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**INTUIT'S JAMES HELMS TAPPED AS SPRING 2019 DESIGNER-IN-RESIDENCE FOR SMU "MADI" PROGRAM**

DALLAS (SMU) – James Helms, vice president of design at Intuit, a [business](#) and [financial software](#) company, in Plano, Texas, has been announced as the Spring 2019 Designer-in-Residence (DIR) for the [Master of Arts in Design and Innovation](#) (MADI) program at SMU.

The MADI program is a multidisciplinary degree based on the concept of Human-Centered Design as an approach to problem-solving, valuable in fields as different as engineering, business, the arts, advertising and the social sciences. The program appoints one DIR a semester to join and enrich the program inside and outside the classroom. Duties include on-going and consistent critique of a MADI class, assisting students with professional development, creating and conducting workshops or seminars, and developing new curriculum.

Originally from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Helms is a graduate of the Visual Communications program at The University of Delaware, where he majored in advertising design. Helms' career includes brand design, creative direction, experience strategy, organizational design and business strategy. At Intuit, he oversees a team of 20 product and marketing designers to improve and reimagine products and services across Intuit's broad financial product and platform ecosystem for small businesses, accounting professionals and consumers. He manages and collaborates with teams in Plano, Texas; Toronto, Canada; Mountain View, California; San Diego, California, and Bangalore, India.

Helms established Design Week at Intuit, with the mission to activate design thinking and doing across designers and aspiring designers. He also sponsors and coaches Innovation Catalysts, Intuit's community of design thinkers, that are trained to coach customer empathy through observation; broadening and narrowing techniques to find, define and attack big problems worth solving; and rapid prototyping and concept iteration. All of these efforts are rooted in Intuit's desire to continue to innovate like a startup.

"We're excited for James to join our program as Designer-in-Residence and look forward to him sharing his vast Human-Centered Design experience in the real world to enrich the MADI program," said Jessica Burnham, director of the MADI program. "As a leader of design in a corporate setting, he will help break down the silos between academia and business while opening up a symbiotic relationship for training future design employees."

MADI has been offered at SMU since 2015. Coursework and project-based learning experiences teach students to combine what people need with the limitless possibilities of technology and the economic requirements for business success through design research, idea generation and rapid prototyping. The MADI program strives to fill a space that puts human need at the forefront of design and innovation.

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## **About SMU**

*SMU is the nationally ranked global research university in the dynamic city of Dallas. SMU's alumni, faculty and nearly 12,000 students in seven degree-granting schools demonstrate an entrepreneurial spirit as they lead change in their professions, community and the world.*

## **About the Bobby B. Lyle School of Engineering**

*SMU's Bobby B. Lyle School of Engineering, founded in 1925, is one of the oldest engineering schools in the Southwest. The school offers eight undergraduate and 29 graduate programs, including master's and doctoral degrees, through the departments of Civil and Environmental Engineering; Computer Science and Engineering; Electrical Engineering; Engineering Management, Information, and Systems; and Mechanical Engineering. Lyle students participate in programs in the unique Deason Innovation Gym, providing the tools and space to work on immersion design projects and competitions to accelerate leadership development and the framework for innovation; the Hart Center for Engineering Leadership, helping students develop nontechnical skills to prepare them for leadership in diverse technical fields; the Caruth Institute for Engineering Education, developing new methodologies for incorporating engineering education into K-12 schools; and the Hunter and Stephanie Hunt Institute for Engineering and Humanity, combining technological innovation with business expertise to address global poverty.*