



Urban Faculty Research Cluster  
Faculty Taskforce Report  
June 3, 2023

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## Defining Urban Research

Urban research involves systematically studying various aspects of urban environments, drawing upon fields such as urban planning, public policy, sociology, geography, economics, health sciences and more. Current events have only increased the urgent need for in-depth theorizing about the 'city.' For example, policymakers and industry-based scholars argue that COVID-19 exposed the lack of research-driven foresight about how the very nature of cities played an oversized role in the pandemic's contagion, as well as our ability to respond with treatment in ways that shaped the mortality of the world's citizens, and how the city can now play a role in global restoration in its aftermath (Deloitte Insights, 2021).

Despite its urgent importance and groundbreaking potential, the field of urban research has its challenges. Unlike most academic areas with discrete boundaries, there are few fields within academia that are not a part, at least tangentially, of modern urban research. A simple taxonomy of the field would bifurcate it between urban studies and urban affairs. "Urban Affairs" generally refers to the practical and policy-oriented aspects of urban areas. It encompasses the study of urban governance, urban planning, public administration, urban policy, and the management of urban environments. "Urban Studies," on the other hand, is a broader academic field that focuses on studying urban environments through systematic research and analysis. It encompasses multi-disciplinary research on various aspects of urban areas, including social, economic, cultural, spatial, and environmental dimensions.

Additionally, there is a growing call for researchers to move beyond a centralized focus on the Western Hemisphere via Global Urban Studies or Global Urbanism. This field focuses on the study of cities and urbanization from a global perspective, examining the interconnectedness and shared characteristics of urban centers around the world. Global Urban Studies recognizes the increasing importance of cities in the global context, as urban areas have become key sites of economic, social, and cultural activity. Scholars in this field analyze the dynamics of global urbanization, including patterns of urban growth, the impact of globalization on cities, urban governance and planning in a globalized world, and the social and environmental challenges faced by global urban centers.

The broad, transdisciplinary, and global nature of urban studies imbues holds promise, but also belies its central challenge: vigorous disagreement on its central organizing principles. Holman, Barnes, Clark, et al. (2022) describe this difficulty in their comprehensive examination of the differences in terminology, methodology, and scope of interests across urban economics, political science, planning, history, and sociology. Lamenting the lack of a singular organizing principle, the authors, after pleading with their colleagues to engage in greater constructive conversation, expressed the following hope, which appears germane to our (the taskforce's) central emphasis:

"The question is how we can shape these now only loosely inter-related parts into a more closely-knit network with greater engagement across the components? The result of such an endeavor would be, we hope, more interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary research; an increased sharing, or, at a minimum, understanding, of methods across subfields; greater recognition and consumption of work beyond one's disciplinary home; and greater emphasis on comparative research and non-Western and global cities. The result, in short, would be a better understanding of urban phenomena."

## Learning from Other University Research Clusters

Although urban research has been conceptualized by scholars in a multiplicity of ways, colleges and universities around the world have endeavored to approach urban research in three predominant frameworks: General "Engaged Research" Clusters, Targeted Research Clusters, and Partnership-Oriented Urban Centers.

### **General "Engaged Research" Clusters**

These more 'catch-all' centers appear focused on drawing together extant faculty across multiple disciplines working on urban issues, and/or research in the local urban area, but they typically have no central substantive focus. Several of these emphasize applied research to generate policy recommendations. These are typically led by faculty in the social sciences, humanities, and public policy. Institutional exemplars include:

- Bristol University (UK) Centre for Urban and Public Policy Research
- Mississippi Urban Research Center at Jackson State University
- University of Illinois-Chicago Great Cities Institute
- London School of Economics Cities Centre
- Johns Hopkins University [21st Century Cities Initiative](#)

Within this cluster the typical academic disciplines are housed: Geography, Economics, Urban Studies, Public Policy, Sociology, Business, Political Science, Education, Engineering, English, History, Criminology.

### **Targeted Research Clusters**

These are centers deliberately focused on a particular set of issues or substantive areas, which also provide particular services to other actors in the community and conduct research. Institutional exemplars include:

- CUNY Center for Urban Research, with "research units," including a NY Labor Market Information Service; a mapping service; and a "data service" that is a New York State affiliate of the Census Bureau

- University of Michigan Flint Urban Sustainability and Environmental Health Research Cluster
- University of Canterbury (NZ) Cluster for Community and Urban Resilience
- University of Chicago Urban Labs, which focuses on crime, education, health, economic opportunity, and energy & environment

The most common disciplines represented in these types of clusters are sociology, economics, geography, health sciences, environmental sciences, and law.

