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**Office of the Provost**

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Dear Colleagues:

There are so many opportunities on campus for students and each of us knows exceptional students who we want to celebrate. This week's newsletter highlights just a few of these opportunities and how students are excelling in a wide variety of activities. Dr. Sheri Kunovich, Associate Provost for Student Academic Engagement and Success, took your suggestions and compiled a snapshot. We hope that you learn about something new, decide to join us at an upcoming event, or simply feel inspired by all that our students accomplish. The dedication and commitment shown to our students by faculty and staff across campus make all the things highlighted here happen. So *thank you* and enjoy.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

**Keeping SMU Students Connected.** Many members of our SMU community partner to keep students informed of opportunities and resources. Each semester, students can find relevant, up-to-date information at the [SMU Connected site](#), which also includes an archive of the most recent reminders. Reminders point students to resources such as tips on topics ranging from [finding out how you are doing in class](#) to [finding on-campus jobs and workshops on professional engagement](#). This site also serves as a landing page for quickly navigating to making advising appointments and scheduling tutoring support for students.

**Ask A Mustang.** “Ask-A-Mustang” will be a collaborative and approachable service that seeks to answer the most pressing SMU student questions. Through a table in the Starbucks area of Fondren Library, SMU students can get quick answers to the most common and persistent questions in a low-stress, non-judgmental environment. To make this table/service more responsive to student needs and approachable, the table will be staffed by one SMU Faculty or Staff member pulled from a pool of volunteers from across campus and one SMU undergraduate student volunteer. We plan to pilot this program starting November 1.

**Gathering places for SMU Scholars.** The [Scholar's Den is a unique space](#) made for studying, group work, informal meetings, or even taking a short nap between classes. SMU has a wide range of scholars groups: Hilltop Scholars, Hunt Leadership Scholars, President’s Scholars, Rotunda Scholars, University Honors Program, and Dedman College Scholars. Stop by to say hello and learn more. You are always welcome to reserve one of our spaces to meet with students. Scholars Den is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 am - 5:30 pm, in the basement of Clements Hall.

**SMU Incubator.** The [Incubator@SMU](#) is a dedicated business workspace that exists to encourage and facilitate the formation and growth of new organizations founded by SMU students, faculty, staff, and alumni. With 7 new companies recently added in the fall cohort, the Incubator@SMU now has a thriving ecosystem of 50 companies across a wide range of industries who are working in collaboration to build better businesses and a better world. Our companies have raised over \$2M dollars and continue to soar. The Incubator@SMU also benefits from the yearly additions of [Big iDeas](#) winners who are added in our pitch and business plan competitions. [This fall we seed-funded 11 undergraduate students](#) with \$1,000 to bring the ideas for their companies to life. Companies like Steadipsoon, who is designing a spoon to help those with Parkinson’s eat with dignity, and spotBOX who is educating about menstruation through ungendered period products, are truly thinking big and doing good. Additionally, companies like Wole Akande’s [City Health Tech](#) just won funds in the SMU MBA pitch competition and we expect these success stories to keep rolling in.

**Engage Dallas.** [Engage Dallas](#) is a place-based community engagement initiative offered by SMU's Residential Commons to address community needs focusing on South and West Dallas. The initiative is a long-term, university-wide commitment led by students to partner with local residents, organizations, and other leaders to positively impact the community. There is equal emphasis on campus and community impact. Faculty and staff can do much to inspire students to participate in service. Whether that be through class announcements, encouraging membership in service organizations, offering extra credit for service, or inspiring action-based research benefiting the Dallas community, [Engage Dallas](#) offers many ways for faculty and staff to connect with students outside of the classroom through service.

Opportunities span from leading an alternative break trip/activity related to [a specific social problem](#), attending a monthly service event, or even leading discussions in the Residential Commons about a particular social problem. To learn more about opportunities to connect with students through Engage Dallas, [check out this video](#). If you have any questions, please email [engagedallas@smu.edu](mailto:engagedallas@smu.edu).

**Voices of SMU.** Voices of SMU is a collaboration between students, alumni, and entities across campus to diversify the University Archives' holdings. With Voices of SMU, Undergraduate Research Assistants conduct oral history interviews with alumni from underrepresented groups and the histories are made available online in the [SMU Libraries Digital Collections](#). Take some time and learn more about these amazing students as they recall significant moments during their time at SMU.

