



Dr. Maria Dixon-Hall, SMU Chief Cultural Intelligence Officer

IT'S ABOUT TIME!

I have started this blog about 15 times. Now don't get me wrong, I love blogging. But it's been a while since I "had" to produce one. Do I talk about the excitement of a new academic year? A story about my feral teenagers? A commentary about the state of the world?

I've decided to just start like this: Welcome to *The Bridge*, the monthly newsletter from the Office of Cultural Intelligence. *The Bridge* is where I hope you'll find information and stories that strengthen the connective tissue linking us together here on the Hilltop. Of course, it will share news about things like our Bridge Builder's Lecture Series and upcoming community gatherings. But more important to me, it will feature stories that highlight you. From semi-regular features like "What Are You Listening To/Watching?" where we ask faculty and staff what's on their playlists or their current binge (I have one word: *Lioness*!), to "People in Your Neighborhood" (shout out to Sesame Street), where we introduce you to people you've seen on email but never met — our hope is that you'll get to know the people who make SMU awesome.

I also hope this newsletter will share stories that help you build more shared meaning with your colleagues. An organization is only as effective as the shared meanings its people have with one another. Contrary to the myth, shared meaning isn't legislated it's created through the overlap of lived experience. Let's face it: we bring our entire selves to work. The kid who hasn't finished their homework, worry about an aging parent, a life-changing diagnosis, financial struggles none of it stays home. It weighs on our work and our relationships. The more we understand about what people bring with them ability, life stage, generation, place of origin, cultural or religious identity the better our chances of building the shared meaning that lets us work well together in service of SMU's mission.

This month's features include how to get your academic-year groove back; what colleagues with chronic illness want you to know; the rise of the "We Don't Care Club"; and a Gen X-to-Gen Z translator. We'll close with a chance for you to share your favorite Dolly Parton song, to celebrate the life of the great American uniter.

Just for the record, Ms. Dolly's greatest works are found on the albums (yes, albums), *Little Sparrow* and *Rockstar*.



Stay cool and Pony Up,

Maria

@CIQSMU