### **Partnership-Oriented Urban Centers**

These centers are more deliberately oriented towards forging ongoing collaborative engagements between university researchers and community-based or government organizations working in targeted areas. They typically involve multi-organizational linkages with a variety of outside organizations or stakeholders. They are also more likely to include board members from the community, government, or from other universities or organizations outside the university host, and also to include university personnel at the Dean's level or above. In at least one case (Marquette), the center appears to have its own staff, separate from university faculty, to conduct operations. Several of these centers emphasize public policy engagement as a part of their goals in working with outside organizations and were established with outside funding. Institutional exemplars include:

- University of Michigan Detroit Community-Academic Urban Research Center
- University of Minnesota Urban Research and Outreach Engagement Center
- Georgia Tech Center for Urban Research
- Loyola University Urban Research and Learning Center
- Marquette University Center for Urban Research, Teaching and Outreach

## **URBAN RESEARCH INSTITUTES AND CENTERS IN TEXAS<sup>1</sup>**

There are eight urban research centers or institutes within the State of Texas. These clusters vary in attachment to their larger universities, degrees and certificates offered, interdisciplinarity, and faculty composition. It is interesting to note that the vast majority of the urban research institutes in Texas demonstrate little connection to their central academic faculty or curriculums. Instead, what we find are policy, research, or service institutes that maintain a foothold in the public service sphere and/or issue analysis without a direct connection to their overall academic missions or institutionalized faculty research output. Surprisingly, we found that SMU had one of the earliest programs in Urban Studies in the State of Texas beginning in the late 1960's.

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<sup>1</sup>We are grateful to Drs. Eric Bing and Abraham Smith for sharing their organizing data from their work on the Social Justice Taskforce.

### **The University of Texas at Dallas: The Institute for Urban Policy Research**

Founded in 2005 as the J. McDonald Williams Institute, the mission of The Institute for Urban Policy Research is to provide research and evaluation, education and outreach, and guidance and consulting to inform, motivate, and inspire community-focused organizations that improve the quality of life in the communities they serve. Initial Funding for the Institute was given by Trammell Crow Chairman Emeritus Don Williams. A non-degree granting institute, it does offer a non-credit certificate. Its two existing staff members are members of the School of Economic, Political, and Public Policy Sciences.

### **The University of Texas at Arlington: Institute of Urban Studies**

The Institute of Urban Studies (IUS) is the principal research center for the College of Architecture, Planning, and Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Arlington. Originally established in 1967 by an act of the Texas Legislature, the Institute's mandated mission is to conduct research and provide technical assistance to city and county governments, governmental agencies, and non-profit organizations, and to offer education and teaching opportunities to individuals either already in or contemplating public service careers. Focusing predominantly on housing, urban mobility, and water settlement, IUS has a coordinating faculty director and four Graduate Fellows, but grants no degrees or certificates.

### **Texas Southern University: The Urban Research and Resource Center**

Housed within the Thurgood Marshall School of Law, The Urban Research and Resource Center (URRC) is a research institute that combines scholarly endeavors with community outreach in order to assume and expand its leadership role as the academic and policy resource for urban issues and solutions. Its major emphasis is on the production of journals in one of its five areas of focus: criminal justice, history of African Americans in Houston, housing and community development, public education, and urban resources. It is a non-degree granting center, offering no area of specialization within the Law School. Overseen by a board comprised of law professors, the URRC is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation funded in part by Texas Southern University, but relies on program funding from donations from individuals.

### **Rice University: The Kinder Institute for Urban Research**

The Kinder Institute for Urban Research is an interdisciplinary research organization at Rice University in Houston. Endowed by Richard and Nancy Kinder for \$50 million, the Institute is a partner-oriented research cluster, obtaining additional funding from sponsor clients and large corporate partners. Although its director is a member of the faculty, it is not a degree granting or certificate granting institute. Primarily known as a data visualization and aggregator for various interests in the Greater Houston Area, it produces an annual survey regarding the state of Houston-area residents. One of the larger centers, it is staffed by over 20 full-time researchers and analysts and 15 administrators.

### **University of Texas-Austin: Institute for Urban Policy Research and Analysis**

The Institute for Urban Policy Research & Analysis (IUPRA) is an interdisciplinary policy research institute that provides intersectional policy solutions. Housed in the School of Liberal Arts, it is the only Texas institute dedicated to social justice, anti-racism, and articulated focus on social equity. Founded through efforts of the Texas Legislative Black Caucus, it is not degree granting and is organized in topical labs. Despite its origination in 2011 and boasting over 33 faculty fellows, it has little notable research funding and has resigned itself to issuing issue briefs and holding events.

### **University of North Texas-Dallas: The SERCH Institute**

The UNT Dallas Urban SERCH Institute is a general engaged learning and service initiative that is primarily focused on Dallas's South Corridor. Rather than an academic or scholarly initiative it housed many of Mayor Mike Rawlings' early grant initiatives and civic-commercial partnerships including work with AmeriCorps and a food mobile venture between DART and Toyota.

### **Southern Methodist University: The Institute for Urban and Environmental Studies**

The Institute for Urban and Environmental Studies (IUES) was founded in 1968. Funded partly from government grants, private donors, and the United Methodist Church, IUES launched interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate degree programs. The coursework for each program encompassed all academic schools at the time, including Perkins and Law. The 122-hour undergraduate curriculum was comprised as follows:

- 21 hours of coursework in the basics of:
  - Anthropology
  - Comparative Arts
  - Journalism
  - Economics
  - Philosophy
  - Political Science
  - Religion
  - Sociology
  
- 21 hours of coursework on Urban Problems
  - Pollution
  - Poverty
  - Overpopulation
  - Ethnic Group Contributions and Difficulties

Although no listing of participating faculty is available, the Institute was overseen by a faculty director, Dr. Sidney Reagan, a Professor of Economics, and housed under the Provost's Office. The School of Humanities managed the degree programs. By 1973, the Institute had obtained

over \$1 million in grants (\$6,832,500 when adjusted for inflation) from the City of Dallas, HUD, and The Department of Health and Human Services.