**The Shop.** [The Shop](#) provides non-perishable food items and basic essentials at no cost to current SMU students (undergraduate and graduate) who are experiencing food insecurity. If you know of a student in need, they can access the shop by visiting the Fondren Library Main Desk during hours of operation.

## **PLEASE JOIN US**

**First Gen Fest November 8.** First-Gen Fest is SMU's celebration of National First-Gen Day. The main purpose is to celebrate first-gen students and their

journey. While celebrating with music, food and giveaways, students also have an opportunity to connect with different departments, organizations and students. Our goal is for students to leave feeling proud of themselves, supported as a first-gen student, and informed about the resources and opportunities on campus. Join us this year for First-Gen Fest Monday, November 8, from 1:00 - 3:30 pm in the Health Center Backyard!

**Residential Commons Affiliation Induction November 8.** The Residential Commons at SMU is a partnership between the Divisions of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs established in 2014. Join Residence Life and Student Housing at a come-and-go event launching the new Residential Commons Affiliate Program. The Affiliate Program at SMU is an integral part of the Residential Commons, where faculty and staff commit to supporting the intellectual, cultural, and social life of the 11 communities by engaging residents and providing mentorship, guidance, and support to students. The Residential Commons is a unique on-campus housing system which supports the foundational SMU student experience. Current Commons Affiliates can reconnect with faculty, staff, and students from their community and welcome new affiliates! Remember to wear your Commons pins! **Faculty and staff without a current affiliation will receive their Commons Affiliation during the launch party and receive swag!** Food and drink is provided for all. An identical, brief presentation with remarks will be made on **Monday, November 8, at 2:00 pm, 3:00 pm, and 4:00 pm in the Mack Ballroom.** [RSVPs](#) encouraged; walk-ins welcome.

**Moody School Three-Minute Thesis Competition November 9 and 12.** SMU graduate students will present their research and compete for prizes at this year's [Three Minute Thesis \(3MT\) competition](#), which will take place in the Chamber in the Hughes-Trigg Student Center (lower level). First round heats will be held Tuesday, November 9, from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm. The finals will be held Friday, November 12, from 12:00 - 1:00 pm. 3MT celebrates the exciting research being conducted by SMU graduate students, and allows them to hone their communication and presentation skills. The rules of the competition are simple: participants present their dissertation or thesis research in non-specialist language in less than three minutes with the assistance of one static PowerPoint slide. They are judged on the effectiveness

of their presentation and their ability to convince the judges of the impact of their research. All members of the SMU community are invited to attend.

**SMU Guildhall's Capstone December 13.** SMU Guildhall's Capstone teams are reaching a significant milestone when they enter the final month of production as they ready three games for publication. SMU Guildhall's TGP Capstone program involves every student in the senior cohort who benefits from students in Music, Film, and Voice departments in Meadows, religious studies in Dedman, continual support from OIT, playtesting from SMU's esports club and a number of students and alumni, and material support from Epic and Intel, coaching and mentoring from a variety of game studios around the country, including Sony Santa Monica Studios, Gearbox, Bethesda Dallas, Better Together Games. The students employ their mastery of teamwork, team efficacy and psychological safety in cutting-edge game development to create three games that will be released worldwide on Steam. The semester culminates their 6-month development with what the students have named "Bagel Day." This is one of SMU Guildhall's major annual events and is a celebration of the students' accomplishments with guests from schools on campus and local game studios. **This year's Bagel Day is on Monday, December 13, at 9:30 am and will be in Ford Hall 201 or by Zoom for those who cannot attend in person.**

**Research Days.** Encourage your students to consider presenting their research at [Research Days](#) in March produced in conjunction with the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies and the Office of Engaged Learning.

**Faculty Supporting Student Events.** Students truly appreciate when faculty they know attend university sponsored events. To add them to your calendar please follow these links for the schedule of events for [Meadows Performances](#), [Athletic Events](#), and [student sponsored activities](#). Alternatively, you can request to join [email mail lists](#) and have upcoming activities delivered straight to your in-box.

