

Weekly Update | May 19, 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

Spring Commencement 2023 recap

This past weekend, May 12-13, SMU held its 108th Commencement Weekend to celebrate the Class of 2023. Commencement Weekend included the Baccalaureate and Rotunda Recessional on May 12, the All-University Commencement on May 13, featuring keynote speaker [Brian Tyler](#), CEO of [McKesson Corporation](#), and 27 degree recognition ceremonies. In total 2,712 students graduated, and 3,433 degrees were conferred this May.

Congratulations to all of this year's graduates. You have achieved a great deal during your time at SMU and we look forward to hearing about your journeys as you go out to change the world.

Thank you to the members of the SMU community, faculty and staff who participated in Commencement Weekend. Graduation is a special time on our campus, and your hard work and dedication ensure a wonderful experience for our students and their families. You, and your work, are greatly appreciated.

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

As mentioned in last week's newsletter, Faculty Senate, Office of the Provost, Office of University Decision Support, and Business and Finance are creating a task force to examine faculty salaries for both the tenure/tenure-track and non-tenure-track levels. Last week, [invitations were sent out](#) to serve and we are grateful to the following participants who have confirmed their willingness to serve:

- Nathan Balke, Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, Department of Economics

- Sondra Barringer, Simmons School of Education and Human Development, Department of Education Policy and Leadership
- Ernie Barry, Office of Budgets and Finance
- Melissa Chessher, Meadows School of the Arts, Division of Journalism
- Ruth Cross, Dedman Law School
- Marta Krogh, Faculty Senate, Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, Department of English
- Maribeth Kuenzi, Cox School of Business, Department of Management and Organizations
- Rebekah Miles, Perkins School of Theology
- Lourdes Molina, Faculty Senate, Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, Department of World Languages and Literatures
- Dinesh Rajan, Lyle School of Engineering, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering
- Michael Tumeo, University Decision Support
- Paige Ware, Office of Faculty Success

During summer 2023, the Office of the Provost will begin gathering data to support the Task Force which will meet throughout the 2023–2024 academic year to respond to their charge.

Congratulations to Recently Promoted Faculty

In [last week's newsletter](#), we shared the list of recently promoted faculty as confirmed by the Board of Trustees during their May meeting. Please join me in congratulating our Dedman Law School colleague, Professor Eric Ruben, who also earned promotion to Associate Professor with tenure this academic year. I would also like to thank all faculty who served as mentors and reviewers throughout this process.

Additional rankings are in, and SMU's graduate programs continue to excel

Last week, we reported the exciting news that [for the very first time in SMU's history, three schools ranked in U.S. News and World Report top 50](#). Cox School of Business is ranked 33rd for their MBA program, Dedman School of Law is ranked 45th, and Simmons School of Education is ranked 49th.

Each of our schools offer multiple programs, and these programs are also individually ranked, and have exciting news to report. *U.S. News and World Report* ranked Cox School the 2nd highest private university in Texas for full-time MBAs and 37th for the part-time MBA program. Simmons School is 1st among private universities and 3rd among all colleges in Texas for education schools. Dedman Law had multiple highly-ranked programs by *U.S. News and World Report*, [listed here](#), and *Reuters* ranked Dedman Law 15th in the nation among law schools with the highest percentage of 2022 graduates placed in long-term, full-time, bar-passage required jobs.

Thank you again to all those who have worked to propel our programs forward and congratulations to our top 50 programs and schools.

Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

Consortium, including SMU faculty, receives \$1 million National Science Foundation's (NSF) Engines Development Award to transform logistics in Texoma region

SMU, the University of North Texas (UNT), the University of Texas – Arlington, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Dallas College and 25 other organizations in Texas and Oklahoma, have been awarded \$1 million from the [National Science Foundation's Regional Innovation Engines program](#). Congratulations to SMU's Khaled Abdelghany, Professor in Lyle School of Engineering's Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, for his contributions to this consortium.

This unique collaboration of higher education institutions, federal, state, local and tribal governments, non-profit organizations, and for-profit companies representing 26 counties, from Dallas-Fort Worth northwards to Oklahoma's Choctaw Nation, is called the Texoma Innovation Engine. Led by UNT, the Texoma Innovation Engine is utilizing one of the NSF's new Engines Development Awards, to create economic, societal and technological opportunities for this region.

The Texoma Innovation Engine will solicit user-inspired projects from the logistics community and, through research hubs located in disadvantaged areas, translate emerging technologies into innovative systems, practices and workforce development programs. These hubs will conceptualize new products and services, incubate startups and facilitate commercialization.