While we could not uncover the reason for the program's phase-out after Dr. Reagan returned to the Business School in late 1973, one could surmise that without its founding director the program lacked a long-term vision and infrastructure to carry it beyond Dr. Reagan's tenure. However, its very existence is a strong indicator that Urban Research is in the very DNA of the academic life of Southern Methodist University.

## Urban Research at SMU in the 21st Century

When considering the (re)engagement of urban research on the Hilltop, we believe there are several factors that provide SMU a rare opportunity to create a strategic institutional advantage: alignment with the needs and priorities of Dallas; existing curricular synergies and faculty excellence; new curricular opportunities; and a reaffirmation of core commitments.

### **The City of Dallas: A Global Star on the Rise**

Across the globe, cities are engines of growth and opportunity. Since 1950, the share of the world's population living in urban areas has increased from 30% to 55%. In the US, over 80% of the population lives in cities. In the last thirty years, Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) has grown from a population of just over 3 million to a population of over 6.5 million. A startling surge, this unusual population growth is, in part, due to domestic and international migration, coupled with unprecedented economic growth, including an increased relocation of a number of Fortune 500 company headquarters to DFW. At the same time, not everyone in large urban areas benefits from this growth. In the case of DFW, for example, South Dallas is increasingly disconnected from job growth in the north.

How can urbanization persist as a lever of growth and opportunity, while avoiding poverty, crime, pollution, segregation, and congestion, which disproportionately impact communities of color?

These are the questions that Mayor Eric Johnson has prioritized in his second term. Johnson, who unlike other large city mayors ran unopposed, seeks to continue what has been called the "Dallas Miracle." Mayor Johnson is currently prioritizing:

- Revitalization of Fair Park and surrounding neighborhoods;
- Making the Kay Bailey Hutchinson Convention Center an economic driver;
- Eliminating housing blight and other environmental threats;
- The expansion of data-driven Policing;
- The continued search for humane and safe eradication of homelessness;
- Continued expansion of Dallas' choice as a destination for corporate relocation; and,
- The development of green spaces and walkable neighborhoods.



This opportunity to align the city's priorities and SMU's research agenda and expertise permits an occasion for the work of the University to benefit the people with whom we work and live. Just as Emory is aligned with Atlanta, Vanderbilt with Nashville, and Tulane with New Orleans, an urban research cluster, partnering with the City of Dallas for the benefit of its citizens, offers a chance for SMU to truly become Dallas's University.

### **Existing Faculty Excellence and Curricular Synergies**

There is not one singular academic unit or school that is leading SMU's current research agenda and engagement with the issues facing urban communities. A cursory examination of attachment one illustrates that a number of faculty in every SMU School is actively participating in urban studies research and engagement. Additionally, our scholars' works are having significant impacts on policy, practice, and the practical lived experiences of urban citizens across our nation and around the world. Several colleagues noted in the national media for their contributions include:

- Dr. Dominique Baker (Education)
- Professor Willie Baronet (Advertising)
- Dr. Owen Lynch (Corporate Communication and Public Affairs)
- Professor Pam Metzger (Law)
- Dr. Barbara Minsker (Engineering)
- Dr. Neely Myers (Anthropology)

We have collectives of professors in Anthropology (focusing on health and social equity), History (new public health project on global PEPFAR), Economics (focusing on urban growth and sustainability), World Languages and History (immigrant communities), Earth Sciences and Civil and Environmental Engineering (infrastructure, earth Hazards and security), Education and Human Development (equity), Corporate Communication and Public Affairs (social entrepreneurship and non-profit organizing), Advertising (homelessness), Psychology (mental health), and Journalism (civic engagement), amongst many others. Some of these groups already collaborate across schools, such as the Data Science for Social Good research cluster and the GIS@SMU research cluster. SMU also offers a number of undergraduate and graduate course that address urban issues. Additionally, these faculty have established strong external partners for collaboration (See Attachment\_).

From our comprehensive analysis of SMU's scholarly activity and the possible synergies between Schools and Departments, we see four main areas of potential:

1. Growth (Education, Human Capital, and Innovation)
2. Opportunity (Migration, Integration, Poverty, and Inclusion)
3. Well-being (Sustainability, Climate Resilience, Infrastructure, and Health)
4. Civic Engagement and Urban Life (Information/Misinformation, The Arts, Civil Society and Social Entrepreneurship)

As depicted in figure 1, Theme 1 (Growth) allows for synergies between Economics, Education and Sociology. Theme 2 (Opportunity) allows for synergies between Anthropology, Economics,

Education, History, Law, Political Science, Sociology, and World Languages. Theme 3 (Well-being) allows for synergies between Anthropology, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Counseling, Economics, Earth Sciences, Law and Political Science, and Sociology. Theme 4 (Civic Engagement) allows for synergies between Art, Art History, the Bush Presidential Center, CCPA, Data Arts, Journalism, Perkins School of Theology, Political Science).



