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USER EXPERIENCE AND INTERACTIVE DESIGN SPECIALIST CASSINI NAZIR SELECTED AS SMU “MADI” SPRING 2020 DESIGNER-IN-RESIDENCE

DALLAS (SMU) – Cassini Nazir has been announced as the Spring 2020 Designer-in-Residence (DIR) for the [Master of Arts in Design and Innovation](#) (MADI) program at SMU. In this role, Nazir, clinical associate professor and founding director of the School of Arts, Technology and Emerging Communication (ATEC) Usability Lab at the University of Texas at Dallas, will enrich the program inside and outside the classroom. Responsibilities include critiquing and enhancing classes, assisting students with professional development, creating and conducting workshops and seminars, and providing curriculum feedback. The MADI program is a multidisciplinary degree based on the concept of Human-Centered Design as an approach to problem-solving, valuable in fields ranging from engineering and business to the arts, advertising and the social sciences.

“Having Cassini join us as our DIR is a very exciting opportunity for the program. Not only does he come to MADI with tremendous academia experience, but he also brings a wide range of professional applications that are directly relevant to our program,” said Jessica Burnham, director of MADI. “I’m eager to work with such a great educator and see how we can learn from each other in the classroom in the coming months. It’s not very common to be able to partner with someone from another university in this capacity, and I’m confident our program will only grow stronger as a result of it.”

At UT Dallas, Nazir teaches classes in user experience and interaction design at the ATEC Usability Lab, which fosters collaborative research with community partners and offers experiential learning to students through industry-sponsored projects. Before this role, he served as the director of design for ArtSciLab at UTD, a transdisciplinary research lab that supports the arts, science, and technology communities by pursuing initiatives of societal urgency and cultural timeliness.

“I’m excited to be able to work shoulder-to-shoulder with MADI graduate students,” said Nazir. “Jessica has succeeded in creating a truly collaborative educational environment, which is often very hard to achieve in academia.”

Nazir’s research complements MADI’s mission to find Human-Centered Design solutions that balance human desirability, market viability and technical feasibility. Throughout his career, he has explored three primary areas, including using transdisciplinary collaboration as a sustainable design process, applying information architecture and experience design across various human senses, and making data more meaningful through design. His academic projects include collaborations with art historians, biochemists, brain scientists, materials scientists, new media artists, futurists and university publications. In addition, Nazir has conducted workshops for industry partners such as Intuit, Toyota, Sabre and projekt202.

Nazir received a B.A. in Literature, a B.A. in Economics and Finance, and an M.F.A. in Fine Arts from the University of Texas at Dallas. He also earned a certificate in User Experience from the Nielsen Norman Group, a computer user interface and experience consulting firm.

MADI launched at SMU in 2015. Coursework and project-based learning experiences teach students to combine human needs 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 needs 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 Lyle School of Engineering

SMU's Lyle School of Engineering, founded in 1925, is one of the oldest engineering schools in the Southwest. The school offers eight undergraduate and 26 graduate programs, including master's and doctoral degrees, through the departments of Civil and Environmental Engineering; Computer Science; Electrical and Computer 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; the Linda and Mitch Hart Institute for Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, combining the innovative forces of Lyle and the Cox School of Business to integrate their expertise, resources and guidance to develop technology prototypes and create viable business plans; and the Hunter and Stephanie Hunt Institute for Engineering and Humanity, combining technological innovation with business expertise to address global poverty.