

Transformative







PROVOST WELCOME

This has been a historic year for SMU by all measures – student quality, faculty research/creative activity and community impact. SMU’s lofty aspirations for even greater academic quality are transitioning from exciting plans into inspirational reality. In this 2022 Provost Report, I am pleased to share the great progress that we have made over the past year and to provide a glimpse at what lies ahead.

Reaching our goals will complete SMU’s transformation into a premier research and teaching university with impact that began in 1959 with the creation of our first Ph.D. program in economics.

SMU is well positioned to reach the next level in terms of academic and research excellence. This is due to the incredible work of our faculty and staff, along with the work of those who came before them. It is also the result of the sustained and visionary leadership of President Turner and is made possible by the generosity of our donors and the students who choose to study with us.

To guide us in reaching our goals, my primary areas of focus through 2025 remain:

- **Academic Excellence**, most directly measurable through ranking systems such as *U.S. News & World Report*, where our goal remains to achieve and sustain top 50 status.
- Meeting the remaining goals for academics in the **2016–2025 Strategic Plan**.
- Achieving and sustaining **Research One status** as measured by the Carnegie Classification system.
- Implementing and supporting **inclusive excellence initiatives** to be true to our belief that ‘every Mustang is valued.’

This report is organized around these four priorities. The content that follows is a representative illustration of the ways that, working together, our goals for greater academic quality will continue to transform us over the next three years.



Sincerely,

Elizabeth G. Loba, Ph.D.
Provost and Vice President
for Academic Affairs

All origami presented in this report, including the cover, were designed and folded by SMU’s own Travis Nolan.



ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE



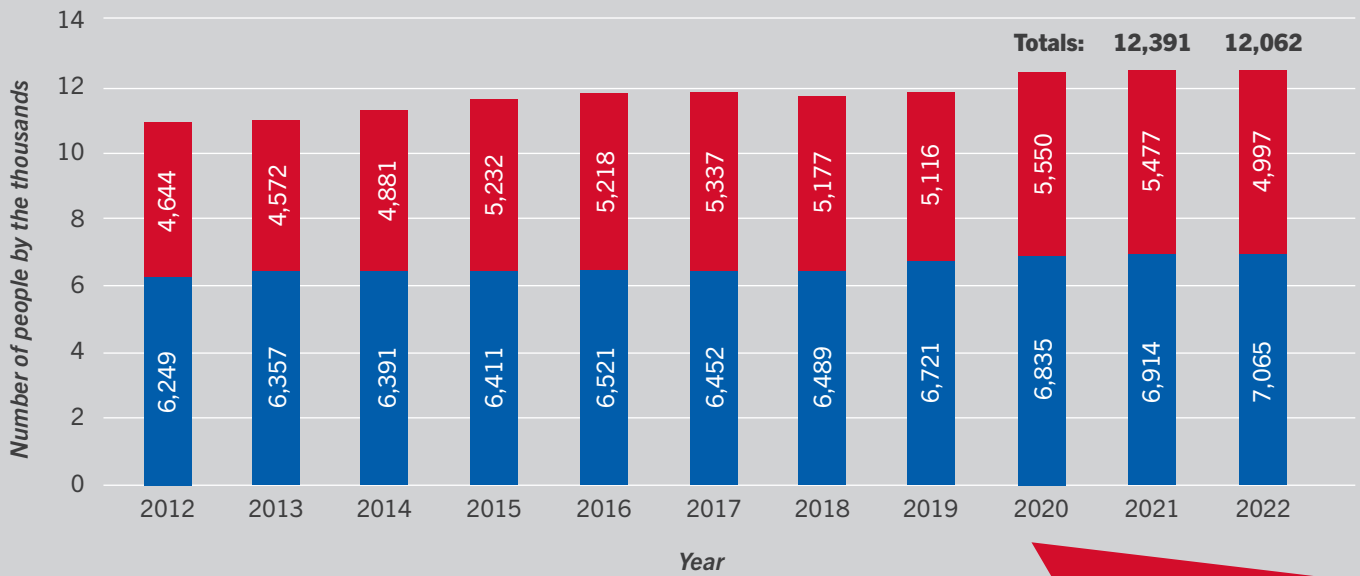
The first priority area is “Academic Excellence” with a focus on improving SMU’s ability to recruit, retain and graduate outstanding students.

