

Weekly Update | October 27, 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, 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 four categories: 1) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, 2) Fall 2023, 3) Inclusive Excellence, and 4) News and Noteworthy.

Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

SMU-led Texoma semiconductor proposal designated by Biden-Harris administration as one of 31 U.S. tech hubs

This week, the Biden-Harris administration, through the [U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration](#) (EDA), [announced the designation of 31 Tech Hubs](#) in regions across the country. This is the first phase of the new [Tech Hubs program](#), which is an economic development initiative designed to drive regional innovation and job creation by strengthening a region's capacity to manufacture, commercialize, and deploy technology that will advance American competitiveness. The program invests directly in burgeoning, high-potential U.S. regions and aims to transform them into globally competitive innovation centers.

I am pleased to announce that on Monday, I and members of SMU's delegation, participated in a Zoom call with President Biden and White House representatives as the White House shared that SMU's proposal for the [Texoma Semiconductor Tech Hub](#) had received official Tech Hub designation. This recognition is an endorsement of SMU's and our region's plans to supercharge technological industries to create jobs, strengthen U.S. competitiveness and protect national security. We look forward to leading the exceptional consortium of 41 organizations – ranging from industry,

research, higher education and government – that will support the Texoma Semiconductor Tech Hub.

Congratulations and thank you to Suku Nair, Vice Provost for Research and Innovation, and the team of SMU faculty and community partners who were the driving force behind this proposal, especially J.-C. Chiao, Mary and Richard Templeton Centennial Chair, and professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Lyle School of Engineering; Jennifer Dworak, associate director of the SMU AT&T Center for Virtualization, and professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Lyle School of Engineering; and Scott Douglas, associate chair of undergraduate studies and outreach, and professor in the Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering at the Lyle School of Engineering.

You can read more about this exciting announcement at [Dallas Morning News](#), [Dallas Innovates](#), [Bloomberg](#), [The Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#), [New York Times](#) and [The Hill](#).

Simmons School of Education and Human Development's Department of Education Policy and Leadership has highest Scholarly Research Index in U.S.

The Department of Education Policy and Leadership at Simmons School of Education and Human Development has the highest Scholarly Research Index in the country when compared to all other education leadership departments throughout the U.S., according to benchmarking data from Academic Analytics.

Thank you to Michael S. Harris, Chair of the Department of Education Policy and Leadership and Faculty Senate President; and Brenna Rivas, Director of Faculty Awards, for bringing this remarkable achievement to light. And thank you to the Department of Education Policy and Leadership's faculty for earning this recognition.

SMU lab creating large synthetic datasets to reduce bias and preserve privacy in AI facial recognition systems

Corey Clark, assistant professor of computer science in the Lyle School of Engineering and deputy director for research at SMU's Guildhall, and his team are leveraging SMU's supercomputing power in their [Intelligent Systems and Bias Examination Lab](#) (ISaBEL) to reduce bias and preserve privacy in AI facial recognition (FR) systems. This project could greatly impact how FR algorithms recognize race and gender. The team will be able to address fairness and bias issues found in FR technology to create a bias certification process that could evaluate existing companies' AI and be used to develop future models.

Cox School of Business professors' research examines gender bias in U.S. and why the gender gap still exists

Professors Darius Miller and Ruidi Huang in the Department of Finance at Cox School of Business, along with coauthor Erik Mayer, have been conducting research that examines gender bias in promotions within the U.S. financial industry. Their research goes beyond simply documenting the often-cited gender gap when it comes to promotions and presents hard evidence that gender bias can explain why the gap exists. Their large-scale sample covers approximately 72,000 workers from over 1,000 mortgage companies.

[Read more here](#) about their research that won the Best Paper Award at the [FMA/UC Davis Napa/Sonoma Finance Conference](#).