The above themes provide opportunities for strengthening existing curricular alignments across the university such as:

- **The SMU Human Rights Program:** This interdisciplinary major and program educates the next generation of changemakers deeply engaged in community research and activism on campus, in Dallas, and across the globe. It also attracts diverse students: 80% of their students identify as female, and many of the students are queer, BIPOC, and/or working-class. New course offerings in Urban Studies would better position these students to advance change.
- **University Honors Program (UHP) The Greater Dallas Experience course:** The Office of Student Academic Engagement and Success sees this co-taught, interdisciplinary course as an opportunity to augment the cohort experience of the new Mustang Scholars Program, as well as the UHP that it currently serves. An adequate number of faculty with urban studies expertise (not necessarily limited to Dallas, as previous instructors have brought expertise from other cities into the course) would enable it expansion beyond the 45 students currently taught. It has previously been taught by professors of history, literature, anthropology, and

- sociology and is currently limited to history and literature on an irregular basis due to administrative responsibilities and gaps.
- **Community-based and introductory courses** that reflect student identities, values, and interests. Many SMU students double and triple major, carefully planning to achieve curriculum requirements and graduate on time. Student representatives spoke with us about their desire to see more diversity within their required coursework in fields such as Pre-Med. For instance, a required Chemistry course offered by a new faculty member specializing in inorganic chemistry might offer a course that engages students in a community research project, sampling and testing waters across the diverse communities of Dallas to consider how environmental hazards disproportionately impact certain communities.
  - **Asian American, Hispanic American, and African American Studies:** An urban research cluster serves as an opportunity for SMU to expand our curricular offerings that explore the lived experiences of specific populations and the impact that urbanization and the city migration has on their health, economic and social mobility, housing education, and political and cultural power. These could complement or reinvigorate current concentrations in International Studies and African American Studies as well as language offerings in the World Languages & Literatures Department.
  - **Graduate Certificates and Ph.D. in Urban Studies:** The IHUS project of 1978 provides a potential roadmap towards the establishment of both undergraduate and graduate degree programs in public policy or urban studies.

### **Something New: Undergraduate and Graduate Degree Programs in Urban Research**

SMU could have an exciting niche in Urban Affairs and create new programming that pairs well with existing core institutions. For example, SMU does not currently have a Public Affairs School or its equivalent (e.g., Government) despite its strong partnerships with the Bush Institute. Such a program could train students in leadership skills (Cox), critical humanities and social science to address current issues (Dedman College and Law), engage with urban planning and infrastructure (Lyle), and utilize social innovation and arts entrepreneurship (Meadows) to create the world's future leaders in Urban Affairs.

We envision using these platforms to expand the reach and impact of Engage Dallas and allow SMU students to incubate exciting ideas for urban reform while thinking and partnering with the people who these reforms will impact the most—the communities involved. Students and community members can both benefit from learning leadership, community organizing, research, project management and team-building skills in the process. The dialogues created between the students and the Dallas community could greatly strengthen SMU undergraduate educational opportunities, help SMU offer students 21st-century educational opportunities in community engagement and leadership, and give back to our home by helping to build a better future for our

city. We also think that a student-led lecture series enabling them to invite relevant speakers for them, perhaps at least once per year, could be a programmatic strength.

Another exciting possibility may be to build on a program recently initiated at Stanford University, which allows community members who are of retirement age (65+) to attend Stanford classes for reduced tuition to share their wisdom and expertise. SMU might consider offering some members of the Dallas community fellowships and honorary degrees through these kinds of programs to enrich our classes and the students' education while also raising up and having the opportunity to learn from the ideas and experiences of older leaders in our community.

Programs in the United States that share some of these features are described in detail below. However, SMU would be the first of its kind to bring these components together, building on our existing strengths.

1. **UCLA** has an undergraduate degree in Public Affairs, as well as a minor in Urban and Regional Studies, and a Master's and PhD degree program in urban planning through the Luskin School of Public Affairs. They also have a Global and Comparative Urban Planning and Governance Program in partnership with The Urban School of Sciences Po in Paris. The UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs undergraduate program is home to the B.A. in Public Affairs, and Minors in Gerontology, Public Affairs, and Urban and Regional Studies.

The Urban Planning Department at UCLA offers rigorous training in a wide array of areas of concentration, including community development, housing, transportation, urban design and development, regional and international development and environmental analysis and policy. A hallmark of UCLA's program is its deep commitment to social, environmental and racial justice, democratized planning, inclusivity, and the integration of practice and research.

2. **Stanford University** also offers a major/minor in Urban Studies. At Stanford, this is an interdisciplinary, undergraduate program that combines academic approaches with real-world experience to understand cities. Topics of focus include why people live in cities (or suburbs), how the built environment shapes behavior, and how to address complex problems like urban poverty, gentrification, climate change, or educational inequality. Students take a common set of prerequisite and core classes, as well as skills classes in research methods and Geographic Information Systems. Their coursework provides the basis for a specialization in one of our six concentration areas, which includes: cities in a comparative and historical perspective; race, ethnicity and urban life; urban education; urban society and social change; urban sustainability; or a self-designed option. Students also have a community engagement requirement that can be faculty-led like our Engaged Learning program. Students have a speaker series and host at least one major Urban Studies scholar per year in an event they plan. In 2023, the students hosted anthropologist-physician Phillipe

Bourgeois in partnership with other programs in an event that included zooming in prisoners to speak about mutual mental health support programs from the LA County Jail.