In terms of recruiting, SMU experienced record enrollment in fall 2022 with a total enrollment over 12,000 students (7,065 undergraduate; 4,997 graduate) for the third year in a row. The growth in entering classes over four years and strong retention, especially between the sophomore and junior year,

pushed SMU’s undergraduate enrollment past 7,000 for the first time since 1958. For the second year in a row, we exceeded 16,000 applications, approaching our goal of reaching 20,000 applications by the year 2025. The average ACT score remained 32 and the average high school GPA is 3.59 – all high marks for SMU.

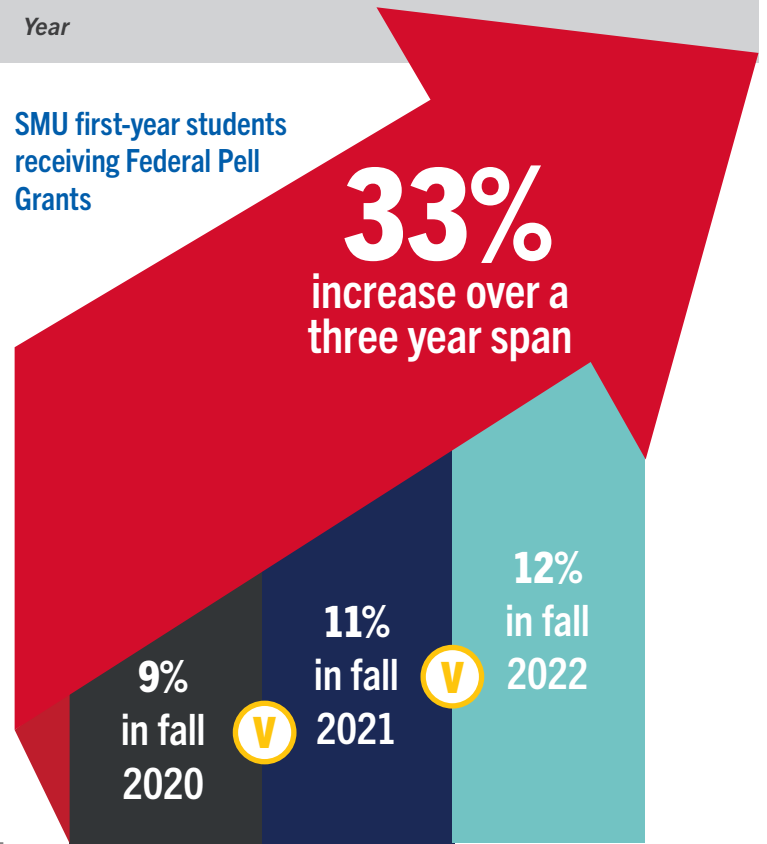
Enrollment Trends at SMU

Undergraduate Graduate & Professional



The incoming class included 33% of our undergraduate students who identify with ethnically and racially underrepresented backgrounds, with 12% of the first-year students being Pell Grant eligible.

SMU first-year students receiving Federal Pell Grants



This year, we launched *Access SMU*, a program which provides financial awards to meet the full financial need for high-achieving, Pell-eligible students from the state of Texas. It is our belief that the dream of pursuing an exceptional college education should be available regardless of

financial background. We are seeing the fruits of this generosity through an increase in Pell-eligible students. 9% in fall 2020; 11% in fall 2021; and 12% in fall 2022 (a 33% increase over a three year span).



Academic Excellence continued:

We are committed to supporting our students beyond the admission cycle. SMU in Four is the University's comprehensive approach to improving SMU's retention and four-year graduation rates. We are already proud of our retention and graduation rates overall, but we also want parity across racial, ethnic and socio-economic lines in those measures of student success. SMU in Four embraces demographic identity and amplifies advising and mentoring to ensure all students have opportunities to participate in the full campus experience.

Opportunity SMU is a new initiative launching this fall as a part of our \$1.5 billion *SMU Ignited* capital campaign that will support all of our students from admission through graduation. The *Opportunity SMU* fund will expand scholarships, financial aid and student support programs throughout the entire student life cycle. This program is one of many SMU is undertaking to support, retain, and ensure success for all of our students, within the next decade.



SMU
in
FOUR

SMU in Four: The University's comprehensive approach to improving retention and four-year graduation rates.

