

Weekly Update | May 12, 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/Summer 2023, 2) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 3) News and Noteworthy.

Spring/Summer 2023

For the very first time in SMU's history, three schools ranked in *U.S. News and World Report* top 50

[U.S. News and World Report](#) released their discipline-specific rankings for 2023–2024 over the past few weeks, and three of SMU's schools are ranked in the top 50. This is a first for SMU and a credit to the faculty, staff and students who have garnered this recognition. [Cox School of Business](#) is ranked 33rd for their MBA program (an eight-point jump from last year), [Dedman School of Law](#) is ranked 45th (a thirteen-point jump from last year) and [Simmons School of Education](#) is ranked 49th (a five-point jump from last year and a 56-point improvement since 2020). Thank you to all those who have worked to propel our programs forward and congratulations to our three top-50 ranked schools.

Fondren Library Center's next phase: The new Rees-Jones Library of the American West

Last week President Turner announced [a gift from Jan and Trevor Rees-Jones](#) of a significant portion of the Rees-Jones Collection of rare documents, maps, books, photographs and other items related to the American West. This remarkable collection, when considered alongside SMU's existing American West collections in DeGolyer Library, will constitute one of the largest university resources on this topic in the nation, similar to the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, and the Yale Collection of Western Americana in the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Yale University. In addition, Mr. and Mrs. Rees-Jones are providing \$25 million to create and build the Rees-Jones Library of the American West, on the site of the current Science and Information Center, and \$5 million to establish an endowment supporting the Library's activities. We will now transition to a period of extensive planning and design, with hopes to complete the project in early 2027.

Faculty Career Achievement Award

On Monday, May 9, I was privileged to honor Professor Kathleen Wellman, the Dedman Family Distinguished Professor and Altshuler Distinguished Teaching Professor, in Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences' William P. Clements Department of History, with the 2023 SMU Faculty Career Achievement Award. Professor Wellman has been a faculty member at SMU for more than two decades and was recognized for her contributions across the research, teaching, and service domains. As further recognition of Professor Wellman's accomplishments, a scholarship in her name will be established and presented to a university student who enters SMU this fall. Thank you to those who participated in Monday's event and please join me in once again congratulating Professor Wellman on this well-deserved honor.

2023 Retiring Faculty Dinner

On Tuesday, May 9, my husband Todd and I hosted the annual Retiring Faculty Dinner, honoring professors who have or will retire from SMU during this academic year. During the event the faculty's Deans and I honored our [20 retiring faculty members](#) and celebrated their individual career accomplishments.

Please join me in congratulating these outstanding faculty members on their retirement. Both collectively and as individuals, they have established a legacy that will not soon be forgotten.

Spring Commencement 2023

SMU's [108th Commencement Weekend](#) is May 12 and 13, 2023. The activities that make up Commencement Weekend showcase some of the University's best traditions and are designed to recognize the pride we all feel in our students' accomplishments. Baccalaureate and Rotunda Recessional will take place today, Friday, May 12, in McFarlin Auditorium at 5:00 p.m. This year, SMU is returning the tradition of All-University Commencement to Moody Coliseum with the ceremony to take place on May 13 at 8:30 a.m. Bryan Tyler, CEO of [McKesson](#), will serve as [Commencement speaker](#). For those who don't know, McKesson delivers a third of all pharmaceuticals used in North America, employs over 78,000 employees, and its \$238 billion in revenues in 2021 made it the seventh largest corporation on the Fortune 500 list.

Both Baccalaureate and Commencement will be [streamed live here](#).

Congratulations to all our spring 2023 graduates. Each one of our students has worked hard to complete their respective academic degrees, and I hope you will join with your colleagues and myself in support of these events, the students graduating, and the values Commencement represents.

