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DEEP ELLUM'S JESSICA BURNHAM TO LEAD SMU "MADI" PROGRAM

DALLAS (SMU) – Jessica Burnham, leader of the Deep Ellum Foundation's widely recognized efforts to enhance, improve and market the iconic downtown neighborhood, will become director of the [Master of Arts in Design and Innovation](#) (MADI) program at SMU on June 4.

The MADI program is a multidisciplinary degree based on the concept of "human-centered design" as an approach to problem-solving, valuable in fields as different as engineering, business, the arts, advertising and the social sciences. Burnham assumes the program from founding director Kate Canales, who is leaving SMU to pursue another academic opportunity.

Burnham is originally from Colorado but has lived in Dallas since 2008. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Communication Design from the Metropolitan State College of Denver and a Master of Fine Arts in Design Research/Human-Centered Design from the University of North Texas. She got her start in community engagement and community-based design through her thesis project that looked at how a community can be built through communication. Those efforts led to creating a business association on Lowest Greenville Avenue called the Lowest Greenville Collective which ultimately led to her role as Executive Director of the Deep Ellum Foundation.

She is already a member of the MADI team, having served as Designer in Residence in Spring 2017 and currently serving as a MADI adjunct faculty member.

"Jessica exemplifies how design can be a strategic toolkit for almost any type of work, and since that concept is core to MADI's existence as a program, she has emerged as the perfect individual to lead it into the next chapter," said Marc Christensen, dean of the Lyle School of Engineering. "She is an incredibly capable designer and leader, with a unique background and training as a graphic designer and design researcher, and we couldn't be more excited for her to transition into this new role."

MADI has been offered at SMU since 2015, grounded in an approach known as "human-centered design." Coursework and project-based learning experiences teach students to combine what people need with the limitless possibilities of technology and the economic requirements for business success through design research, idea generation and rapid prototyping. In addition to core courses in Design, the program's curriculum pulls from the Lyle School's civil and environmental engineering, mechanical engineering and computer science departments, as well as advertising through SMU's Temerlin Advertising Institute,

entrepreneurship through the Cox School of Business, anthropology through Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences and arts entrepreneurship and creative computing through the Meadows School of the Arts.

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About SMU

SMU is the nationally ranked global research university in the dynamic city of Dallas. SMU's alumni, faculty and nearly 12,000 students in seven degree-granting schools demonstrate an entrepreneurial spirit as they lead change in their professions, community and the world.

About the Bobby B. Lyle School of Engineering

SMU's Bobby B. Lyle School of Engineering, founded in 1925, is one of the oldest engineering schools in the Southwest. The school offers eight undergraduate and 29 graduate programs, including master's and doctoral degrees, through the departments of Civil and Environmental Engineering; Computer Science and Engineering; Electrical Engineering; Engineering Management, Information, and Systems; and Mechanical Engineering. Lyle students participate in programs in the unique Deason Innovation Gym, providing the tools and space to work on immersion design projects and competitions to accelerate leadership development and the framework for innovation; the Hart Center for Engineering Leadership, helping students develop nontechnical skills to prepare them for leadership in diverse technical fields; the Caruth Institute for Engineering Education, developing new methodologies for incorporating engineering education into K-12 schools; and the Hunter and Stephanie Hunt Institute for Engineering and Humanity, combining technological innovation with business expertise to address global poverty.