Undergraduate retention and graduation trends	Reporting term				
	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021
1st year retention <i>(entered SMU 1 year prior)</i>	90.9%	90.6%	91.5%	90.3%	90.6%
4 year graduation <i>(entered SMU 4 years prior)</i>	71.6%	73.1%	74.76%	75.0%	76.2%
6 year graduation <i>(entered SMU 6 years prior)</i>	80.5%	78.0%	81.1%	80.9%	82.3%

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE: ROAD TO R1



Similar to the *U.S. News & World Report* national rankings of colleges and universities, the Carnegie Classification system attempts to classify and distinguish universities in terms of their research productivity, with “Research One” being the pinnacle of distinction.

To reach our lofty, but achievable, research goals will require progress in each of the seven measures monitored by Carnegie. We have made tremendous progress in recent years, moving from the third tier or Research Three designation to Research Two. During the 2021 review cycle, released in early 2022, SMU was only two spots from reaching our Research One goal. With concentrated effort and investment, we can reach the next level this decade.

2021–2022 was a record year for research at SMU.

To highlight a few accomplishments:

- Highest total research awards in a single academic year (41% higher than our five-year average).
- Near-record total research expenditures in a single academic year (16.3% higher than our five-year average).

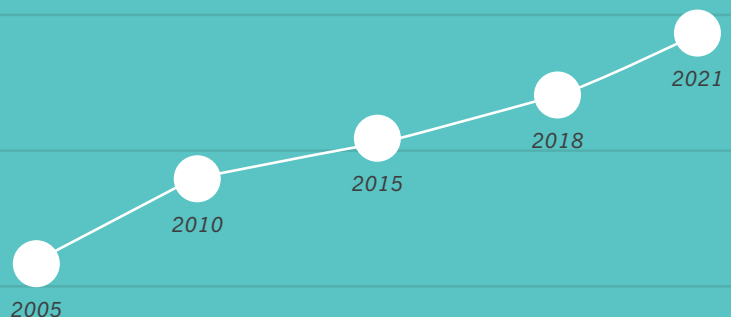
Research Awards: SMU advanced past 55 universities

OUR CONTINUED R1 PROGRESS OVER THE YEARS

Very high research activity (R1)

High research activity (R2)

Moderate research activity (R3)



- Simmons School of Education’s faculty member Leanne Ketterlin Geller was awarded a single-year grant of \$7.99 million from the Department of Education. This represents the largest research award received by any SMU faculty member in a single fiscal year.
- Faculty from all of SMU’s schools and college received a research award this year – a first for SMU.

To reach our goals for research excellence will require continued increases with those achieved this year.

Taking the recommendations of faculty-led task forces and working in consultation with the deans, SMU advertised cluster hires in fall 2021 across two areas of strategic research excellence: 1) Technology-Enhanced Immersive Learning and 2) Earth Hazards and National Security. These clusters will enhance areas of established research strength at SMU and will serve as a model for future cluster hires to support our research and scholarly/creative ambitions. In fall 2022, SMU launched a Data Science Cluster, consisting of 12 faculty lines to support and advance our growing capabilities in a wide array of research disciplines, ranging from computational biology to health analytics and human performance, from national defense to digital humanities. And in October, SMU announced an agreement with Pegasus Park, a 23-acre campus of flexible office and laboratory space in the heart of Dallas to expand opportunities for collaboration in innovative biotech research leveraging advanced computational tools and technologies. In the callout on this page, you can read more about SMU’s recent investments in data science.

SMU’s commitment to generating research with impact is a win for our students as it gives them exposure and access to a world of emerging knowledge, discovery and professional development. It is a win as well for our region in terms of innovation, entrepreneurship, workforce development and community service.



Making strides with investments in data science

In addition to our data science faculty cluster hire, SMU has expanded our capacity to conduct groundbreaking research harnessing big data. Key examples include:

- 1) **NVIDIA-DGX SuperPOD™:** This past year, in collaboration with accelerated computing leader NVIDIA, SMU exponentially increased the power and reach of our existing supercomputing system, priming it for more powerful AI applications, by incorporating a NVIDIA DGX SuperPOD™ into the data center that is capable of producing a theoretical 100 petaflops of computing power. We are now one of only two universities in the United States with this level of supercomputing. The collaboration will give SMU faculty, students and research partners the ability to integrate sophisticated AI technology across a wide array of research disciplines, ranging from computational biology to human performance, from national defense to digital humanities.
- 2) **Named and endowed a director of the Data Science Institute at SMU:** A \$2 million gift from the O’Donnell Foundation will name and endow the Peter O’Donnell, Jr. Director of the Data Science Institute at SMU. A search for this position is launching in spring 2023. The new endowment will honor the legacy of renowned humanitarian Peter O’Donnell Jr. who passed away October 10, 2021, at the age of 97. Part of the University’s \$1.5 billion campaign, *SMU Ignited: Boldly Shaping Tomorrow*, the gift will support SMU’s strategic vision to expand research in this rapidly growing discipline by building on the University’s previous investments in data science.