3. **The University of Chicago's** Committee on Environment, Geography and Urbanization offers an undergraduate program and "Doctoral certificate" at the PhD level. Based in the Division of Social Sciences at the University of Chicago, the Committee on Environment, Geography and Urbanization (CEGU) is an interdisciplinary platform for critical thinking, advanced research, and innovative pedagogy on the societal and spatial dimensions of climate change, biodiversity loss, and other kinds of environmental transformation. CEGU builds upon the University's legacies of excellence in geographical studies while providing a new divisional and inter-divisional platform for scholarship, teaching, and public events related to environment and society across time and space. Their key fields of research and pedagogy include urban environmental studies and sustainable urbanism; energy histories and geographies; environmental humanities; spatial and environmental media; environmental policy, design and practice; and, community engagement. With over 30 faculty affiliates drawn primarily from the Division of Social Sciences and the Division of Humanities, CEGU seeks to investigate and respond to the environmental challenges of our time not only by advancing climate change awareness, but by actively centering contemporary planetary environmental emergencies in all aspects of social research and humanistic inquiry.
4. **The Loyola University Chicago** Center for Urban Research and Learning opened in 1996 with a \$1.5 million grant and endowment from the McCormick Tribune Foundation. In 2000, the Foundation awarded a \$2.5 million challenge grant to guarantee that CURL will be a permanent part of Loyola's research, education, and linkage with Chicago communities. The University has raised the matching endowment support. CURL now has about a \$7 million endowment which is used to support faculty, student, and community fellowships along with other general research activities. In addition to this core support, CURL routinely receives grants and contracts from foundations, government agencies, and non-profit organizations to support community-based research. As a vital part of Loyola University Chicago, the Center accesses the vast resources of this major urban university, nationally recognized for its centuries-old Jesuit tradition of excellence in scholarship and commitment to service. The Center offers an undergraduate Urban Studies minor and a Masters' Degree in Urban Affairs and Public Policy. The also offer a JD/MPP and a certificate in Public Affairs and Management. Several of these programs include internships in the city of Chicago. A Friday Morning seminar also offers a time for all of CURL – graduate students, undergraduates, staff, faculty, and community members – to discuss their thoughts and experiences with community-based initiatives and/or relevant research.

5. **New York University** has an ambitious cluster initiative with 15 areas of focus and faculty across campus—from literary studies to STEM. This is designed to impact not only New York, but cities worldwide. They are also clearly using these hires to expand diversity in the faculty. They write that their cluster initiatives, several of which seem relevant to our interests, represent both an opportunity and a responsibility for NYU to be a leader and a force for positive change in recruitment in higher education. By hiring, supporting, and elevating the most innovative faculty with diverse research, life experience, and a commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration, NYU enhances learning for both faculty and students. The expertise of cluster faculty aims to benefit generations of global researchers, professionals, citizens, and leaders.
  
6. **The University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa** has a program in Environment and Society that offers undergraduate and graduate certificates with 12 credits from specific courses. The program is housed in the Department of Geography. Their focus on urban, regional, and environmental planning includes exploring problems related to housing, conflicting land uses, ecotourism, environmental management, transportation planning, economic development in rural and urban areas, regional planning, exclusionary zoning, and concerns of developing nations

**This taskforce believes that an urban research cluster at SMU—with its aforementioned unique assets and given the success of other institutions—can exploit a significant advantage in the educational marketplace that offers new curricular and degree opportunities.** Such a cluster strategically positions SMU as an interdisciplinary organizational entity better able to seek significant community partnerships and grant funding for faculty and postgraduate research. For example, an existing SMU urban research cluster would have been competitive during FY22-23 for over \$56 million in federal grants in energy and poverty, cultural anthropology, mental health, immigration, unaccompanied minors, and urban farming.

We believe it is important to point out that the urban research cluster offers an opportunity for renewed investment in the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Arts as research fields. In our conversations with colleagues, this factor loomed large in the faculty's imagination and support for our efforts. Additionally, the potential for new tenure-track colleagues in non-STEM areas was viewed as an opportunity to invigorate course offerings and departmental expertise, which clearly raised faculty morale.

Finally, this research cluster will empower SMU to fulfill our institutional commitments under the BUF Agreement. Unlike our previous research cluster offerings, this cluster enables SMU to recruit underrepresented faculty from disciplines in which there are larger pools of qualified scholars and researchers. In addition, this cluster increases our local and national visibility in venues and with individuals previously underserved by SMU and, as such, signals our intentions to expand our engagement with such communities more substantially.

# The Challenge

Cluster formations, more specifically, research cluster hiring, are exciting. Yet, the task force concedes that the very breadth of interest, faculty expertise, and ongoing research that makes the urban research cluster intriguing also makes it logistically complex. For example, negotiations about the final composition of the faculty cluster (scholars who are interested versus those who are actively researching), cross-departmental promotion and tenure guidelines (essential for the protection of junior faculty), and the administrative infrastructure to maintain such a vast faculty collaboration are daunting. Nevertheless, as the fourth such research cluster SMU has undertaken, such challenges may be easily overcome.

However, we would be remiss not to report that underlying the faculty's excitement about the emergence of an urban research cluster is a cynicism about the University's will to move forward with the enterprise. The task force and our colleagues questioned whether academic leadership would undertake the considerable financial investment required.

While there is a move to centralize the distribution of faculty lines, the prevailing belief and expectation of SMU's tenured faculty (particularly those here over a decade) are that a department's lines remain within the department suffering the loss of personnel. This clash of values (and organizational realities) have served to create tensions within two academic units most impacted by centralization: Dedman College and Meadows School of the Arts. Therefore, to support the vision of research clusters and respond to line centralization, Deans either converted empty tenured and tenure track lines for the research clusters being staffed or were given NTT positions to fill faculty vacancies.