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:

- Dedman College: [Renee McDonald](#), Senior Associate Dean
- Lyle School: [Dinesh Rajan](#), Senior Associate Dean
- Simmons School: [Anthony Petrosino](#), Associate Dean
- Guildhall: [Mary Endsley](#), Executive Assistant
- Other schools: Please contact the school Dean's Office

More information and instructions can be found in the [call for proposals](#). Please reach out to your school or college Dean's Office point of 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. Application review began on **May 15, 2023**, and will continue 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

Fifteen students in Art History, Economics, and History were selected for Provost's Doctoral Candidacy Fellowships, as part of a [new program we launched](#) in March, to support Ph.D. students in the humanities and social sciences who have performed well in the early stages of their programs. These fellowships will provide the selected students with up to three years of a stipend, health insurance, and research funding. Providing this support, in turn, will allow these students' departments to admit additional promising prospective students to join their Ph.D. programs with existing resources. Congratulations to our inaugural class of Provost's Doctoral Candidacy Fellows, listed below:

Economics

- William Cunningham
- Weihong Li
- Rouzhi Liang
- Ignacio Penagos Montoya
- Fangzhou Sha
- Ayus Mitra
- Md Tameed Hossain
- Javier Jose Gonzalez Rodriguez

History

- Tom Pelchat
- Rashida Shafiq

Art History

- Jean Christensen
- Arvin Maghsoudlou
- Kelsey Rozema
- Gabriela Paiva de Toledo
- Jennifer Laffick

Key leadership searches underway

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

The search committee and our executive search firm, Isaacson Miller, are continuing to collect strong applications for this position. We look forward to having 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

SMU undergraduate student selected for US Department of State's Foreign Affairs Information Technology Fellowship

Delphina Rivas, a rising junior and Provost Scholar, double-majoring in Computer Science and Creative Computing, has been selected by the [U.S. Department of State](#) for the [Foreign Affairs Information Technology \(FAIT\) Fellowship](#).

In this two-year fellowship program, Rivas will receive up to \$87,000 in academic funding over the course of two years, two summer internships, and mentorship. Upon successful completion of the fellowship, Rivas will receive an appointment in the Foreign Service as an Information Management Specialist.

Congratulations, Delphina, for your selection. We are excited for the next steps in your academic and professional journey as you continue being a world changer.

Inaugural SMU+GSV Mission Summit May 22–24

SMU is partnering with Global Silicon Valley (GSV) to host a mission summit on May 22–24. Already over 500 attendees have registered to participate in the summit hosted on SMU's campus.

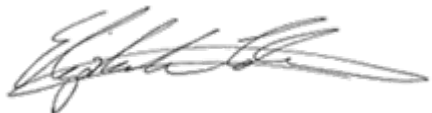
Newly-confirmed speakers include: Governor Kevin Stitt and First Lady Sarah Stitt of Oklahoma; Jeanne Allen, founder and CEO for the Center for Education Reform; Rob Pace, founder of HundredX; Todd Wagner, founder of 1613 and co-founder of the Mission Fund who will join with an already-phenomenal roster including individuals such as Rob Kaplan, former president and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas; Avery Johnson, former professional athlete and coach; Jennifer Chandler, managing director and president of Bank of America; Clark Hunt ('87), Chairman of the Kansas City Chiefs, and many others.

More information, including registration instructions, [is available here](#).

SMU Global, Online and Continuing Education's (GOCE) Rethinking the Workforce of the Future panel

The [Rethinking the Workforce of the Future panel discussion](#) at the recent MSP Summit and [Channel Partners Conference & Expo](#) in Las Vegas, NV on May 1 was a success. Two of GOCE's Future of Work advisory members participated in the event, Sharlene Jenner, Vice President at [Abelson Taylor](#), who served as a panelist, and Ron Lovern, Executive Vice President at [Triton Networks](#), who moderated the panel. Two of the other three members serving on the panel, Robert W. Miller, Director Fiber Channel Marketing - Integrated & Partner Solutions at [AT&T](#), and Kelechi Onyebuchi, Director of Product Management at [TDSynnex](#), are SMU alumni. SMU's strong representation at this conference of 7,800 participants was notable. The panelists engaged in an insightful discussion on various aspects of the future workforce, including remote work, generational diversity in the workplace, technology adoption, and the importance of continuing and professional education. They emphasized the value of industry partnerships that propel workforce training, citing examples of programs and initiatives offered by GOCE.

Sincerely,



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World Changers Shaped Here