ROBIN POSTON, MOODY SCHOOL OF GRADUATE AND ADVANCED STUDIES

On August 15, Robin S. Poston became dean of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies. SMU launched a national search for the next Moody dean in fall 2021, and – thanks in particular to the historic generosity of the Moody foundation’s \$100 million gift in 2019 – this search attracted the highest quality candidates.

Dr. Poston comes to SMU from the University of Memphis where she served as vice provost and dean of the graduate school since 2018. At U of M, she oversaw the university’s strategies in support of graduate enrollment growth, student success and timely graduation – key themes for SMU in our current pursuit of greater academic and research excellence and attaining R1 status as measured by Carnegie.

Among her many accomplishments across a nearly 20-year career as a business school faculty member and academic administrator at U of M, she was also a key contributor to that university’s 2021 rise from R2 to R1 in the Carnegie rankings. She rose through the faculty ranks in U of M’s business school, from assistant professor through full professor with tenure and established a very strong research record. She was also director of the Systems Testing Excellence Program (STEP) at the FedEx

Institute of Technology, supporting interdisciplinary teams of faculty and students on government and industry sponsored projects to build up research and curricular competencies.

Dean Poston was a key contributor to her previous university’s 2021 rise from R2 to R1 in the Carnegie rankings. We look forward to benefiting from her proven leadership and experience in charting SMU’s course to the same level of recognition.

STEP became an internationally recognized group in the field of systems testing, and STEP researchers have worked on projects with groups such as the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Defense, FedEx and others.

We look forward to benefiting from her proven leadership and experience in charting SMU’s course to even greater research excellence and international recognition.



JASON NANCE, DEDMAN SCHOOL OF LAW

On August 10, Jason P. Nance became the Judge James Noel Dean of the Dedman School of Law. In early 2022, SMU launched a national search for the law school's next dean which resulted in an outstanding group of applicants. After a series of interviews with the law school's search committee, executive board, senior administrators, faculty, staff and students, Dean Nance immediately rose to the top of the list.

Jason joins SMU from the University of Florida Levin College of Law, where he was associate dean for research and faculty development and professor of law. Previously at UF Law, he served as associate dean for academic and faculty affairs, as an associate director of the Center for the Study of Race and Relations, and as an associate director for education and law at the Center on Children and Families.

Jason began his career in education by teaching math to middle schoolers and GED and English courses to adults in Houston before pursuing a career in education administration. While preparing to become a school principal, he developed an interest in education policy and law during his graduate studies. This led him to earning a Ph.D. in education policy and administration from The Ohio State University prior to completing his law degree from University of Pennsylvania School of Law.

He built a successful legal career that included clerking for Judge Kent A. Jordan of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 3rd Circuit and the U.S. District Court for the District of Delaware as well as practicing corporate and securities litigation during the financial crisis of 2007–2010.

Since 2011, Jason has held a variety of roles at UF Law, including associate dean for academic and faculty affairs, associate director of the Center for the Study of Race and

Under Dean Nance's leadership, SMU is well-positioned to advance Dedman Law's well-earned reputation within the legal and business communities.

Race Relations, and associate director for education law and policy at the Center on Children and Families while teaching courses in education law, torts, and remedies. His scholarship explores the intersection between law, education policy, and the criminal justice system, and it has been cited extensively by courts, party and amicus briefs, books, journals, and featured in national media outlets. His work with the American Bar Association resulted in a report and proposed solutions to help dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline nationwide.

During his time as associate dean, UF Law rose in the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings from 41 (2019) to 21 (2022). He knows what it takes to help law schools flourish, and we look forward to his experience and vision for the law school.

Under Dean Nance's leadership, SMU is well-positioned to advance Dedman Law's well-earned reputation within the legal and business communities and to expand our impact in line with SMU's aspirations for even greater academic excellence.



