



**Elizabeth G. Lobo, Ph. D.**  
**Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs**  
**Office of the Provost**

April 29, 2022

Dear Colleagues:

Thank you for your interest in, and commitment to, advancing SMU's academic mission. These weekly updates will serve as a tool to keep you informed and engaged with SMU's Academic Affairs division as, together, we manage a safe, healthy and productive spring semester. If you have suggestions for what we should include in future communications, please send your ideas to this [email address](#). Previous newsletters are available [here](#).

### **Spring 2022**

- **May Commencement** – SMU's 107<sup>th</sup> annual May Commencement will take place on Saturday, May 14, at 9:00 am in Ford Stadium. Your presence at this significant rite of passage is important both to those whom you have taught and to the entire University community. We are pleased to welcome Grant Moise, President and Publisher of the *Dallas Morning News*, as this year's commencement speaker. We are also pleased to announce that Anita Martinez, the first Mexican American member of the Dallas City Council and founder of Ballet Folklórico, will receive an honorary degree.

Please access the [May Commencement RSVP](#) webpage to let us know if you will attend the ceremony and participate in the academic procession. It is important that we know how many faculty will attend the morning ceremony so we can reserve enough seats for everyone who

participates. We also welcome you to the Faculty Breakfast to begin at 8:00 am. Please let us know if you will be able to join by emailing [facultysuccess@smu.edu](mailto:facultysuccess@smu.edu). The deadline to RSVP for attending the ceremony is **today**.

Click [here](#) for additional information on May commencement festivities.

- **Simple Syllabus now live in Canvas** – We are excited to call your attention to a new, live link that appears in all Canvas courses: *Simple Syllabus*. SMU has just activated this new syllabus creation platform intended to streamline the many syllabus-related tasks faculty face each term. Feedback from faculty and academic governance groups throughout the last year has been overwhelmingly optimistic and favorable. While we are gearing up to provide a full campus launch of the system for fall 2022, *Simple Syllabus* is available now for use with May term and summer sessions. Faculty experiences and feedback from early users will be reviewed to ensure a pleasant full rollout to campus in the fall. So far, we have observed that *Simple Syllabus* makes it easy to manage syllabus tasks because it uploads automatically to the SMU Syllabus Library, formats according to accessibility standards, pre-populates required SMU syllabus statements, and automatically publishes a *Simple Syllabus* page in Canvas. Instructors are able to use rich content editing to add their course-specific content including assignments and their due dates, course policies, etc. The tool seamlessly exports/prints into a PDF and generates unique URLs and embed codes.
  - For instructions, visit the [new Simple Syllabus service page](#).
  - Questions about getting started? [Reach out to your School/College's Academic Technology Service Director \(ATSD\)](#).
  - Questions about syllabus policies? Email [facultysuccess@smu.edu](mailto:facultysuccess@smu.edu) directly.
  
- **Townhall with Black faculty** – My thanks to Chief Diversity Officer, Maria Dixon Hall, for organizing, and to all the faculty members who participated in yesterday's Town Hall with Black faculty. With more than

65 faculty searches this year and new processes put in place to increase transparency and equity within the search process, we now have more robust data from which we can review outcomes. At the end of this search season, we will share this data in greater detail. A preliminary review shows that overall diversity this year has been 20% - 25% but our composition of African American candidates is not as high (4% - 12%). Working with Dr. Dixon Hall, we will seek to identify variables impacting our ability to attract talented African American scholars and practitioners. I look forward to developing strategies for improvement next year and moving forward.

- **Interim Dean for SMU's Lyle School of Engineering** – Informed by meetings this spring with the Lyle's Executive Board, faculty, staff and students, I was [pleased this week to announce](#) that Paul Krueger, Department Chair and Professor of Mechanical Engineering has agreed to serve as Dean *ad interim* of the Lyle School of Engineering. Please join me in welcoming and congratulating him on his selection for this important role.
- **Please remember that Tuesday, May 3 (SMU's last class day) follows a Friday schedule** – This is a reminder to treat next Tuesday, May 3rd like a Friday when it comes to your class schedule. As per the [academic calendar](#), SMU's last class day follows a Friday schedule. Students have also received reminders this week about the change from the Office of Student Academic Engagement and Success.
- **Reminder from previous update**
  - **Interim Dean for Dedman School of Law** – As [announced last week](#), Thomas Wm. Mayo, Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Altshuler Distinguished Teaching Professor and Professor of Law has agreed to serve as Dean *ad interim* of the Dedman School of Law. He will become Interim Dean on May 16th and will serve in this capacity until we have appointed a new permanent Dean for the school.

## **Road to R1/Scholarly Creative Excellence:**

- **Request for proposal (RFP): SMU – Bush Institute post-doctoral program**  
– The Office of the Provost, in partnership with the George W. Bush Institute, has created a new [post-doctoral fellowship program](#) with the goals of encouraging collaborative research between SMU and the Institute and increasing the number of post-doctoral fellows at SMU. Under this program, three post-doctoral positions will be funded annually. Funding is limited to one year (12 months) per post-doctoral fellow, and preference will be given to proposals that are able to provide a second year of funding for the requested post-doctoral fellow and to proposals from Principal Investigators (PIs) at the rank of Assistant Professor.

