

Weekly Update | March 1, 2024

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 provost@smu.edu. Suggestions received before noon on Tuesday will be reviewed and considered for publication in that week's Friday newsletter. Others will be held until the following week. Previous newsletters are available [here](#).

Today's update falls into four categories: 1) Spring 2024, 2) Academic Excellence, 3) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 4) News and Noteworthy.

Spring 2024

Mandatory staff and faculty active threat safety training

On Monday, February 26, SMU Aware sent a message to employees regarding the implementation of active threat training starting February 28. This short 30-minute training supports SMU's ongoing commitment to fostering a safe and secure campus.

On Wednesday, you should have received an email notification with a prompt to complete the training. Please prioritize reviewing and completing it within 90 days, by Tuesday, May 28, to do your part in improving our overall safety preparedness.

Thank you for your dedication to the security of our community. If you have any issues accessing the course once it is assigned, please contact help@smu.edu.

Microsoft Skype to Teams conversion update

Since Microsoft has announced it will be terminating support for Skype for Business in 2025, the Office of Information Technology (OIT) is currently working to transition from Skype for Business to Microsoft Teams. This transition will require SMU to migrate phone services to Microsoft Teams, which can be used for voice, video, chat, workgroup collaboration, calendar and file storage.

Unfortunately, the current desk phones are proprietary to Skype for Business and are not compatible with Microsoft Teams. This will require all employees to transition either to a new desk phone or to a headset that plugs into your computer.

To begin this transition, in October 2023 OIT sent a survey to faculty and staff to assess interest in replacing desk phones with headsets for making voice calls through the PC instead of through desk phones. Almost 200 employees signed up at that time to replace their desk phones with headsets. Deployment of these new headsets began last month and will continue throughout the spring 2024 semester.

OIT will distribute a second survey in the near future to provide faculty and staff with another opportunity to specify their preferred Teams device for phone services. If someone requires a physical telephone rather than a headset, it is important to notify OIT through this survey. In the coming months, all SMU employees will receive either Microsoft Teams-compatible desk phones or headsets to replace their current desk phones.

To learn more about the Teams Migrations project, timeline and frequently asked questions navigate to the [Teams Migration Project website](#).

Call for applications: SMU Impact Lab for social and environmental ventures

The SMU Impact Lab is seeking applicants from entrepreneurial faculty, students, and alumni for social and/or environmental ventures. The Impact Lab is looking to invest up to \$50,000 in these ventures. Entrepreneurial concepts must align with investment themes but may span any stage of business development from idea to working prototype to go-to-market.

For additional information on the Impact Lab and application instructions [visit the lab's website](#) or contact program Co-Director James Hart at jdhart@smu.edu.

Registration open: Women's Symposium

Registration for the 58th Annual Women's Symposium hosted by the Women & LGBT Center is now open. The symposium will be held on Wednesday, March 6, 2024, beginning at 5 p.m. and will include a networking session, plated dinner, keynote address and award presentations.

Alex Elle will be the keynote speaker for this year's symposium. Elle is a *New York Times* Bestselling Author, certified breathwork coach, and Restorative Writing specialist currently residing in Maryland with her family. She teaches workshops, courses, and facilitates retreats to assist others in finding their voices and creating clarity in their lives and relationships.

Learn more about registration, schedule of events and donation opportunities on the [Women's Symposium website](#).

If you have any questions about the symposium, reach out to Nate Faust at nfaust@smu.edu, director of the Women & LGBT Center.

Academic Excellence

Search update: Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences Dean

The search is underway for the next Elisabeth Martin Armstrong Dean of Dedman College. The search committee members have been confirmed and we are pleased to announce [the complete roster](#) and to thank them in advance for their service.

In addition to participating in the first search committee meeting on March 7, Committee Chair Robin Poston, dean of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies and associate provost for Graduate Education and [C.V. O'Boyle](#), our executive search firm, will host a series of meetings March 6–8, with Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences stakeholders to inform the position description that will guide our search.

SMU Art History Ph.D. student receives prestigious Fulbright award

Jennifer Laffick, art history doctoral student in the Meadows School of the Arts, has received a [Fulbright U.S. Student Program](#) to study at the Université Grenoble Alpes in France for the 2024–2025 academic year. The grant was awarded from the U.S. Department of State and the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board. Laffick will spend the year in France conducting research on her dissertation project titled “Neoclassicism’s Atlantic Currents: French Painting and Power in the Early 19th Century.”