2016–2025 STRATEGIC PLAN



Like the preceding two five-year plans (1996–2000 and 2001–2005) and the 10-year plan (2006–2015), our 2016–2025 *Strategic Plan: Launching SMU’s Second Century*, is grounded in the vision and values embodied in SMU’s Master Plan of 1963.

To enhance the fundamental strengths of the University – faculty, staff, students and the resources for instruction, research and service – SMU has implemented many major advances during the past 20 years, led by its strategic plans. These plans have guided two

major gift campaigns, *The Campaign for SMU: A Time to Lead* (1997–2002) and *SMU Unbridled: The Second Century Campaign* (2008–2015), and now serves to guide the \$1.5 billion *SMU Ignited: Boldly Shaping Tomorrow* capital campaign, which launched on September 17, 2021.

These campaigns provided crucial enhancements to the entire campus, including new buildings and endowments for scholarships, academic programs, faculty positions and the campus experience. These fundraising successes also have generated great momentum for SMU's distinction as a national institution growing in quality and impact.

Moody Hall construction – This past December, SMU broke ground on the new Frances Anne Moody Hall, named for Frances Anne Moody-Dalberg '92, SMU trustee and executive director of the Moody Foundation. Moody Hall will house SMU's eighth degree-granting school, the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies. Backed by a \$100 million gift from the Moody Foundation – the largest gift in SMU's history – the Moody School began operations in fall 2020. This gift is already transforming graduate education at SMU.

The expansion of research at SMU – a strategic priority that fuels the University's steady ascent toward achieving Carnegie R1 status – gained momentum with the Moody gift. This bold investment supports SMU's research mission by attracting outstanding graduate students – the workforce behind groundbreaking discoveries that bolster the University's doctoral and research ecosystem. New positions that will help SMU graduate students win nationally recognized external fellowships, thrive in their programs and launch successful careers have been filled with extraordinary faculty and staff. The combination of SMU's strengths in supercomputing and data science, the University's growing externally funded research and the outstanding graduate education provided through the Moody School drives impactful ideas on the Hilltop and beyond.



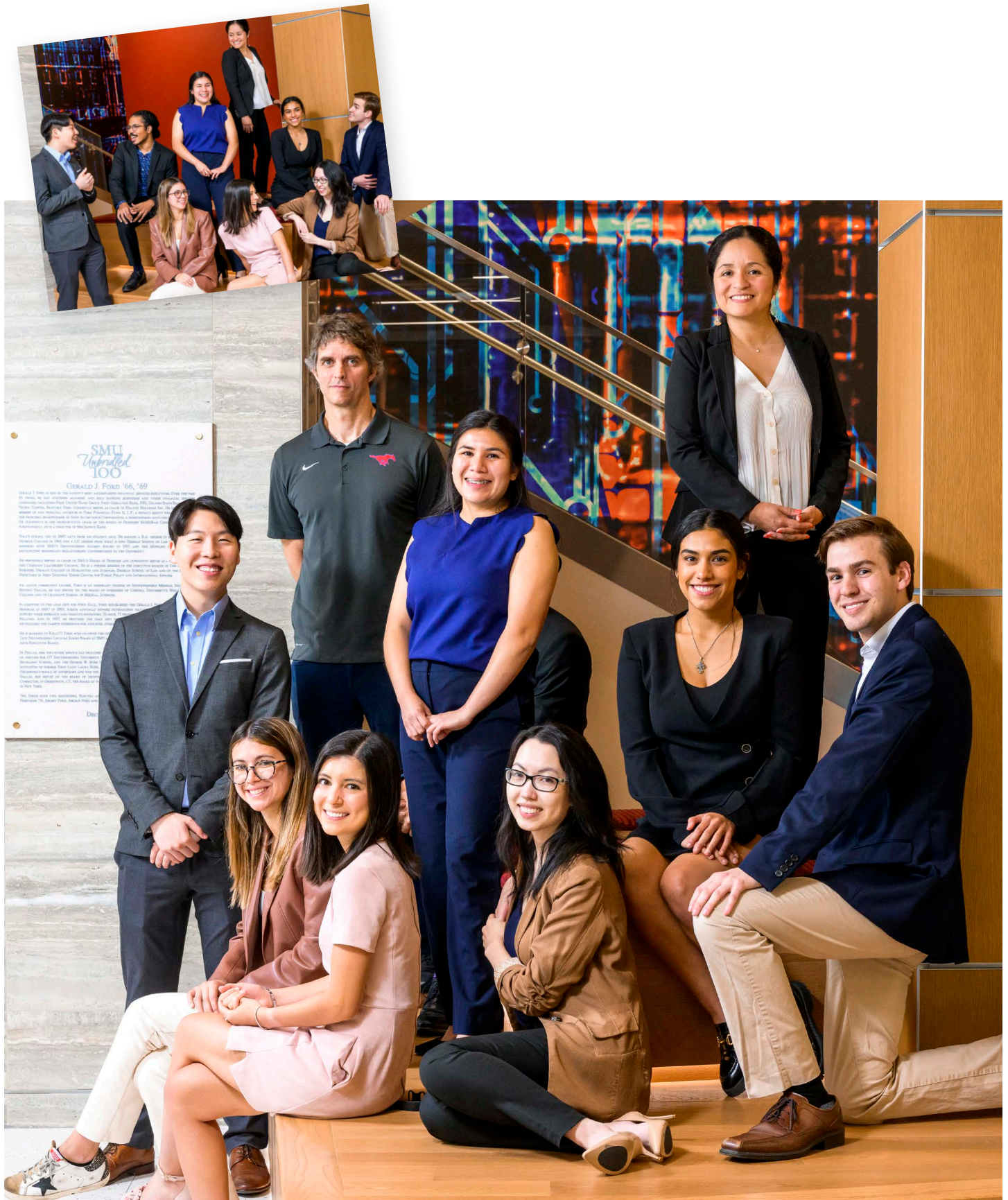
Cox renovations – In May, SMU broke ground on a \$140 million renovation and expansion project designed to train students for a collaborative and technologically integrated world.