The taskforce believes this history becomes germane to the urban research cluster because it is the fourth research cluster that Deans will be asked to staff with existing faculty lines. Already under pressure from chairs and faculties to meet longstanding needs within high enrollment majors and graduate programs, *Deans face a dilemma: use a line to support another research cluster that offers their schools the opportunity to diversify their curriculum and faculty or advocate for a line to relieve pressure on existing faculty members and curriculum?*

Hence, the task force's major roadblock in prescribing the next steps. **We are convinced that for the urban research cluster to make a significant impact on SMU's academic brand with underrepresented scholars and communities, ensure the sustainability and retention of scholars hired, and keep the institutional commitment to the Moving Forward Agreement a minimum of five to seven tenure track faculty are required. A suggested allocation is 3-4 in Dedman (Anthropology, Economics, Sociology, English, Political Science) and 2 in Meadows (Journalism and CCPA—Social Entrepreneurship only).**

Based on estimates from conversations with the Deans, at most three existing lines can be offered for this cluster. **At an average cost of \$129K per line (including startup and fringe benefits), the annualized total recurring budget request would be \$516K for the remaining four lines.** Therefore, without additional funds from the Deans, these additional lines would

either need to be funded from a central budget request by the Provost to the University or directly funded by the Provost. Unfortunately, unless this budgetary impasse is resolved, the chances of a successful launch of this cluster is doubtful.

It is important to note that the impact of failing to support lines at the same or greater level than earlier clusters would have a devastating effect on the perception of the University in the eyes of its key stakeholders. Given that this cluster was touted as a gamechanger to both the BUF and AAPI communities in terms of creating substantial opportunities to realistically increase faculty diversity in departments that have yet to have diverse members in their ranks, underdelivering would undermine three years of goodwill and patience.

Additionally, the rest of our mandate can only be realistically completed with a clearer picture of available lines or departmental assignments. The task force will reconvene when a decision is rendered regarding the level and location of university investment.



**ATTACHMENT 1**  
**FACULTY AND DISCIPLINARY CENTERS**  
**INTERESTED IN URBAN ISSUES BY SCHOOL AND DEPARTMENT**

**Cox School of Business**

Folsom Institute for Real Estate program:

- research and debate of critical private and public land use; program currently clinical professors who do applied research on real estate, interests in the financial sustainability of affordable housing
- Joseph Cahoon teaches real estate practicum with 10 UG and 10 MBA students who manage real estate investment fund with \$4M invested in affordable housing project in Fort Worth

**Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences**

Anthropology

- Eric Bing
- Maryann Cairns
- Kacey Hollenbach
- Neely Myers

Chemistry

- Elfi Kraka

Earth Sciences

- Stephen Arrowsmith
- Heather De Shon

Economics

- Wookun Kim, Assistant Professor, Economics
- Klaus Desmet, Professor, Economics
- Daniel Millimet, Professor, Economics

English

- Darryl Dickson-Carr, African American literature

History

- Neil Foley, Professor, immigration
- Kenneth Hamilton, Professor, African American and ethnic studies

- Jill Kelly, Associate Professor, global public health (PEPFAR)
- Clements Center for Southwest Studies (see attachment below)

### Math

- See below, with DCII Clusters on Political Decision-Making and Earth Hazards and National Security

### Political Science

- Department has history of urban studies engagement with annual Civil Rights Pilgrimage, the “Law, Politics, and the Supreme Court” course that travels to Washington, D.C. every spring, and the Tower Scholars Program in which students combine their academic interests with world of public policy
- Their public policy major and minor often lacks sufficient courses for completion, requiring force matching. They identify the Urban Studies Cluster hire as an opportunity to build their course offerings and contribute to online MPP program out of the Moody School,

### Psychology

- Recently lost a faculty member (Priscilla Lui) to another university who does work on mental health among racial/ethnic minority populations. Eager to have someone else working on this as her lab intentionally promoted opportunities for diverse students.
- Eager to hire in diversity science — in psychology this typically involves research on the causes of racism, socioeconomic and health disparities, and bias and it involves the recruitment of study samples from traditionally underrepresented groups.

### Sociology

- Alicia Schortgen, nonprofit organizations in Dallas
- Matthew Keller, innovation
- The Department routinely supervises nonprofit internships for students in the DFW area, as part of a cluster of courses on nonprofit organizations and community development
- Interested in hiring an urbanist to continue department’s history of supporting urban sociology and the UHP Greater Dallas course

### Stats

- See below with DCII cluster

### World Languages

- Elizabeth Russ, Associate Professor and Chair, teaches Dallas course with David Doyle
- Herve Tchumkam, Professor, Literature and Postcolonial Studies, *urban problems in a global world, integration of immigrant populations, banlieue problems*
- Alicia Zuese, book on cities in Early Modern Spain, teaches class on Madrid.
- Alberto Pastor and Gabriela Vokic, research on variations of Spanish as spoken in Dallas and/or on bilingual education, using Dallas as the community they are looking at.

