

Weekly Update | September 6, 2024

Provost and Senior 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 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 five categories: 1) Fall 2024, 2) Academic Excellence, 3) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, 4) Inclusive Excellence, and 5) News and Noteworthy.

Fall 2024

SMU launches presidential search

As mentioned in [last week's newsletter](#), President R. Gerald Turner has announced that this coming academic year will be his last to serve as SMU's 10th President, and that he will transition to a full-time role as President Emeritus working under the 11th President and Board of Trustees. Over his three decades of leadership on the Hilltop, he has guided our University to new heights in academic and research excellence. As he said in his announcement, "there is still much to be done during the next year," and my focus remains working alongside him and the leadership team to make progress on our strategic goals. I look forward to joining all of you at the end of the year as we celebrate his distinguished record of achievements and all that he has done for SMU, Dallas, and higher education.

You can find more information on the search for SMU's 11th President [here](#).

Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center services offered remotely Friday, September 6

Due to today's football game in Ford Stadium, the Loyd Center will require early security checks and lockdown. Therefore, all services offered in the Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center (A-LEC) will be offered today as virtual options only, since all A-LEC staff will be remote. Tutoring services are canceled, but all other services (i.e., Writing Center, Disability Accommodation and Success Strategies services, and academic counseling) will operate as scheduled. Please check with your respective staff member for the specific online modality (Zoom or Teams) to support virtual sessions.

New SMU Express Shuttle tracking app and safety escort now available

SMU's Parking and ID Card Services has introduced a new mobile app that allows faculty, staff, students, and guests better visibility into SMU's Express Shuttles and access to SMU's Safety Escort program.

The new Passio GO! app is available now and free to download in the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#). With this app, you can see shuttle routes, stops, and arrival times. The app provides "rider alerts" should there be any delays or unexpected service interruptions. The app can also direct users to SMU's [Safety Escort](#) program, which is managed by the SMU Police Department, and offers free, safe rides on SMU's main campus for up to two students or employees from 7 p.m. to 3 a.m., seven days a week while classes are in session.

[Read more details here.](#)

Campus safety resources and reminders from SMU Aware

SMU Aware would like to remind everyone of the [resources available to the SMU community](#) to help promote personal and community safety.

- Download the SMU Aware Safety App - This intuitive mobile app offers real-time emergency notifications and quick access to essential campus safety resources. You can make calls from the app directly to SMU Police and to other emergency and non-emergency assistance services, quickly report an incident or connect with someone you trust for a virtual "Friend Walk" across campus. Download the SMU Aware Safety app in the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#).
- Be prepared for any situation, including an active threat to campus. Learn the "Avoid, Deny, Defend" response model that SMU has adopted. Check out [this video](#) for more on these crucial survival strategies.
- Stay informed with SMU Aware - The [SMU Aware website](#) is your go-to source for information during an emergency or extreme weather event.

Register to vote at SMU

The Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility invites you and your students to register to vote. Dallas County representatives will be on campus throughout the month of September offering faculty, staff, and students the opportunity to learn more about voter registration, absentee ballots and voting-by-mail.

Academic Excellence

Generative AI in the classroom guidance and support materials available for faculty

Over the summer, SMU faculty and staff have prepared a range of resources, including workshops, one-page guides, and other helpful materials to support greater understanding of ways to utilize Generative

AI for classroom instruction. Please take full advantage of these new support tools this fall and moving forward.

- As a reminder, all course syllabi must contain a statement about Generative AI use guidelines. A [link to the syllabus statement builder can be found here](#).
- Engage in department-tailored conversations about Generative AI at one of your department meetings. These conversations will be supported by Paige Ware, associate provost for Faculty Success, Jason Warner, associate CIO for Academic Technology Services, and your department's [Academic Technology Service Director](#) (ATSD). If they haven't already, your school's ATSD will be reaching out in the first weeks of the term to convene these department-tailored conversations about AI.
- You can read and share these Generative AI starter guides, created by SMU's academic technology support staff, here: [Leveling Up – From AI Beginner to Expert](#), [Streamline Your Workday – Using Generative AI To Save Time](#), [Guide for Research & Data Analysis](#), [Practical AI for Teaching](#), [Practical AI for Creatives](#), and [Managing Questions About Academic Integrity & Generative AI](#)
- Review [this SMU website](#) for a comprehensive perspective on AI Guidance for campus activities. This informational site was developed with broad campus representation (e.g., Academic Affairs, Office of Legal Affairs, Risk Management, Office of Information Technology, Office of Research, etc.). It provides a clear set of guidelines about how SMU is responding to Generative AI at multiple levels of operation across the campus.
- Join a skill-building cohort that provides hands-on instruction on how AI works. SMU Libraries is working with Constellate, JSTOR's text analysis platform and training team, to provide Zoom-based instruction on building datasets, Large Language Models (LLMs), and automated text classification. All SMU faculty, students, and staff are welcome to attend. Participants will have the option to earn badges in Python, Large Language Models (LLMs), and Data Literacy. For more information, the full schedule and the registration link, please [visit this site](#). For more information, contact Carrie Johnston, director of research and scholarly initiatives, at cjohnston@smu.edu.