The two-year project will expand the footprint of the Cox School of Business by more than 30 percent, with the construction of four new buildings connecting the existing facilities into cohesive space that supports collaboration within the Cox School and across the campus, as well as with the vibrant Dallas business community.

Community impact – Another key focus area is strengthening programming and research collaborations with industry, non-profit and civic organizations that are focused on community impact. This summer, SMU and AT&T teamed up for a data science boot camp plus on-site internship for nine students, with a focus on STEM undergraduate and graduate students from diverse and underrepresented populations.

In this partnership, SMU provided 12 weeks of instruction in data science leading to certification and AT&T provided an on-site internship to include an interview for a permanent position upon graduation.





SMU's inaugural AT&T scholars

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE INITIATIVES



The initiatives that support SMU’s inclusive excellence goals echo many of those listed above – but with a focus toward underrepresented faculty and students.

Faculty recruiting – In summer 2021, working in close consultation with the Office of Institutional Access and Equity and the chief diversity officer (CDO), the provost office announced changes to the faculty search and recruitment process. These changes align with the University’s response to the Black Unity Forum Action Plan and our commitment to increase diverse

representation in hiring processes on campus: 1) inclusion of a mandatory diversity, equity and inclusion workshop for all search committee members; 2) use of a transparent, standardized process for managing applications; and 3) decanal and chief diversity officer sign-off on robust recruitment plans.



Inclusive faculty recruiting, promotion and tenure initiatives in 2022

Faculty promotion and tenure – The college/schools submitted updated promotion and tenure guidelines to the provost office through the Associate Provost for Faculty Success and they have been reviewed for transparency and thoroughness. The Provost Advisory Council for Promotion and Tenure provided feedback on the process and other areas related to promotion and tenure during the February–March 2022 review cycle.



100%

Diversity, equity and inclusion workshop for all faculty searches

Decanal and Chief Diversity Officer signoff on recruitment plans

100%

Promotion and tenure guidelines revised, reviewed and published



Recruitment, promotion and retention of underrepresented faculty – Maria Dixon Hall, chief diversity officer (CDO), in partnership with the provost office, established a faculty retention protocol with deans to respond to and guard against academic recruitment by other universities. In addition, a formal voluntary, independent faculty exit interview process has been established for departing faculty to identify root causes and develop mitigation strategies.

Compensation of faculty members working on inclusion-focused initiatives – Associate Provost Paige Ware, working together with the Research Fellow for Diversity and Inclusion, Johnitha Johnson, systematically reviewed research about the intersection of equity and workload policies. Department-level workload policies have been finalized for all academic departments and are now posted to ensure transparency and visibility.