Formation of a Task Force on Faculty Salary and Merit Allocation Benchmarking

In response to a resolution by the Faculty Senate calling for an examination of faculty salaries, a task force is being formed from a broad and representative group of members from the faculty, Faculty Senate, Office of the Provost, Office of University Decision Support, and Business and Finance. Invitations went out this week to each member, and the full membership roster will be announced next week. The Task Force will be charged with analyzing a number of areas in order to bring forward a full report to guide decision-making for faculty salaries at both the tenure/tenure-track and non-tenure-track levels. Their efforts will include analyzing and expanding available comparative data of faculty salaries; exploring variables associated with salary ranges; examining factors that impact salary compression; benchmarking merit and equity allocations against best practices; examining longitudinal data of faculty recruitment and retention; and exploring options for addressing disparities found through this analysis. During summer 2023, the Office of the Provost will begin gathering data to support this work, and the Task Force will meet throughout the 2023–2024 academic year to respond to the charge.

Doctoral Graduate Recognition Dinner

Each year, on the evening before May commencement, the Moody School for Graduate and Advanced Studies hosts a dinner to honor graduating Ph.D., D.E. (Doctor of Engineering), and Ed.D. (Doctor of Education) students. This year's dinner will take place tonight, May 12, in Annette Caldwell Simmons Hall. As the number of doctoral degrees SMU confers each year increases, so too grows the dinner. This year, the Moody School will honor the most doctoral graduates ever – 45 students and their advisors. Congratulations to our new Ph.D., D.E., and Ed.D. graduates and thank you to the advisors and staff who have supported them during their journey.

Provost Faculty Fellows Announced for 2023-2024

We are pleased to welcome three new members of the Provost Faculty Fellows program this coming academic year.

Susana Solera Adoboe, Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences' Department of World Languages and Literatures, will participate on the Internationalization Steering Committee and work closely with the Institutional Planning and Effectiveness Office.

Karen Lupo, Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences' Department of Anthropology, will focus on developments in the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies related to Graduate Assistantships.

Lin-Lin Lipsmeyer, Simmons School of Education and Human Development's Department of Teaching and Learning, will collaborate with the Office of Research and Innovation on improving research communications and infrastructure support.

They will join the current Provost Faculty Fellow for Equity and Inclusion, Kiersten Ferguson, Simmons School of Education and Human Development's Department of Education Policy and Leadership; and Provost Faculty Fellow for Strategic Communication, Gordon Law, Meadows School of the Arts' Division of Advertising. The program offers opportunities for faculty to gain leadership experiences and for the Office of the Provost to expand faculty involvement in development and implementing projects that enhance our academic priorities. We appreciate the expertise, energy, and support provided by two of our current Fellows whose terms conclude this year: Renee McDonald, Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences' Department of Psychology, Fellow for Research Enhancement and Scholarly Impact; and Jared Schroeder, Meadows School of the Arts' Division of Journalism, Fellow for Faculty Community and Awards.

Congratulations to Recently Promoted Faculty

The Board of Trustees has confirmed the recommendation of the faculty, Deans, Provost and President to promote the following faculty at each of the two steps of promotion and tenure. Please join me in congratulating our colleagues on these well-earned milestones in their academic careers. I would also like to thank all faculty who served as mentors and reviewers throughout this process.

Promotion to Associate Professor with Tenure

1. Sondra Barringer, Simmons School of Education and Human Development's Department of Education Policy and Leadership
2. Hillel Bavli, Dedman School of Law
3. Melanie Clemmons, Meadows School of the Arts' Division of Art
4. Harsha Gangammanavar, Lyle School of Engineering's Department of Operations Research and Engineering Management
5. Ann Horsburgh, Dedman College of Humanities & Sciences' Department of Anthropology
6. Nathan Hudson, Dedman College of Humanities & Sciences' Department of Psychology
7. Milica Mormann, Cox School of Business' Department of Marketing
8. Adam Norris, Dedman College of Humanities & Sciences' Department of Biological Sciences
9. Carla Reyes, Dedman School of Law
10. Nishiki Sugawara-Beda, Meadows School of the Arts' Division of Art