## **Dedman College of Law**

- Nathan Cortez, Co-Director of the Tsai Center for Law, Science and Innovation, Callejo Endowed Professor of Law in Leadership and Latino Studies, health law/international health
- Eric Ruben, criminal law
- Seema Mohapatra, health care equity
- Anna Offit, prosecutorial ethics, the U.S. jury system
- Mary Specter, rights of consumers and tenants, access to justice in the civil courts
- Jessica Dixon Weaver, child welfare laws, multigenerational living and
- Leo Yu, civil rights litigation and Asian American jurisprudence
- Pamela Metzger- Deason Law Center

## **Lyle School of Engineering**

### Civil and Environmental Engineering

- Khaled Abdelghany, Professor, urban growth and transport
- Nicos Makris, Professor, structures and natural hazards
- Barbara Minsker, Professor, infrastructure
- Janille Smith-Colin, Assistant Professor, sustainability and infrastructure resilience
- Kathleen Smits, Chair, Civil and Environmental Engineering, water and energy
- Jessie Zarazaga, Clinical Associate Professor, landscape mapping and public engagement

### Electrical and Computer Engineering

- Jianhui Wang, Professor, smart grid and power
- Mohammad Khodayar, Associate Professor, smart grid and power
- *Issues: grid resilience, energy resources*

### Hunt Institute for Engineering and Humanity

- Dr. Eva Szalkai Csaky, Executive Director and co-founder of the Inclusive Economy Consortium

## **Meadows School of Arts**

### Advertising

- Willie Baronet, “We are All Homeless” art project

### Art History

- Strengths in urban (modern and ancient) Africa and Latin America; recently hired TT positions in Afro-Latin American and West African art and performance; literally all art historians work on aspects of urbanism--from civilizations, monumental building complexes, emerging cultures and food deserts

- Roberto Conduro
- Tashima
- Elyan Hill
- Adam Herring

### Corporate Communication & Public Affairs

- Owen Hanley Lynch, Associate Professor, Participatory Action Research & Asset Based Community Development. Primary focus is on the local Agri-System: community food resilience, local food production and access, job training and food entrepreneurialism. Focus Research in South Dallas Fair Park (primarily 75210 & 75215) since 2010. Partnered with community members and organizations to both research and implement projects- for example Restorative Farm (USDA- recognized to be one of the most ambitious and impactful urban food projects in the country). Projects have been bases several research projects, NSF grant applications, student capstone and research projects, internships and engaged Dallas location.
- Doric Earle- Professor of Practice. Dr. Earle has been active research and consulting in economic development projects in South Dallas. This led an expansion of applied research and new social impact hub at SMU that he is co-directing. Co-founder with Dr. Lynch on Restorative Farm project.
- Maria Dixon Hall, Associate Professor and Chief Diversity Officer (Non-Profit and Religious Organizations focus and founder of mustangconsulting, student consulting firm which serves urban and corporate clients since 2005.

### **Simmons School of Education**

#### Graduate Liberal Studies

- John Potter (spends most Thursdays at The Well Recovery Center. A few students have conducted qualitative research here for their capstone)
- Mag Gabbert (creative writing community service)
- Rick Halperin, Professor of Practice for Human Rights – extensive community service and activism DFW, nationally, and internationally
- Robert Hunt, Professor of Interreligious Dialogue and Global Christianity (extensive work in interfaith dialogue particularly between Christianity and Islam)
- Hal Recinos, Professor of Church and Society, Perkins School of Theology

#### Educational Policy & Leadership

- Dominique Baker, researches policies that influence the ability to create an inclusive an equitable campus climate
- Alexandra Pavlakis, examines how student and families’ broader life contexts intersect with educational institutions, actors, policies, and practices to shape their schooling experiences
- Meredith Richards, research situates policies in their metropolitan and geographic contexts, focusing on the role that educational boundaries play in facilitating social stratification and segregation
- Michael Harris research interests consider the culture, strategy, and behavior of higher education institutions.

## Teaching & Learning

- Quentin Sedlacek, roles that racialized and gendered ideologies of language play in shaping teacher practices and student experiences
- Magdalena Pando, research also focus on teacher preparation and professional development aimed at fostering culturally and linguistically inclusive teaching methods in early childhood and K-12 education
- Johnitha Watkins Johnson, Urban Education
- Karla del Rosal, teaches graduate and undergraduate courses on bilingual education, ESL instruction, student diversity, and classroom assessment

## Counseling

- Greta Davis - Prioritizing increasing diversity in the Counseling program - increases in diversity among faculty and students under her leadership; utilizes Cultural Formation Interview and Culturally Informed Suicide Assessment to ensure proper assessment and no misdiagnoses due to cultural background
- Terra Wagner - Simmons Diversity Officer; Counseling Program Diversity Committee Chair (increased diversity on all searches participated in); updated Diverse Communities course curriculum; focus on infusing cultural discussions across all aspects of Counseling curriculum; presented solo and with students on cultural humility and Black clients/supervisee issues; facilitates faculty discussions on urban issues and how they impact students; initiated and planned Counseling While Black event; supports students in leading events related to urban matters (i.e. I am Here); works to recruit and retain Black counselors and clients in our counseling clinic (currently all interns are Black); recommended student clinical course assessment (Clinical Progress Assessment) evaluate Cultural Humility rather than competency; community outreach; services clients in the community in private practice
- Damion Davis - Teaches diverse communities with curriculum focused on urban matters and how they may impact the counselor's work with clients; community outreach; services clients in the community in private practice
- Denise Walker - Teaches diverse communities with curriculum focused on urban matters; teach Family Therapy with a focus on urban matters and how they impact client mental health; community outreach; services clients in the community in private practice
- Brandy Schumann - Teach Adolescent therapy through a culturally sensitive lens to limit counselor bias and harm; community outreach; services clients in the community in private practice; engages in opportunities to help the community when mental health crises arise; intentionality about increasing diversity and equity in all spaces she navigates; supports students in addressing bias/stereotypes during Internship class and assumes professional responsibility for gatekeeping based on ACA Code of Ethics
- Tom Hartsell - Teaches Ethics with a focus on understanding diversity and historical contexts that may lead to discrimination.

