

## Weekly Update | November 18, 2022

**Elizabeth G. Loba, Ph.D. Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs**

Dear Faculty and Staff,

These weekly updates will serve as a tool to keep you informed and engaged with SMU's Academic Affairs division as, together, we work toward achieving the goals that fall within our four priority areas through 2025: 1) Academic Excellence/ *US News and World Report* top 50, 2) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, 3) 2016 – 2025 Strategic Plan and 4) Inclusive Excellence.

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](#).

Today's update falls into three categories: 1) Fall 2022, 2) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 3) News and Noteworthy.

To honor the Thanksgiving Holiday, there will not be a newsletter next week, but we will resume distribution the following week and for the remainder of the fall 2022 semester.

### Fall 2022

#### **SMU Appoints Suku Nair Vice Provost for Research (VPR) and Chief Innovation Officer (CIO)**

This week, [SMU announced](#) the appointment of Suku Nair, Associate Provost for Research *ad interim* as Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer effective December 1, 2022.

After several meetings with the VPR/CIO search committee this fall to discuss next steps, we discussed Suku's candidacy for the permanent VPR/CIO position. Based on individual and group interviews with Suku, and an examination of his accomplishments over the past six months as Associate Provost for Research *ad interim*, committee members brought forward the recommendation this week to offer Suku the VPR/CIO position full-time moving forward, and I was pleased to [announce his acceptance](#) this morning.

My thanks to Dean Stephanie Knight and the search committee for their outstanding service and congratulations to Suku on earning this strategic leadership appointment.

#### **SMU's Tate Lecture Series Returns to Campus This Week**

On Tuesday, November 15 the Tate Lecture Series continued its 41<sup>st</sup> season by hosting an evening with Tara Stoinski, President and CEO/Chief Scientific Officer for the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund. Regarded as one of the country's finest platforms for distinguished and engaging discussions, the Tate Lecture Series provides unique opportunities for student interaction, faculty discourse and community debate with world changers and raises funds for academic scholarships and student programs. Click [here](#) for more information on this year's Tate Lecture Series events.

#### **Preparing for the Holiday Season: A Reminder About Supports in place to Manage Stress**

This week, Vice President for Student Affairs Dr. K.C. Mmeje and I sent a [message](#) to community members with reminders about support mechanisms in place at SMU for faculty, staff and students to assist in managing the stress that can be associated with the Holiday Season. Please be aware of the signs of stress in yourself and others and seek support when needed, while also helping to spread the word about the supports available at SMU.

## Reminders from last week

### Common Curriculum Update: Making it Easier to Administer and Fulfill the “Writing in the Major” Proficiency

Last week, the [Office of General Education](#) shared important information about changes to the Writing in the Major (WiM) Proficiency of the Common Curriculum (CC) to make administration and fulfillment easier. We will be tracking student completion of the WiM Proficiency through program assessment, rather than through DPR tracking. [Read more about these changes here.](#)

### Invitation to Participate in December Commencement

Please access the [December Commencement RSVP](#) webpage to let us know if you will attend the December ceremony and participate in the academic procession. The deadline to RSVP for attending the ceremony is **Friday, December 2nd**, by 4:00 p.m. Clark Hunt '87, chairman and CEO of the Kansas City Chiefs and FC Dallas and member of SMU's Board of Trustees, will be the commencement speaker.

Prior to the ceremony, there will be a faculty breakfast beginning at 7:45 a.m. in the Miller Champions Club in the Miller Event Center, directly inside the entrance to the Coliseum on Binkley Avenue. [If you would like to attend the breakfast, please RSVP by sending an email to this link.](#) The deadline to RSVP for the breakfast is **Friday, December 9th**, by 4:00 p.m.

## Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

### Call for Proposals for FY 2024 Congressional Earmark/Appropriation Process

As mentioned [previously](#), we invite faculty to develop proposals for consideration as a part of the U.S. Congress' FY 2024 earmark and/or appropriate process.

This [LINK](#) will take you to a box folder where you may view and copy resources provided by during last week's federal research workshop: (1) A copy of the presentation shown by Clark-Hill, our consultants and (2) a template to be used to develop and submit your proposals.

To be included for consideration in the FY 2024 budget development cycle, first drafts of your proposals must be submitted to [Suku Nair](#) by **November 23, 2022**, with final submission to Suku no later than **December 16, 2022**.