11. Benjamin Tabak, Dedman College of Humanities & Sciences' Department of Psychology

Promotion to Full Professor

1. Stephen Arrowsmith, Dedman College of Humanities & Sciences' Department of Earth Sciences
2. Marcus Butts, Cox School of Business' Department of Management and Organizations
3. Chotibhak Jotikasthira, Cox School of Business' Department of Finance
4. Sandra Duhe, Meadows School of the Arts' Division of Corporate Communication and Public Affairs
5. Jon Blake Hackler, Meadows School of the Arts' Division of Theatre
6. Alex Lippert, Dedman College of Humanities & Sciences' Department of Chemistry
7. Candace Walkington, Simmons School of Education and Human Development's Department of Teaching and Learning
8. Brian Zoltowski, Dedman College of Humanities & Sciences' Department of Chemistry

Provost participating in informal conversations with college/school faculty this spring

On May 9, I concluded the informal conversations series with college/school faculty this spring by meeting with the Dedman School of Law faculty.

Thank you, once again, to all the faculty who made time to participate in these meetings and shared their perspectives. As we continue in our journey toward even greater academic, research and inclusive excellence, your input and support will remain vital.

May Term classes commence this week on both Dallas and Taos campuses

This week, [SMU Intersessions](#) commenced classes on both the Dallas main campus and our Taos, New Mexico campus. Please note that each campus has different dates and deadlines tailored to that campus. May Session in Dallas started Thursday, May 11 and will end on Thursday, May 25. The SMU-in-Taos May Session began today, May 12 and will last until Saturday, May 27. Additional details and dates are available on the [SMU Academic Year Calendar](#).

Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

Call for Proposals: Provost's Science & Engineering Postdoctoral Fellowships

To support our goals for research excellence and Carnegie R1, we are announcing the Provost's Science and Engineering Postdoctoral Fellowships Program. This new initiative will provide \$55,000 stipends plus standard SMU benefits for one year to postdoctoral scholars who will be affiliated with science and engineering departments, programs, centers or institutes, as defined by the ACE Carnegie Foundation. Up to 10 postdoctoral positions will be funded for one year through this program with selection priority given to proposals that can guarantee funding for subsequent years.

Proposal review will start June 1, 2023, and continue on a rolling basis thereafter. Proposals must be pre-reviewed by the PI's school or college Dean's Office by sending proposals to the following school or college contacts for pre-review:

1. Dedman College: [Renee McDonald](#), Senior Associate Dean
2. Lyle School: [Dinesh Rajan](#), Senior Associate Dean
3. Simmons School: [Anthony Petrosino](#), Associate Dean
4. Guildhall: [Mary Endsley](#), Executive Assistant

5. Other schools: Please contact the school Dean's Office

More information and instructions can be found in the [call for proposals](#). Please contact your school or college Dean's Office contact for questions about the pre-review process. Additional questions may be directed to [Robin Poston](#), Dean of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies.

Provost Summer Research Grants

As additional support for our research excellence and Carnegie R1 goals, we are launching a new program to support degree completion for doctoral students in the humanities and social sciences. [Provost's Summer Research Grants](#) provide up to \$5,000 per student for dissertation research-related expenses during the summer. Eligible expenses include: living expenses (if the student does not have a summer stipend from their department), travel to research sites, lodging at research sites, research equipment, technology purchases, software purchases, survey research expenses, etc. Applications will be reviewed starting May 15, 2023, and on a rolling basis thereafter. Questions about the program can be sent to [Dr. Alan Itkin](#), Senior Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs and Chief of Staff, Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies.

Provost's Humanities and Social Sciences Doctoral Candidacy Fellowships

As you might recall, in March we also [announced a new fellowship program](#) to better support our current and incoming classes of humanities and social sciences Ph.D. students. We asked department chairs in these areas to submit Ph.D. student nominations no later than Friday, March 31 to align with SMU's April 15 deadline for admitted Ph.D. students to accept admission offers. We will provide an update on the exciting new class of Ph.D. students supported from this initiative in upcoming newsletters.

New video promoting SMU's vision of research now online

My office and the Office of Research and Innovation have [created a video](#) to promote our vision as we begin making the investments required to expand our research into the realm of innovation and entrepreneurship. Thank you to our outstanding faculty for the work you are already doing in the research and innovation domains. We look forward to supporting you further and expanding opportunities for impact in the years ahead.