## Applied Physiology & Sports Management

- Eric Bing, global health

## INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH CLUSTERS WITH A FOCUS ON URBAN ISSUES

- Asian Studies and Asian American Experiences
  - *research space and opportunities for collaboration, to advance creative teaching in Asian Studies, and to foster a campus environment inclusive of diverse perspectives*
  - Piyawan Charoensap-Kelly, pckelly@mail.smu.edu
  - Wookun Kim, wookunkim@mail.smu.edu
  - LaiYee Leong, lleong@mail.smu.edu
  - Rachel Ball-Phillips, rmball@mail.smu.edu
- Data Science for Social Good Research Cluster
  - *arises out of SMU's Summer REU, entitled "Data Science for Social Good," economic development, voting fairness, the Dallas County Inland Port's effect on the community's access to transportation services, and the fairness of Dallas County eviction and their effect on families.*
  - Lauren Gilmore
  - Nicos Makris, Civil Engineering, urban areas and natural hazards
  - Mary Spector, mspector@smu.edu
  - Lynne Stokes, slstokes@smu.edu
- Earth Hazards and National Security
  - Two critical and interconnected issues facing the United States and Texas today are Earth Hazards and National Security. With existing and emerging challenges associated with climate change and an increasingly multipolar world, addressing these challenges requires research on natural and human systems, technical innovation and advanced monitoring and data analyses approaches. T
  - Heather DeShon, hdeshon@smu.edu
  - Dinesh Rajan, rajand@lyle.smu.edu
  - Alejandro Aceves, aaceves@smu.edu
  - Stephen Arrowsmith, sarrowsmith@smu.edu
  - Zhong Lu, zhonglu@smu.edu
- GIS @ SMU
  - *mapping and spatial analysis*
  - Klaus Desmet, kdesmet@mail.smu.edu
  - Mark McCoy, mdmccoy@mail.smu.edu
  - Jessie Zarazaga, jzarazaga@mail.smu.edu
- Hispanics at Work
  - *bring together faculty, staff, graduate students and the Dallas business community who are interested in different topics relating to Hispanic leadership, business, language and culture within the workplace. It will examine the complex and innovative ways in which American Corporate Culture is transforming as it integrates Hispanic language, culture and business practices. Moreover, it seeks to make points of contact, stimulate intellectual exchanges and research about the material culture of these two praxes and how they intersect and make a unique workforce.*
  - Leticia T. McDoniel, World Languages mcdoniel@mail.smu.edu
  - Jessica Martinez, Cox School of Business jnmartinez@mail.smu.edu
- Human Rights
  - *the history of Dallas County since 1850 through the lens of human rights*
  - Rick Halperin, rhalperi@mail.smu.edu
  - Tony Pederson, tpederso@mail.smu.edu

- Ed Gray, [edwardg@mail.smu.edu](mailto:edwardg@mail.smu.edu)
- Political Decision Making
  - *In recent years, the study of political decision-making has received increasing attention from mathematicians. This interest is driven by several factors, including the availability of computational resources that have enabled new algorithms for sampling high-dimensional probability spaces, as well as a broadly felt urgency to contribute to civic life among members of a discipline that has historically viewed itself as apolitical. These factors align with SMU's strategic interests in high-performance computing and interdisciplinary research. We propose to organize a research cluster in Political Decision-Making with three focus areas: the mathematics of redistricting, social choice theory, and mathematical modeling of polarization.*
    - Andrea Barreiro, [abarreiro@mail.smu.edu](mailto:abarreiro@mail.smu.edu)
    - Matthew Lockard, [mlockard@mail.smu.edu](mailto:mlockard@mail.smu.edu)
    - Scott Norris, [snorris@mail.smu.edu](mailto:snorris@mail.smu.edu)
    - Brandilyn Stigler, [bstigler@mail.smu.edu](mailto:bstigler@mail.smu.edu)

## 1. **CENTERS, PROGRAMS AND MAJORS WITH A FOCUS ON URBAN ISSUES**

- Budd Center
- Clements Center Research on Urban Studies Postdoctoral Fellows
  - Katherine Bynum
  - Bryant Etheridge
  - Gavin Benke
  - Douglas K. Miller
  - Tyina Steptoe
  - Andrew Needham
  - Monica Perales
  - Laura Hernández Ehrisman
  - Raúl A. Ramos
- Consortium on Educational Research and Improvement (Simmons/DISD Collaboration)
- Ethnic Studies/American Studies Major
- Human Rights Major
- International Studies Major
- Markets & Culture Major
- Mission Foods Texas-Mexico Center
- West Dallas STEM School