Graduate students interested in applying for the Fulbright should contact the [Moody Fellowships Office](#).

Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

Chair of Temerlin Advertising Institute publishes latest research examining use of eco-labels in health food products

Professor Joe Phua, Chair of the Temerlin Advertising Institute in the Meadows School of the Arts, published his latest research article examining the use of eco-labels in health food products in the [Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising](#). The article, Effects of Eco-Labels and Perceived Influencer Expertise on Perceived Healthfulness, Perceived Product Quality, and Behavioral Intention, was published with co-author Youngjee Ko from the University of Georgia.

Jacob and Frances Sanger Mossiker Endowed Chair in the Department of English releases new memoir

Professor Christopher González, Jacob and Frances Sanger Mossiker Endowed Chair in the Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences’ Department of English has released his newest memoir [Big Scary Brown Guy: A Memoir](#). Published in December 2023, González’s memoir reminisces on his life, his development of identity and growing up Latino in the United States and Texas.

News and Noteworthy

O'Donnell Data Science and Research Computing Institute to host seminar featuring director of Geospatial Science and Human Security Division at Oakridge National Laboratory

On Wednesday, March 2, from 3–4 p.m. at Hughes Trigg Student Center Room 220BC, Dr. Budhu Bhaduri from the Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) will be speaking on GeoAI, high-performance computing, and the nation's energy mission. Over light refreshments, Dr. Bhaduri will draw from his experiences at ORNL to highlight progress and challenges of some of the emerging data analysis and computational approaches, including artificial intelligence, machine learning, and high-performance computing.

For more information about the [event click here](#).

Meadows School of the Arts honors composer and drummer in The Police with Meadows Award

The Meadows School of the Arts announced that this year's [recipient of the Meadows Award will be Stewart Copeland](#), acclaimed composer and drummer for the English rock band The Police. As the recipient of the Meadows Award, which was first given in 1983, Copeland will complete an artistic residency in Dallas this spring and lead the Meadows Symphony Orchestra in a performance of his full orchestral rearrangement of The Police's best-known songs, "Police Deranged for Orchestra" at the 31st annual "[Meadows at the Meyerson](#)" benefit concert on April 1, 2024. This is the first time Copeland's work will be performed by a collegiate orchestra.

Recipients of annual J. Erik Jonsson Award from Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility announced

Ashlee and Chris Kleinert will receive the [2024 J. Erik Jonsson Ethics Award](#) from SMU's Cary M. Maguire Center for Ethics & Public Responsibility in recognition of their bold contributions to the Dallas area and their devotion to public service. Named in honor of J. Erik Jonsson, the public-spirited former mayor of Dallas, the annual award is given to individuals who epitomize the spirit of moral leadership and public virtue.

[The Kleinerts are set to receive the award](#) on April 11, 2024, from 12–1:30 p.m. in the Martha Proctor Mack Grand Ballroom in the Umphrey Lee Center.

SMU Continuing and Professional Education (CAPE) recently hosted leadership webinar about AI impacting the future of design

On February 15, SMU CAPE's instructors Karen Damwijk and Randy Krum discussed the impact of AI on graphic design and data visualization in a Thought Leadership webinar. They shared insights into effective AI tools, the ethical considerations for utilizing AI in data and design and the challenges that designers face when incorporating AI into their workflow. Damwijk and Krum also shared their thoughts on the balance between human and AI-generated creativity in design and their predictions for future trends. The recording is available on [CAPE's YouTube channel](#).

SMU Financial Literacy program hosted conference for financial literacy peer mentors

On February 16, SMU's Financial Literacy program, managed by Jennifer Gomez, welcomed peer mentors to campus for the third annual financial literacy conference. This was SMU's first year to host the conference where 10 advisors and 40 financial literacy peer mentors attended from the University of North Texas, Texas Woman's University, University of Texas at Arlington, University of Texas at Austin, University of Texas at Dallas and Tarleton State University. This conference provided an opportunity for mentors to collaborate with and learn from each other.

Hunt Leadership Scholars featured on FOX 4 News volunteering at food bank

Students from the Hunt Leadership Scholars Program were featured on [FOX 4 News](#) for volunteering at the [North Texas Food Bank](#) on Valentine's Day. The scholars assembled 25 pallets of produce that were used to create 15,000 meals to be distributed throughout the Dallas Fort Worth metroplex.

Sincerely,



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