Underrepresented student recruiting and retention – 2021 was a historic year for SMU in terms of recruiting students from historically underrepresented populations. Overall, our student body was 34% diverse last year. Through initiatives such as *Access SMU*, undergraduate diversity increased from 31% in fall 2021 to 33% in fall 2022. Graduate student diversity, 34% in fall 2021, remained high in fall 2022 at 33%. This matched SMU's overall percentage of 33% diverse in fall 2022.

This summer, Elena Hicks, SMU's dean of Admission and executive director of Enrollment Services, was elected chair of the Coalition for College – an organization with representation from 150+ top colleges and universities working together to create a future where all students have access to a successful, affordable and transformative college experience.

Inclusive faculty compensation and student recruiting initiatives in 2022

100%

Department-level workload policies revised, reviewed and published

33%

Diversity at undergraduate and graduate levels

Our near- and long-term goals focus on increased access for underrepresented populations and supporting these students throughout their time on campus and across the full campus experience. Success toward these goals for increased access and success requires support across the full student lifecycle.

SMU shares the Coalition's vision for student access leading to transformative success, and our near- and long-term goals focus on increased access for underrepresented populations and supporting these students throughout their time on campus and across the full campus experience. Success toward these goals for increased access and success requires support across the full student lifecycle.





CONCLUSION

With a bold vision and impressive trajectory, most notably during President Turner’s nearly thirty years of leadership, SMU continues to make steady advances toward its goal of becoming a premier research university with global impact.

Particularly within the past decade, our University has seen a remarkable rise in undergraduate quality, an incredibly successful fundraising campaign (totaling >\$1 billion), an expanding research footprint and the development and implementation of an ambitious 2016–2025 Strategic Plan – in which many of the goals and objectives link directly to the steps required for SMU to reach our full potential.

In September 2021, SMU launched the \$1.5 billion *SMU Ignited* campaign and, at the time of publication, we have received over \$900 million in commitments. Through *SMU Ignited*, we will have a unique opportunity to see our lofty goals for academic quality come to fruition.

As with many institutions, our response to COVID-19 in 2020 and again in 2021 required financial investments geared heavily toward maintaining health and safety. We have seen validation in these investments in terms of the students who are choosing to come to SMU. The fall 2020 and 2021 incoming classes were the largest and most diverse in SMU’s history. And again in 2022, we set a new record for undergraduate students.

Fiscal responsibility during COVID-19 has enabled SMU to begin making some of the major investments needed to accomplish our goals for even greater academic quality. This fall’s entering class of 73 new faculty is the first of many significant academic investments planned for the years ahead. Working with my leadership team of deans and associate provosts during the spring and summer of 2022, we have developed a three-year budget model that will guide and inform future strategic investments.

As a result, SMU is well-positioned and beginning to achieve its goals for even greater academic quality. I look forward to the years ahead as we continue to refine and implement the plans that will propel SMU even higher.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth G. Loba, Ph.D.
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

“Generous donors to two successful comprehensive campaigns since 1997 have fueled SMU’s rapid improvement in academic quality and research impact. During the planning phase and first public year of the *SMU Ignited: Boldly Shaping Tomorrow* campaign, supporters have made record-setting gifts to graduate education and research, business and arts education, and more. Their investments in support of our academic excellence strategy, adeptly led by Provost Loba, set the stage for SMU to make even greater impact on fields of knowledge and in the professions and communities our graduates reach.”



R. Gerald Turner
SMU President





Travis Nolan: Paleontology student and origami expert

All origami presented in this report were folded by SMU's own Travis Nolan, including his original design of Peruna, SMU's mascot, which is featured on the cover. Travis, who is a junior, is a Dedman

Scholar studying geology and biology with a goal to work in paleontology after graduation. He grew up in Dallas, Texas, and his devotion to origami began at a young age in conjunction with his fascination of dinosaurs, which feature prominently into both his studies and in his origami. For Travis, origami is self-taught, and he specializes in 22.5-degree designs. In the 2021 International Internet Olympiad, Travis took first place for individual design, placed fifth overall and helped the USA team rank third. His work has been showcased on book covers and in museums and art galleries. He also volunteers with Paper for Water – a Dallas-based charity that uses origami to fund water wells – and is starting a club on campus to provide similar service opportunities to other SMU students.

Scan the code below to watch Travis' origami folding process.



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