Key leadership searches underway

Peter O'Donnell Jr. Data Science Institute (DSI) Director

Last week, the search committee met with our executive search firm, Isaacson Miller, to review the current slate of applicants and to assess what adjustments, if any, were needed to establish a complete and highly competitive candidate pool by mid-June.

As always, thank you to Suku Nair, Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer, for chairing the search committee, and to Peter Moore, who is serving as the DSI Director *ad interim*, and starting June 1, 2023, Center for Research Computing Director *ad interim*, until the new Director arrives. Be on the lookout for additional information in subsequent newsletters.

News and Noteworthy

Inaugural SMU+GSV Mission Summit

This year, for the first time, SMU is partnering with Global Silicon Valley (GSV) to host a mission summit on our campus May 22–24. Aiming to accelerate the growing wave of businesses that combine purpose and profits, the [SMU+GSV Mission Summit](#) will build on the tradition of GSV's internationally recognized and acclaimed [annual summit program](#), gathering a mix of entrepreneurs,

investors and leaders from business, academia, government and non-profits to focus on propelling society forward.

Scheduled speakers include Rob Kaplan, former president and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas; Avery Johnson, former athlete and coach; Jennifer Chandler, managing director and president of Bank of America; Mike Carter, CEO and founder of BizEquity; Clark Hunt ('87), Chairman and CEO of the Kansas City Chiefs; Jeff Hoffman, founder and chairman of the Global Entrepreneurship Network; Alex Holmes, chairman and CEO of MoneyGram, and many others. More information, including registration instructions, is available [here](#).

Cox graduate student named in "2023 Best & Brightest MBAs" by Poets & Quants

[Okechi Nwabara](#) (MBA '23) has taken on multiple student leadership positions at the Cox School, including serving as the President of the Black Graduate Student Association, Vice President of Diversity for the Cox Student Advisory Board, and as an MBA Peer Coach. He was recognized as an Excel scholar by the National Black MBA Association DFW Chapter and is both a Cox Community and Cox Diversity Scholar. After graduation, he will join Microsoft as a Finance Manager. Read more about Nwabara in [Poets and Quants here](#).

SMU anthropologist researching and paving the way for better early psychosis care among diverse youth

Associate Professor of Anthropology, Neely Myers, in Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences' Department of Anthropology, [oversaw a study](#) that looked at disparities in care pathways for youth in Black, Latino, Native American, Asian, and other racial/ethnic groups as compared to white youth in the United States. Researchers from the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities, University of Pittsburgh, University of California – Davis, and Columbia University, as well as SMU undergraduate research assistant Matt Hutnyan, '21, also participated in the study.

SMU team helping NASA map the effects of natural and human impact on the Earth

SMU geophysicist Zhong Lu, Jinwoo Kim, Interferometric Synthetic Aperture Radar (InSAR) research scientist in the SMU Radar Laboratory, and SMU Ph.D. student Lang Liang, are [part of a team](#) working on a new [National Aeronautics and Space Administration](#) (NASA) program to make free satellite-based observations of Earth's water, ecosystem and land surface available to anyone with an internet connection. This project, Observational Products for End-Users from Remote Sensing Analysis (OPERA), will help government agencies, disaster responders and the public find timely data about changes in the Earth driven by environmental and geological processes.

SMU GOCE hosts webinar on data security in the defense sector with General David Petraeus

In a May 1 webinar, sponsored by SMU Global, Online and Continuing Education (GOCE) and [DTC Global](#), General David Petraeus spoke with attendees about Defense Supply Chain Vulnerability, Operational Readiness, and Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) Compliance. Attendees gained a deeper understanding of supply chain security and the importance of safeguarding Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) in the defense sector. They also received practical advice and actionable solutions for enhancing operational readiness and meeting CMMC framework compliance requirements. General Petraeus's expertise, drawn from his esteemed career, made this event an excellent and well-attended learning opportunity. As a Licensed Training Provider for the CMMC, SMU GOCE is proud to deliver their Certified CMMC Professional Program. Learn more about the program [here](#).

Sincerely,



Elizabeth G. Lobo, PhD

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Southern Methodist University

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

World Changers Shaped Here