

Weekly Update | February 3, 2023

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) Spring 2023, 2) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 3) News and Noteworthy.

Spring 2023

Thank you for your responsiveness to this week's winter weather

Late January and early February have once again delivered a round of hazardous winter weather to our region. I am hopeful that last year's changes to SMU's adverse and inclement weather policy, informed by a faculty and academic staff working group, resulted in an improved process for faculty, staff and students this year.

I have also [charged a committee](#) to provide recommendations on how SMU should address the need for make-up instruction, in light of this week's cancellations. They will report back by the end of this month, and we will share SMU's approach as quickly as possible.

As a reminder, please check [SMU Aware](#) for updates and the latest weather information. Thank you for your resilience and flexibility through these challenging conditions.

FY 2024 Budget meetings underway

Fiscal year (FY) 24 budget deliberations continued with another key meeting this week. On Tuesday, I met with President R. Gerald Turner; Dr. Harold Stanley, Vice President for Executive Affairs; Chris Regis, Vice President for Business and Finance; and Ernie Barry, Associate Vice President for Budgets and Finance, to review our budget requests for academic affairs. As a reminder, our requests align with the three-year investment strategies for academic excellence, research excellence and the faculty/staff resources required by the schools to support these goals that were outlined during last month's general faculty meeting. We will provide additional updates in future newsletters.

SMU in Taos Executive Board Meeting

This week's on-campus meeting with the Taos Executive Board was cancelled in response to winter weather and will be rescheduled for a new time later in the spring semester.

Interested in Joining a Campus-Wide Conversation about ChatGPT and Generative AI?

If you are new to this conversation, you can learn more by reading this [brief introduction \(co-authored by ChatGPT\) in University Business](#). We invite interested faculty and staff to join in conversations throughout the spring term across four different areas: classroom instruction and pedagogy; research innovations; the world of ChatGPT and AI; and legal/policy implications. If you are interested in learning more or in helping us shape the discussion, please email facultysuccess@smu.edu.

Common Curriculum Course Proposal Deadlines for Spring 2023

The Council on General Education [invites course and approved activity proposals for Common Curriculum general education and graduation requirements](#). Proposal deadlines are February 8, 2023 (for review on February 17) and March 22, 2023 (for review on March 31). Literary Analysis and Interpretation (LAI) and Technology Advances and Society (TAS) are of particular interest. Accepted proposals will be tagged at the course level and go into effect for summer 2023. Please reach out to the [Office of General Education](#) for questions or proposal development support.

Reminder: Judges needed: Dallas Regional Science and Engineering Fair

Local scientists and engineers are invited to serve as judges for the 2023 Beal Bank Dallas Regional Science and Engineering Fair (DRSEF) on **Saturday, February 18, 2023**, at Fair Park, Dallas. Judging is a half-day commitment, fulfilled entirely on Saturday, February 18. Please join us in supporting critical thinking and science education for students in our region. Click [here](#) to register.

Road to R1/Scholarly and Creative Excellence

Planning and deliberation continues for SMU's earmark proposals

The Office of Research and Innovation, working in coordination with SMU faculty and in consultation with executives from Clark Hill – SMU's federal government relations advisors – will put forward 22 proposals for funding at the federal level as a part of the U.S. Congress' FY 24 earmark and/or appropriation process. To advocate for SMU's faculty proposals, Clark Hill has arranged a visit to Capitol Hill for SMU leadership February 6 – 8.

Research and Innovation Week, March 20-25

[Research and Innovation Week](#) is SMU's annual showcase and celebration of the outstanding research being done by SMU students and other members of our community. This year's events will take place **March 20-25** and include a keynote talk, undergraduate and graduate poster sessions, a panel on "Graduate Education and the Future of Research in North Texas" featuring faculty at SMU and other North Texas universities, and the Master of Fine Arts Qualifying Exhibition.

Please encourage undergraduates, graduate students, and postdocs who are conducting research at SMU to be a part of this exciting event by participating in the poster sessions, which will take place on **Tuesday, March 21** (undergraduate poster session) and **Wednesday, March 22** (graduate and postdoc poster session), from **2-5 p.m.**, in the **Hughes-Trigg Student Center Ballroom**. You can find more information, as well as the link to register for the poster session, on the [Research and Innovation Week website](#).

Key leadership searches underway or completed:

Data Science Institute Director

Early this month, I will appoint and charge a search committee for SMU's inaugural Peter O'Donnell Jr. Director of the Data Science Institute with plans to fill the position by the fall 2023 semester. Suku Nair, Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer, has agreed to chair the search. Be on the lookout for additional information in subsequent newsletters. Continued thanks to Peter Moore for serving as Data Science Institute Director *ad interim* until our new director arrives.

Lyle School of Engineering Dean

On January 11, 2023, SMU [announced](#) Nader Jalili as the next dean of the Lyle School of Engineering effective March 1, 2023. Dr Jalili joins SMU from the University of Alabama, where he has been Professor and Department Head in Mechanical Engineering since 2018.

News and Noteworthy

SMU faculty member named American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) fellow

Congratulations to Robert Gregory, professor in Dedman College's Roy M. Huffington Department of Earth Sciences, for election as a class of 2022 AAAS fellow. This prestigious distinction honors members whose efforts on behalf of the advancement of science or its applications in service to society have distinguished them among their peers and colleagues.

SMU participating in the Sister2Sister Exchange program in summer 2023

The Sister2Sister Exchange Program is a public-private partnership led by American University, which has been made possible through the primary support of the U.S. Department of State. It aims to empower Pakistani female college students to overcome cultural limitations that inhibit their participation in pursuing competitive and lucrative careers.

Through this program, American University and its partner universities enable 20 young Pakistani women every year to participate in U.S. university summer undergraduate courses, in mostly Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields.

U.S. partner universities offer summer scholarships for undergraduate courses related to the participants' fields of study, and we are pleased to accept American University's invitation to serve as a partner school beginning in summer 2023.

Graduate Student Success day scheduled for Monday, February 6

The Moody School for Graduate and Advanced Studies will host its first Graduate Student Success day on Monday, February 6. Faculty are invited to attend this daylong event to participate in conversations around recruiting outstanding graduate students from diverse backgrounds and to learn more about the Moody School's resources to support graduate education. Along with members of the Moody staff, Maria Dixon Hall, Chief Diversity Officer, and Paige Ware, Associate Provost for Faculty Success, will provide their insights. Kurt Kraiger, professor and chair in the University of Memphis' Department of Management will also lead a facilitated discussion with SMU faculty around best practices for graduate student success. Faculty interested in participating should contact [Alan Itkin](#) for additional information.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth G. Loba, PhD

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Southern Methodist University

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

World Changers Shaped Here