

## Weekly Update | June 28, 2024

### Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dear Faculty and Staff,

I hope you are having a restful and productive summer. Whether you are teaching, conducting research, or preparing exhibits or performances, your contributions are greatly appreciated and valued in our quest for even greater academic quality. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to SMU's academic mission.

As mentioned in the [final Weekly](#) of the spring 2024 semester, I plan to send these updates twice each month during June and July and once in August prior to the start of the fall semester. If you have suggestions for what we should include in future communications, please submit your ideas through our story form via the button below. 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.

[Submit your story](#)

Previous newsletters are [available here](#).

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

## Summer 2024

### **SMU set to join Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) on July 1**

[SMU officially joins](#) the [Atlantic Coast Conference \(ACC\)](#) on Monday, July 1. To help us celebrate, costumed mascots from all 18 ACC member teams are coming to Dallas. A large public party will be hosted at The Happiest Hour, 2616 Olive St. in the Harwood District and Dallas' downtown skyline will be lit in SMU colors.

This is an incredible milestone for our University and our region, uplifting SMU's visibility across the nation in athletics and academics. Everyone is encouraged to wear their favorite red and blue and join us, as able, in the [festivities this coming Monday](#).

Pony up!

## Dean Search updates

*Cox School of Business*

As mentioned in my [previous Weekly Update](#), Matthew B. Myers, dean of Cox School of Business, has announced that he will step down from the dean's role by the end of the 2024-25 academic year.

Thank you to all the [search committee members](#) for agreeing to participate in this important search, and thank you to Jason P. Nance, Judge James Noel Dean of Dedman School of Law, for serving as the search committee chair. [Korn Ferry](#) will support the search as our external consultant.

We will continue to share updates regarding this search in upcoming newsletters.

## Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

### Deason Criminal Justice Reform Center wins federal grant to study public defense systems across the country

The Deason Criminal Justice Reform Center (Deason Center) at SMU's Dedman School of Law is launching an ambitious [research project that aims to help state and local leaders improve public defense](#). The study is funded by a grant from the [National Institute of Justice](#) (NIJ), providing \$800,000 to the Deason Center to assess five local public defense systems across four states to determine whether new public defense structures can be associated with significant change. Researchers will collect and compare data about pre- and post-implementation representation rates, pretrial detention rates and case outcomes.

Using a "research for reform" model, the Deason Center prioritizes projects that produce actionable recommendations. In addition to a final report to NIJ, the center plans to publish scholarly articles and policy briefs as well as findings and recommendations for each studied jurisdiction.

Deason Center researchers have started initial work on the project with plans to complete their study by the end of 2026.

### Faculty member in Division of Art at Meadows School of the Arts exhibiting work in Taiwan

Brian Molanphy, professor and Claire Morris Spaht Chair of Art at Meadows School of the Arts, opened two exhibitions this month in Taiwan. The first exhibition is at [Seven Star Warehouse 七星倉](#), Cloud Forest Gallery, Taipei; and the second is at [South Warehouse 南倉](#), Chin Chin Pottery, Tainan. The exhibitions comprise nearly 100 tea wares made in Taipei and Dallas.

Taiwan's landscape of steep mountains surrounded directly by ocean or intermediate zones of marsh or jungle is reflected in the fluid give and take, the release and retention, and the concentration and dissolution of Taiwan's most celebrated products – semiconductors and tea. The information concentrated in their containers flows through very different forms, but both silicon wafers and teapots are ceramic in nature. Credit is due to the rich environments in Taiwan – including the splendid studio of Tang Run Qing in the mountains of Miaoli where Professor Molanphy will be working – and the consistent current of artistic energy conducted back and forth across the Pacific Ocean between Taiwan and Texas.

## **SMU research team utilizes unused fiber cables beneath campus for earthquake detection**

An SMU research duo from Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences' Roy M. Huffington Department of Earth Sciences, consisting of Jyoti Sharma, a postdoctoral researcher, and Stephen Arrowsmith, professor and Hamilton Chair in Earth Sciences, are transforming SMU's network of [unused telecommunications and computer fiber into a sophisticated seismic monitoring system](#).

Working with the Office of Information Technology (OIT), Sharma and Arrowsmith are putting these communication fibers to work detecting seismic vibrations both near and far. This project has the capacity to expand the levels of seismic monitoring that can be readily deployed in densely populated urban areas, areas that are often vulnerable to earthquake activity. Succinctly put, this impactful research could save countless lives by creating a new early earthquake warning system.

## **Additional Faculty Research Acceleration Grant recipients announced by O'Donnell Data Science and Research Computing Institute (ODSRCI)**

ODSRCI is pleased to announce round two of this year's Faculty Research Acceleration Grant (FRAG) recipients. Faculty from any field of study were eligible to apply, and the grant was designed to bolster research that specifically incorporates large-scale data science, multimodal data, AI/ML technologies, or implementation on SMU high-performance computing (HPC) platforms.

Lyle School of Engineering's Department of Computer Science professors Eric Larson and Mehak Gupta's project "Fairness-aware Multimodal AI for Healthcare Data" has received FRAG funding.

## **Lyle School of Engineering professor awarded grant to develop quantum-resistant cyber solutions for U.S. Air Force**

Faculty member Klyne Smith, professor and co-director for the Data Center Systems Engineering Graduate Program at Lyle School of Engineering, and [SENTRIQS](#) have secured a \$110,000 grant from the U.S. Air Force to develop quantum-resistant Voice over IP (VoIP) solutions. This funding, part of the [Small Business Technology Transfer](#) program, aims to safeguard mobile communications from potential quantum threats. Professor Smith and SENTRIQS' collaboration will provide valuable research and industry insights, benefiting both military operations and commercial applications.

## **Perkins School of Theology professor's latest collection of poetry currently being reviewed for the Pulitzer Prize**

Perkins School of Theology faculty member Harold Recinos' most recently published collection of poetry *The Place across the River* (Wipf and Stock, 2024) was nominated and accepted for the 2025 Pulitzer Prize competition. This is Professor Recinos' second poetry collection to be reviewed for the Pulitzer Prize.

## **News and Noteworthy**

### **Meadows School of the Arts faculty member honored by international professional music fraternity with Elizabeth Mathias Award**

Barbara Hill Moore, senior associate dean for faculty and Meadows Foundation Distinguished Professor of Voice in Meadows School of the Arts' Division of Music, was recently honored by [Mu Phi Epsilon](#), an international professional music fraternity, with the Elizabeth Mathias Award. The Mathias Award, named for one of Mu Phi Epsilon's founders, is given only during convention years and honors a member of the

fraternity who has reached the highest levels of recognition and achievement in the music profession. It is the premier honor for members of the fraternity and another worthy accomplishment for one of SMU's most distinguished faculty.

### **Lyle School of Engineering research professor wins second place at American Society of Engineering Education (ASEE) competition**

Dr. Kelyn Rola, director of the Thrive Scholars Program and research professor at the Caruth Institute for Engineering Education at Lyle School of Engineering, and Dr. Caitlin Anderson, senior lecturer in the Department of Applied Physiology & Sport Management at Simmons School of Education and Human Development, was awarded second place in the 2024 First Year Programs Division from the American Society of Engineering Education (ASEE). Dr. Rola was selected to present her paper detailing the Thrive Scholars Program's success in retaining traditionally underrepresented first-year students at the ASEE annual conference in June. Read more about the [Thrive Scholars Program here](#).

Sincerely,



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

**SMU**