

Weekly Update | September 29, 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 three categories: 1) Fall 2023, 2) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 3) News and Noteworthy.

Fall 2023

Dedman School of Law Executive Board meeting recap

Yesterday, I joined President Turner and Jason Nance, Judge James Noel Dean and Professor of Law, for the Dedman School of Law's 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 *US News and World Report* rankings outcomes, and announced Neena Imam's appointment as the inaugural Peter O'Donnell, Jr. Director of the O'Donnell Data Science and Research Computing Institute.

Annual SMU Family Weekend begins today

[SMU Family Weekend events](#) are now well underway. Each year, the SMU campus welcomes parents and families of current Mustangs to spend the weekend on campus for a glimpse into their students' lives.

Family Weekend events are hosted by multiple departments, schools and student organizations to talk about services, offer a chance to meet with faculty and staff, and celebrate campus life. Tomorrow's main event will be the SMU football game against the UNC Charlotte 49ers at Gerald J. Ford Stadium.

Call for proposals: May, Summer and August 2024 Sessions

On Wednesday, September 27, I sent [an email to all faculty](#) calling for summer 2024 session course proposals at both the Dallas and Taos campuses. Summer intersession courses are important as they allow students to complete needed coursework, taking advantage of intensive and experiential learning opportunities.

Proposed courses should be submitted no later than Wednesday, October 18. Please complete a separate proposal for each course you intend to teach. Complete a [course proposal for Intersessions by clicking here](#). Complete a [course proposal for the SMU-in-Taos term here](#).

For additional information please reference [my previous email](#) or contact [SMU Intersessions](#) program staff: Dr. Maeve Skidmore, Dr. Andrew Hamilton, or Mariah Parker at intersessions@smu.edu or [SMU-in-Taos](#) program staff: Dr. Maeve Skidmore or Cristalle Choi at smutaos@smu.edu.

Provost Monthly Lunch at the Commons Table next week

On Monday, October 2, from 12 – 1 p.m. I will be having lunch in the re-opened Faculty-Staff Dining Room located in Umphrey Lee. The “Commons Table,” designed by the Faculty Senate and the Faculty Club, is designated for community members who come to meals by themselves or in small groups and wish to socialize with others to better foster faculty and staff community. I look forward to seeing you there and hope you will join me for a relaxed lunch and conversation.

You can [purchase credits for SMU dining facilities online \(which includes access to the Faculty-Staff Dining Room\) here](#).

AT&T Technology and Leadership Talks at SMU recap

On Wednesday evening, September 27, I had the privilege of hosting the [AT&T](#) Technology & Leadership Talks in SMU’s newly dedicated Frances Anne Moody Hall. During the event, participants had the opportunity to hear from four AT&T leaders (three of whom are SMU alumni) about their unique professional journeys in the fields of data and technology and to receive their insights on new data science tools that are revolutionizing the world around us. The program reinforced to me the impact SMU can have when we combine our strengths with leading-edge corporate partners.

Three Minute Thesis competition registration now open

Please encourage graduate students working on research projects to participate in SMU’s annual [Three Minute Thesis \(3MT\)](#) Competition in November. 3MT is an excellent opportunity for graduate students to share their research with the SMU community, hone communication and presentation skills, and earn prizes of up to \$800.

This year’s competition will be held in the Moody Hall Auditorium. First-round heats will take place 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. on Tuesday, November 7. Top competitors from each heat will advance to the finals, which will take place from 12 – 1 p.m. on Friday, November 10. All sessions are open to the SMU community. [Registration is open](#) now through October 31.

Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

Lyle School of Engineering Professor awarded National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant

Professor MinJun Kim, Robert C. Womack Endowed Chair Professor in Engineering in the Lyle School of Engineering’s Department of Mechanical Engineering, has been awarded a four-year grant exceeding \$1.7M from the [National Institutes of Health’s \(NIH\) Research Project Grant Program \(R01\)](#). This award will be used

to support the research project: Multimodal Label-Free Nanosensor for Single Virus Characterization and Content Analysis.