Third Annual Place-Based Community Engagement Symposium

The Place-Based Community Engagement Symposium, hosted by Engage Dallas, in collaboration with Residence Life and Student Housing, The Budd Center, Office of General Education, Cary M. Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility, and Center for Teaching Excellence invites all SMU faculty and staff to attend this year's third-annual event. This year's theme is "Listening, Learning & Leading Locally: A Place-Based Approach to Amplifying Community Champions and Mobilizing the Next Generation."

The Place-Based Community Engagement Symposium is a gathering of thought leaders, academics, community leaders, and nonprofit professionals from SMU and the DFW area. This event is designed to explore the transformative potential of community engagement within specific geographic contexts with the goal of delving into the strategies and innovations that have the power to catalyze positive change within communities, with emphasis on campus and community collaboration and sustainable mutually beneficial relationships.

This year's two-day symposium will take place on October 2, 2024, from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. on the SMU campus, and on October 3, 2024, from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. on the UNT Dallas campus. This is a free event and registration will include meals for both days. [Please register here](#) only for the day(s) you can attend by September 18, 2024.

Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

Lyle School of Engineering faculty members receive National Science Foundation grant to study broad area of decision-making processes in data science

Lyle School of Engineering faculty members Miju Ahn and Harsha Gangammanavar from the Department of Operations Research and Engineering Management, have received a grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) in the broad area of decision-making processes in data science.

The \$199,698 grant will support the project “[Integrated Decision-Making in Data Science: New Models, Tractable Reformulations, and Validation through Undergraduate Projects](#)” through September 2026.

Inclusive Excellence

SMU joins FirstGen Forward Network boosting support for first-gen students

The [First-Generation Initiative](#) (FGI) at SMU is excited to announce that we have been accepted as a member of the [FirstGen Forward Network](#). The FirstGen Forward Network is a program that brings “together higher education leaders from around the country to share data, model innovations and scale impact to first-generation student support.” By joining this network, SMU will be able to strengthen and enhance our ability to support first-generation students on campus.

[Read more about the FirstGen Forward Network and FGI Director Christopher Meyers' work here.](#)

Simmons School of Education and Human Development faculty members create research-based comic book as free resource to help support students experiencing homelessness

Alexandra Pavlakis and Meredith Richards, professors at Simmons School of Education and Human Development's Department of Education Policy & Leadership and former SMU postdoctoral fellow, Kessa Roberts, [have published a comic book](#), *Uprooted*, based on their combined 30 years of research studying homelessness' effects on students and determining the best ways to help them succeed in school.

Their new comic aims to provide a compelling snapshot of the diverse realities that students experiencing homelessness face, countering the myths that surround them and deepening educators' policy awareness and sensitivity to this issue. *Uprooted* is available at no cost [here](#).

News and Noteworthy

Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute Café to host bi-semesterly meetings

Twice each semester, the Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute (DCII) hosts a gathering where faculty and graduate students from across campus can come together to make connections and discover shared research interests while enjoying a free lunch. Please [RSVP for the event here](#).

Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies senior assistant dean elected to executive committee of Conference of Southern Graduate Schools

Moody School of Graduate & Advanced Studies' Senior Assistant Dean Alan Itkin has been elected to the executive committee of the [Conference of Southern Graduate Schools](#). The Conference of Southern Graduate Schools is an organization of over 200 graduate schools in 15 Southern states, including Texas. Conference members convene to consider topics relating to graduate study and research that are of mutual interest and concern to universities in the Southern region and to serve as liaisons with other national and regional educational bodies. Dr. Itkin's term on the executive committee will run through 2026.

The Conference of Southern Graduate Schools will hold its next [annual meeting](#) in on the SMU campus, March 19-21, 2025, with over 300 graduate deans, associate deans and other graduate education professionals.

Deason Criminal Justice Reform Center's director takes spotlight in Dallas Morning News feature

The Dallas Morning News recently published an article featuring Pamela Metzger, executive director for the Deason Criminal Justice Reform Center in the Dedman School of Law. The article praised the work of the law school's nationally recognized Deason Center, as both a research and advocacy center, which serves as a national leader in the pursuit of criminal justice reform.

[Read the full article here.](#)

Lyle School of Engineering dean featured in Dallas Innovates article

Local media outlet, [Dallas Innovates](#), has recently published an article featuring Lyle School of Engineering's inaugural Mary and Richard Templeton Dean Nader Jalili. The article highlights Lyle School of Engineering's 14 new faculty members and a new era of innovation focused on creating a future workforce of resilient engineers.

Sincerely,



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