Fall 2023

Executive Board meeting recaps

Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences

On Thursday, I joined President Turner and Elisabeth Martin Armstrong Dean Tom DiPiero for the Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences' fall 2023 Executive Board meeting. During my remarks, I reviewed SMU's undergraduate and graduate enrollment outcomes for fall 2023, updated board members on the 2024 *U.S. News and World Report* rankings outcomes, and discussed some exciting advancements in research that will support our goals for even greater academic excellence, such as: 1) the \$30 million gift from the O'Donnell Foundation to endow the O'Donnell Data Science and Research Computing Institute (ODSRCI) and to support the Initiative for Digital Innovation in Engineering and Computer Science, 2) Neena Imam's recent appointment and her introduction to the Executive Board as the Peter O'Donnell, Jr. Director of the ODSRCI, and 3) the Biden Administration's announcement that SMU's proposal for a Texoma Semiconductor Hub has been accepted, making it one of only 31 official designated U.S. Tech Hubs to spark innovation and development across the country.

Lyle School of Engineering

Today, I joined President Turner and Mary and Richard Templeton Dean Nader Jalili for the Lyle School of Engineering's fall 2023 Executive Board meeting. My remarks were similar to those given to the Dedman College Executive Board but with additional information on the contributions and accomplishments of Lyle's faculty and staff.

EthicsPoint's fraud reporting system supports SMU's Code of Ethics

Chandra McQueen, director of Internal Auditing and Consulting Services, [sent a message](#) on Monday, October 23, about SMU's external reporting system EthicsPoint. EthicsPoint allows employees with knowledge of unethical activity or activities that may violate SMU's Code of Ethics to file a report safely and securely. Early reporting of unethical behavior may minimize its potential negative impact.

Internal Auditing and Consulting Services offers an [information video on their website](#) with additional information.

If you wish to make a report via EthicsPoint, you may choose from one of the following methods:

- *EthicsPoint Hotline* (Toll-free): 844-995-4895
- *Online Reporting Portal*: smu.ethicspoint.com
- *Mobile Online Reporting Portal*: smumobile.ethicspoint.com

For additional questions, please contact Chandra McQueen at 214-768-4767.

2023 Staff Celebration and Convocation recognizes outstanding SMU staff members

On Tuesday, October 24, the SMU Staff Association hosted the annual Staff Celebration and Convocation at the George W. Bush Presidential Center. This event recognizes and celebrates [all](#)

[SMU staff who have reached their 25th anniversary of service](#) as well as the Presidential & Loretta O'Reilly Hawkins Award winners.

Congratulations to this year's award recipients:

- Gretchen C. Voight New Employee Excellence Award: Amanda Navarro, Office of Facilities Planning and Management
- Continuing Excellence Award: Carolyn Jeter, Office of the Provost
- Innovation Award: Jennifer Mayes, Academic Technology Services
- Outstanding Leadership Award: Neil Robinson, Marketing and Communications
- Loretta O'Reilly Hawkins Award: Wendelin Donahue, Media and Community Relations

Thank you to all who were recognized at this event for your outstanding work and dedication to the University. And thank you to the staff, particularly in the Staff Association and in Human Resources, who organized this event in celebration of our colleagues.

Please allow me a personal note of congratulations to my Executive Assistant Carolyn Jeter, who received the Continuing Excellence Award. For nearly forty years (and double-digit provosts), Carolyn has been the embodiment of continued excellence for SMU's Division of Academic Affairs and for the University at large. Her work has not only sustained the Office of the Provost for decades but has continued to raise its game over the years in line with SMU's steady advance.

Carolyn, I am so personally pleased to have your incredible accomplishments formally recognized with this award.

2023 Homecoming Weekend

SMU's Homecoming and Reunion Weekend takes place this weekend, October 26 – 29. Over the next few days, there will be [multiple events held across campus](#) bringing alumni and families back to the Hilltop. This means that our campus will be busier than usual, so please plan for a few extra minutes of travel time to get on, around and off campus, have patience with drivers and pedestrians who are navigating after a long time away, and assist with directions to anyone who may be in need.

This is a wonderful time when our extended SMU community can reunite and rekindle their collegiate spirit together. I look forward to celebrating with you all this weekend.