Congratulations to Professor Kim and his team.

Lyle School of Engineering Professor awarded Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) grant

Professor Khaled Abdelghany, Professor in Lyle School of Engineering's Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, has been awarded a three-year grant exceeding \$1.2 million from the [Federal Highway Administration's \(FHWA\) Exploratory Advanced Research Program \(EAR\)](#). This award will support the research project: PANORAMA: An Interpretable Context-Aware AI Framework for Integrated Real-Time Intersection Detection and Signal Optimization.

SMU is the lead institution for this project with collaborators from the Georgia Institute of Technology and The University of Tulsa, with expertise spanning artificial intelligence/machine learning model development and applications, virtual reality development, traffic control modeling and analysis, traffic flow theory, cloud computing, software development, and system automation.

Congratulations to Professor Abdelghany and his team.

Call for Proposals: SMU Mission Foods Texas-Mexico Center 2023

The [SMU Mission Foods Texas-Mexico Center](#) is accepting proposals for research grants, policy papers and evidence-based policy demonstration projects that specifically affect the Texas-Mexico relationship. Proposals investigating migration or trade and investment topics and team projects that include scholars from institutions in the U.S. and Mexico will be given priority.

This academic year the maximum award available is \$15,000 per grant, and the submission deadline is October 27, 2023. Proposals should include a CV for the Principal Investigator (PI), an itemized budget of the research costs and a research proposal between 2-4 pages in length.

[Click here to learn more or to submit a proposal.](#)

News and Noteworthy

Inaugural Custard Institute for Spanish Art & Culture Symposium to be held next week

The Meadows Museum at SMU is hosting the inaugural [Custard Institute for Spanish Art & Culture Symposium](#) in the museum's Bob and Jean Smith Auditorium. The two-day symposium brings together national and local experts to discuss how technology and virtual visual realities may impact museums and the contexts for displaying artworks and artifacts in institutional settings.

There will be two keynote talks on the [first day of the symposium](#), Thursday, October 5, from 6 – 8 p.m. by Anne Balsamo, Arts and Humanities Distinguished University Chair at The University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) and Maurizio Forte, William and Sue Gross Distinguished Professor of Classical Studies and of Art, Art History, and Visual Studies, at Duke University. [On the second day of the symposium](#), Friday, October 6, five local experts will continue the discussion, which will culminate in an open forum to provide an opportunity for lively discussion.

The event is free, but registration is required for each day. [Register here for day one](#), and [here for day two](#).

Registration open: SMU Annual Place-Based Community Engagement Symposium

The [SMU Place-Based Community Engagement Symposium](#) is a gathering of thought leaders, academics, community leaders, and nonprofit professionals from SMU and the DFW area. This event is designed to explore the transformative potential of community engagement within specific geographic contexts.

The two-day symposium will take 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. Meals will be provided on both days.

Seats are limited; so, [please RSVP here](#) by October 20, 2023.

SMU Debate Team takes home awards from season-opening debate tournament

This past weekend, the SMU Debate Team competed in the first International Public Debate Association (IPDA) competition of the academic season at Lee College in Baytown, TX. The competition included over 20 collegiate programs with more than 100 student debaters from Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas and Texas.

SMU student Matthew Garcia won the novice debate championship and Evangeline Bulick won top speaker and seven consecutive rounds (7-0) in the junior varsity category. Megan Watson advanced to the top 16 among more than 50 novice competitors and Chi Aberle advanced to the top four.

SMU Financial Literacy launches podcast to help students

[SMU Financial Literacy](#) launched its first podcast last week, *Pony Finance 101*, which is now available on [Spotify](#), [Apple](#) and [Amazon](#). This podcast aims to make complicated money matters simple and to guide students through their journey of money management. Conversations address a broad range of issues such as budgeting, credit, savings and more. Every episode features a guest expert to help explain all things financial with new episodes released two to three times a month.

Sincerely,



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Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Southern Methodist University

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

World Changers Shaped Here