All SMU tenured and tenure-track faculty are eligible to submit proposals and to serve as PI. All faculty, including non-tenured-tenure-track faculty, may serve as co-PI on proposals and awards. One proposal may be submitted per year per PI. There are no restrictions on the number of proposals on which a faculty member can serve as co-PI. Proposals must be submitted by May 2, 2022 to [provost@smu.edu](mailto:provost@smu.edu) in 11-point or greater font and not exceed two, 8.5. x 11 pages in length.

- **SMU libraries offers \$1,000 research assignment stipends** – SMU Libraries' Research Assignment Stipend awards \$1,000 to faculty for winning proposals to integrate new information literacy components into undergraduate and graduate coursework in collaboration with librarians. Information literacy gained from well-designed research assignments allows students to think more critically, to translate information into knowledge, and to use what they've learned outside of the classroom to support their own understanding. [Submit your proposals](#) for summer/fall 2022 by May 28, 2022.
- **Key leadership searches underway** –
  - **Dedman Law Dean** – The search committee conducted confidential semifinalist interviews this week and put forward four exceptional

finalists. We expect to complete campus interviews with these finalists in May prior to Commencement.

- **Vice Provost for Research (VPR) and Chief Innovation Officer (CIO)** – We hope to announce our new VPR/CIO prior to May Commencement.
- **Dean of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies and Associate Provost for Graduate Education** – Interviews and a campus visit for the third of our four finalists took place this week. Click [here](#) for information on how to attend the Vision Talk of the remaining candidate on Monday, May 2 at 10:30 am. As a reminder, all candidates arriving to Campus should remain confidential. Please do not share candidates' names or visits with anyone outside of SMU.
- **Lyle School of Engineering Dean** – See above for information on Lyle's Dean *ad interim*. The search committee for the permanent Dean will be appointed and charged at the start of the fall 2022 semester and Sam Holland, Dean of the Meadows School, will chair the committee.

### **News and Noteworthy:**

- **William S. Spears Institute for Entrepreneurial Leadership** – As [announced yesterday](#), a commitment from celebrated energy expert and philanthropist William S. Spears, the largest gift by a non-alumnus in the history of SMU, will establish the William S. Spears Institute for Entrepreneurial Leadership in the SMU Cox School of Business.
- **Meadows faculty member receives national award** – Congratulations to Jared Schroeder, Associate Professor of Journalism in the Meadows School of the Arts, on receiving the Harry W. Stonecipher Award for Distinguished Research on Media Law and Policy. He received this recognition for his article "Fixing False Truths: Rethinking Truth Assumptions and Free-Expression Rationales in the Networked Era," which was published in the William & Mary *Bill of Rights Journal*. Award organizers wrote, the "work stood out for its potential to have a lasting

impact on freedom of expression scholarship.” Judges cited the “strong theoretical component in Schroeder’s research as he re-examined the search for truth rationale in the marketplace of ideas theory of free expression, given artificial intelligence and other contemporary technologies and developments.”

- **Meadows Art History Ph.D. student brings diversity and inclusion to Smithsonian programming and receives national acclaim** - Meadows’ Claudia Zapata, Ph.D. student in Art History, was one of the principal organizers of the ¡Printing the Revolution! Exhibition debuted at the Smithsonian, and which is now at the Amon Carter Museum as part of its national tour.

The show was a finalist for the CAA Alfred J. Barr Award this year, a career-making achievement that Zapata has earned before even finishing her Ph.D. The show also won the Association of Latin American Art/Thoma Foundation Exhibition Catalogue Award. This award is presented to the lead author or authors of an especially distinguished exhibition catalogue of Latin American or Latinx art, from the Pre-Columbian era to the present, published under the auspices of a museum, library, or collection.

- **Reminders from previous updates:**
  - **Announcing *Access SMU*, a new scholarship program for high-achieving, high-need Texas students** – Academic excellence is one of our four priority areas through the year 2025. One of the ways we will achieve this goal is by increasing access to SMU for more high achieving, first-generation and underrepresented students. *Access SMU*, a new scholarship program set to [launch this fall](#), will close financial gaps among high-achieving Texas students who are eligible for Pell Grants. We are grateful to SMU’s generous donors who, through the *SMU Ignited* capital campaign, are demonstrating their strong support for this critical and world-changing initiative.

- **Farewell receptions for Deans Christensen and Collins** – This spring, we have the bittersweet opportunity to bid farewell – and congratulations – to two of our Deans who will soon become university presidents. On Tuesday, May 10th from 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm in the Hughes-Trigg Student Center Ballroom, President Turner and I will host a [farewell reception](#) for Jennifer M. Collins, Judge James Noel Dean and Professor of Law in the Dedman School of Law. And, on Wednesday, May 11th from 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm in the Mack Grand Ballroom, President Turner and I will host a [farewell reception](#) for Marc P. Christensen, Dean and Lyle Professor of Innovation in the Lyle School of Engineering.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth G. Loba", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Elizabeth G. Loba, PhD  
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Southern Methodist University  
<https://www.smu.edu/provost>  
**World Changers Shaped Here**