Reminder: 2nd annual Place-Based Community Engagement Symposium

The SMU Place-Based Community Engagement Symposium invites SMU faculty and staff to attend the two-day symposium taking place on November 2, 2023, at the SMU Indoor Performance Center from 4:30 – 7 p.m. and on November 3, 2023, at Dallas College's West Dallas Campus from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

[Additional information on this year's theme and keynote speakers is available here.](#)

This event is free and seats are limited; so, please [register here](#) by end of day today, October 27. You will be able to register for one or both days.

Inclusive Excellence

Dedman School of Law students win prestigious scholarships at Dallas' African American bar association's gala

[J. L. Turner Legal Association](#), the African American bar association of Dallas, hosted their Royal Scholarship Gala on October 21, 2023. We are pleased to share that during this event two of our Dedman School of Law students won prestigious scholarships.

Congratulations to Julia St. John for winning the Justice Carolyn Wright Scholarship and to Jania McGahee for receiving a J. L. Turner Legal Association Foundation Scholarship.

First-Gen Fest to celebrate SMU's first-generation students

Join Student Academic Engagement & Success (SAES) and the First-Generation Initiative at [First-Gen Fest](#) on November 8 from 12 – 3 p.m. located on the Mary Hay/Peyton/Shuttles Commons Quad. In honor of National First-Gen Day, representatives from SAES, the First-Generation Initiative and other SMU partner departments come together to celebrate SMU's first-generation students. There will be music, food, and giveaways, and students will have an opportunity to connect with various campus resources, organizations, and supportive faculty and staff. Faculty and staff are invited to attend and encouraged to announce this event in class or via an announcement in Canvas to support our first-generation students.

News and Noteworthy

Poets & Quants names Cox School of Business professor one of 2023's Favorite MBA Professors

Professor Helmuth Ludwig in Cox School of Business' Department of Strategy and Entrepreneurship has been named one of [Poets & Quants' Favorite MBA Professors of the Class of 2023](#). Professor Ludwig was nominated by Brent Schlagel from SMU's class of 2023 MBA program, who was selected as one of [Poets & Quants 2023 MBAs to Watch](#).

Pollock Gallery to feature Tamiko Kawata's exhibition, "Beyond Edge, Beyond Surface," November 1 through December 1

Join the Meadows School of the Arts' Division of Art for the [opening reception](#) of SMU Visiting Artist [Tamiko Kawata's](#) exhibition *Beyond Edge, Beyond Surface*, on Friday, November 3, from 5 – 7 p.m. in the Pollock Gallery, located in Suite 101 of Expressway Tower.

On November 1, Kawata will host a [public lecture](#) about the art exhibit in O'Donnell Hall OAC2130, Owen Art Center, at 7 p.m.

The free exhibit will run from November 1 to December 1 in the Pollock Gallery.

Recap: #1Day4Dallas service event

On Saturday, October 21, SMU Engage Dallas hosted its third annual #1Day4Dallas event. This annual event gathers students from every Residential Commons to participate in community service

activities. This year, 151 volunteers participated in volunteer activities across [13 service sites](#) in West and South Dallas.

Engage Dallas is more than a student-led service program; it is also the most accessible co-curricular way for Common Curriculum students to receive their [Community Engagement \(CE\)](#) and/or [Civics and Individual Ethics \(CIE\)](#) Proficiency and Experience required for graduation. Students can learn more and get started with the service by [following the instructions on the Engage Dallas website](#).

Office of Global, Online and Continuing Education (GOCE) hosts artificial intelligence (AI) panel discussion

On October 20, SMU's Office of Global, Online and Continuing Education (GOCE) hosted a focused AI panel discussion in Moody Hall. Supported by GOCE's Future of Work, Cybersecurity, and Women in Leadership Advisories, the event featured industry experts from [AT&T](#), [Verizon](#), [IBM](#), and [Abelson Taylor](#). These representatives joined Professor Bivin Sadler, lead faculty of SMU's Master of Science in Data Science program, to explore the complexities of artificial intelligence, and the discussion yielded valuable insights into AI's evolving role in technology and society.

Sincerely,



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

World Changers Shaped Here