faculty in their area of interest before they commit to SMU.

3. ManeFrame II: Those of you who spent the summer in Dallas know that the installation of Mainframe I, funded from OE2C savings, is completed. Michael Hites, our new CIO, will look forward to talking with various group of you about its utilization. Now that we have more capacity, we obviously have capacity to increase our sponsored research efforts utilizing this resource. ManeFrame II is more than five times more powerful than ManeFrame I as well as more energy efficient. ManeFrame II, along with the availability of new discipline-specific software and enhanced training for faculty and graduate students, will make supercomputing even more available to SMU researchers. The power of this system greatly increases the ability of SMU researchers to perform computationally intensive research in

science, engineering and big data, creating a competitive edge in competition for grants and encouraging interdisciplinary research.

4. Provost's Task Forces: In addition to the General Education Review Task Force, last fall the Provost Currall created three task forces related to the academic goals of the SMU's Strategic Plan, 2016-2025. Task force reports were completed this past summer:

- a. Task Force on Scholarly Research and Creative Impact
- b. Task Force on Creative and Interactive Technology
- c. Task Force of Data Science and Analytics

During the first part of this academic year, we will be taking the reports, prefacing them with a document for campus-wide review and discussion and have appropriate groups recommend approaches toward addressing these areas as pathways toward achieving the goals of the Strategic Plan, particularly those focusing on enhancing the academic stature and quality of the University.

**5. Continuing education's push to enhance academic mission and provide further resources to strengthen that academic mission. After a yearlong study by the Task Force, headed by Vice President for Executive Affairs Harold Stanley, Provost Currall has selected Larenda Mielke, whom I just introduced to you, to oversee the expansion of continuing and online education courses for the University.**

**As Associate Provost for Continuing Education, Larenda is working to meet a major objective in SMU's strategic plan: "Engage the community for lifelong learning through professional training and continuing education." Larenda and her team will prioritize, coordinate, support, and grow a broad array of continuing education initiatives. Developing an enhanced SMU-wide strategy will build on the notable efforts that SMU's existing Continuing and Professional Education, and several academic units, have already made. Larenda's work will**

**ensure that continuing education advances SMU's academic mission, enhances the influence of SMU faculty, and is in close alignment with SMU's values.**

**Additionally, the Continuing Education Program Council (CEPC), chaired by the Provost and comprising the deans of academic units, will provide input regarding the overall strategy for SMU's continuing education and will review new proposals and revisions. This internal guidance will ensure that SMU's culture and knowledge will not only be preserved, but also be advanced by an outward-looking vision toward other, as yet untapped, groups of students.**

**6. Graduate Fellowships Funded with OE2C Savings: Beginning in the fall of 2015, with annually recurring savings achieved through Operational Excellence and reinvested in academics, SMU has enhanced University Fellowships to outstanding Ph.D. applicants. This fellowship is designed to help the University recruit and retain top candidates by offering up to \$10,000 a year on top of the departmental fellowships, making**



**SMU's funding packages at or above the market stipend in most fields. For fall 2017, the 16 incoming Ph.D. Fellows will mark our largest incoming Ph.D. Fellow class and highest yield to date, with a 60% acceptance rate. With that incoming class, we will have 34 Ph.D. Fellows from OE2C funds representing 17 different Ph.D. programs, including humanities, social sciences, and STEM fields.**

**7. Pony Power. Strengthening the Stampede: As we begin to plan for the next major gifts campaign, it is very important to increase support for SMU's annual fund, which are gifts given to be expended in the year designated for the gift. Our goal is to average \$50 million a year over the next three years. We ended May 31, 2017 with \$42.7 million, down from a high of \$48 million in the last year of the campaign. It is important that the new donors activated during the campaign be maintained and that ongoing donors be requested to pledge an annual gift each of the next three years. The goal is to reach \$45 million by May 2018; \$50 million by May 2019; and \$55 million by May 2020, resulting in an average of \$50 million per year over these three years. As we have noted, this is equivalent to an endowment of**

**\$1 billion; therefore, it is not only important to our efforts to increase our scholarship pool, but also to increase the funding available to Deans for programmatic support in their individual Schools. Your continued participation continues to be a very important component of this effort!**

**8. Construction Updates.**

**Ford Research Building: With a \$15 million gift, the former Chairman of the Board, Gerald J. Ford, Kelli O. Ford, and The Gerald J. Ford Family Foundation, make possible a new state-of-the-art building to support research facilitated by SMU's high-performance computing capabilities, our digital humanities initiative, and other projects. The building will be used for classes, conferences, and performances showcasing computational research at SMU. It also will be the home of the Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute, established in May 2012 through a gift from the Dedman family and Foundation. The building will be located on SMU's main campus at the corner of McFarlin and Airline.**

**It is expected that availability of the Research Center will encourage more faculty to use high-performance computing and attract greater levels of external research funding. SMU aspires to increase its research expenditures annually to \$50 million per year. The more senior-level scholars with active research agendas that we recruit, along with existing faculty who are leading important research projects, need and expect the best facilities to support their work. With the completion of the programming for the Gerald J. Ford Research Center, final drawings will be developed during the current academic year with the beginning of construction planned for the summer of 2018. Fundraising will continue toward completing the \$25M cost of the facility.**

**Child Development Center: SMU is deeply committed to ensuring access to high-quality child care for members of the University Community. This year we will begin construction for the Child Development Center on Daniel Avenue across from Burleson Park at the site of the old Chi Omega house. The capacity of the center will grow from 34 to 84.**

**We are working with the Bright Horizons Company (who oversee 700 such centers) on the design and management of the facility. This new facility will be under the leadership of Business and Finance, and be overseen as an employee benefit, as it is on most campuses having a child care center. Chris Regis, Vice President for Business and Finance has been working with an advisory group, including faculty, and a similar group will be created as the Center comes online.**

**Meadows Renovations – Owens Fine Arts Center: University leaders and architects have been working with Dean Sam Holland, his faculty, and staff on renovation of the northern part of the Owens Fine Arts Center. Plans are underway. The Meadows Foundation gave an initial \$10 million matching gift to get this renovation process started and Gene and Jerry Jones have generously pledged \$5 million.**

**East Campus – Aquatics Center: During the fall semester, we will have the official opening celebrations for the Robson/Lindley Aquatic Center across the way on East Campus at Homecoming. You will receive information about events surrounding the opening in the coming weeks.**

**Also -- the golfers among you will want to take notice -- in a public private partnership among the City of Dallas, AT&T, and SMU, we will officially open the Trinity Forest Golf Course this fall. This course is now the official home of the Mustang golf teams and the Byron Nelson Golf Tournament.**

## **CONCLUSION**

**As I report to the Board each fall, I can tell you what we intend to be the focus of our efforts, but the list always expands in unforeseen ways.**

**As I started these remarks, I will also end them. In times of intense differences of opinion about fundamental political and social issues, it is important that we be guided by both our academic values and foundational freedoms on our Constitution. Both the worst and the best products of humanity are vividly enacted before us. As we oppose vigorously those that destroy “e pluribus unum,” may we work to build stronger community where, as the students say, “All Mustangs are Valued.”**

**I think we in higher education, both nationally and locally, have our work cut out for us this year. However, we are blessed to be here at SMU. Because although there are no perfect places to be, this is a really good one. Let's continue to make it even better.**