### Call for President's Partners Grants

The President's Partners Program was inaugurated by SMU's President, R. Gerald Turner, to support teaching and research efforts by faculty and staff. All full-time faculty and staff are eligible to apply for grants of up to \$5,000. These grants fund equipment that enhances the work of faculty and staff in furthering our commitment to the SMU experience. This can include materials related to teaching and research or administrative and support supplies. Applications should be submitted to the Provost's Office at [facultysuccess@smu.edu](mailto:facultysuccess@smu.edu) no later than Friday, December 16<sup>th</sup>. Each application will be reviewed by a committee comprised of faculty and staff. Application instructions and a cover sheet template can be found [here](#).

### Sam Taylor Fellowship Call for Proposals Announced

All full-time faculty are encouraged to apply for awards of up to \$2,000 through the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. Information about the award parameters, eligibility requirements, and the application process can be found at <https://www.gbhem.org/sam-taylor-fellowship-fund/>. This award was established by the late Sam Taylor to fund continuing education and development of faculty members at United Methodist-related colleges and universities in Texas. All faculty applications are submitted as one institutional packet with letters of support from the deans and the president of the university, per the guidelines of the GBHEM; therefore, the

internal SMU deadlines for the award are Friday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, for applications to be submitted to the respective deans' offices, and Friday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, for the full application to be submitted to the Office of the Provost at [facultysuccess@smu.edu](mailto:facultysuccess@smu.edu). Questions about the process and final submissions should be directed to [facultysuccess@smu.edu](mailto:facultysuccess@smu.edu).

## Moody School hosts Ph.D. Advisor Appreciation Luncheon

Thanks to Robin Poston, Moody School Dean; Suku Nair, Associate Provost for Research *ad interim* and VPR/CIO-elect; Peter Moore, Senior Advisor to the Provost and Data Science Institute Director *ad interim* and the Moody School team for hosting this week's luncheon for faculty who are advising Ph.D. students in the final stages of their degrees. At the luncheon, we thanked the PhD advisors for their important contributions to SMU's strategic goals, including the Road to R1, shared some of the initiatives currently being undertaken by the Provost's Office, the Office of Research and the Moody School to advance these goals, and listened to their recommendations for ways we could support them in their important work of mentoring Ph.D. students. I enjoyed hearing the thoughtful input of the faculty at the luncheon, and it will inform the work of our offices in supporting graduate mentors going forwards.

## Three Minute Thesis Competition

SMU's [Three Minute Thesis \(3MT\) Competition](#), organized by the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies, took place on Monday, November 14. Eleven SMU graduate students from a range of fields participated in the competition, which tests students' ability to present their research clearly, concisely, and compellingly to a non-specialist audience. The winners of this year's competition are: First Place: Claire Trotter, Applied Physiology Ph.D. Program; Second Place: Mayson Trujillo, Psychology Ph.D. Program; People's Choice: Rajeev Vaisakh, Physics Ph.D. Program. As first place winner, Claire Trotter will now have the opportunity to compete in the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools regional 3MT competition in Tampa, Florida in March. Congratulations to the award winners and all of the students who participated in this year's competition!

## Key Leadership Searches Underway

### Dean, Lyle School of Engineering

Click [here](#) to review the position description that is now being broadly advertised and please share it with colleagues within your network. Over the next two weeks, committee members will be reviewing applications. They plan to narrow the field to 8-10 semifinalists by November 21<sup>st</sup> and to conduct on-campus interviews in early December.

## News and Noteworthy

### Dallas Innovates Covers SMU-led Research Team's \$2M Grant for Algorithms to Improve Complex Energy Systems

[Dallas Innovates](#) recently covered the work SMU's Harsha Gangammanavar, Assistant Professor in the Lyle School of Engineering's department of Operations Research and Engineering Management is doing, with help from a \$2M Department of Energy grant, to develop algorithms that improve complex energy systems such as the management of the energy grid under intermittent renewable power.

### Perkins School of Theology hosts Distinguished Alumni Award Banquet

This week, the Perkins School of Theology hosted their annual distinguished alumnus/a award banquet to recognize its 2020, 2021 and 2022 recipients. This year's four honorees included:

- Reverend Donald W. Underwood (2020 recipient)
- Reverend Dr. Sydney G. Hall III (2020 recipient)

- Dr. Evelyn L. Parker (2021 recipient)
- Bishop Ruben Saenz Jr. (2022 recipient)

There is, perhaps, no more important measure for a school than the impact its alumni have on the world. I was grateful for the opportunity to join Dean Craig Hill and the Perkins community this week to celebrate excellence in these four truly distinguished Perkins alumni and to recognize them for their living out SMU's call to be world changers.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth G. Lobo, PhD

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Southern Methodist University

<https://www.smu.edu/provost>

**World Changers Shaped Here**