## **CAMPUS UPDATES**

**SMU Study Abroad.** Fall 2021 is the first term since Spring 2020 that SMU Abroad offered in-person study abroad programs. Three programs offered were with partner Institute for American Universities (IAU) in Aix-en-Provence, France; Barcelona and Madrid, Spain. SMU Abroad will continue to plan in-person abroad programs for subsequent terms, in addition to offering more programs in more locations in consultation with the Travel Oversight Committee (TOC). Two additional affiliated programs are offered for the Spring 2022 term with DIS Study Abroad in Scandinavia (partner since 1984) in Copenhagen, Denmark and Stockholm, Sweden. The application cycle for January 2022 and Spring 2022 terms closed on October 1, with a total of 105 applicants. The application cycle for Summer 2022 and Fall 2022 will open on Monday, November 1. Students who are interested in participating in SMU Abroad programs are strongly encouraged to create their Advising Profile and complete Abroad 101 on Canvas *now*. 367 students have already created their Advising Profile for upcoming study abroad programs. SMU Abroad expects higher application numbers than usual and therefore strongly recommends that students complete an application early. Spots are limited.

**Data Science@SMU.** The new Data Science B.S. and Data Science minor are already attracting students. Currently there are 19 majors and minors with additional students declaring regularly. We will graduate our first majors/minors in December. The Data Science major is designed for students across the university since it requires that students already have a declared major (the content major) and requires 36 credit hours. A key requirement is a capstone course that allows students to apply what they have learned to their primary major. Only a few capstone courses have been proposed thus far. Please consider proposing such a course by sending a syllabus for the course to [pmoore@smu.edu](mailto:pmoore@smu.edu). I am happy to answer any questions you have about the major (or minor) including the capstone. Of course, the minor is also accessible. In both cases the introductory data science class, DS 1300/OREM 1300, is a great way for students to be introduced to the area.

In conjunction with the Scott-Hawkins lecture series, the Office of Curricular Innovation and Policy will host Melissa Cefkin, a Cultural Anthropologist (Ph.D. Rice) who works on Google's self-driving car effort. More information about her visit on February 17-18, 2022, is forthcoming. You may contact Peter

Moore, Associate Provost for Curricular Innovation and Policy, at [pmoore@smu.edu](mailto:pmoore@smu.edu)

The Data Science Institute has hosted a series of speakers funded by DCCI on new data sources such as Twitter to encourage interaction among faculty interested in both theory and practice. Finally, the DSI is planning a pilot of an interdisciplinary Master's student capstone project course for Spring 2022.

### **A COLLECTION OF STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Over Fall Break, eleven Corporate Communication & Public Affairs students traveled to Washington D.C. to participate in the Hilltop on the Hill program. For four days, this program connects students with leading communication professionals in public affairs, media, legislative offices, and public advocacy groups. This was also the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the program, which we celebrated with an alumni event that drew dozens of alumnus from the Washington D.C. area.

The [Fall Research Symposium](#) took place on Wednesday October 27, with 23 undergraduate and 3 graduate students presenting. Special thanks to all the faculty mentors who guided them along the way.

The Office of Engaged Learning piloted a Summer Research Intensive program this summer. Undergraduate students worked on research projects with faculty members, participated in weekly professional development workshops, and competed in a "three minute thesis" competition. 42 students participated, working with 27 faculty across 10 departments. By assisting faculty members this summer, these students contributed to 8 grant proposals, 7 conference presentations, and 2 published papers.

Twenty-one doctoral students in humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and engineering participated in the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies Doctoral Candidacy Ceremony on Friday, October 22. Advancement to candidacy marks the point in a doctoral student's progress when they have completed all coursework and qualifying examinations and have been judged by the faculty of their program to be capable of completing an original and

significant research project worthy of the doctoral degree. The Moody School Candidacy Ceremony honors Ph.D. and other doctoral students who have passed this significant milestone.

A record number (11) of National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program applications were put forward this year from the departments of Anthropology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Psychology, and Statistics.

Graduate student **Carolyn Mason**, African American Mustang Fellowship winner who (in her first 8 weeks on our campus) has won the Christine Wilson Award from the Society for the Anthropology of Food and Nutrition, earned the position of Graduate Assistant to the Society for Medical Anthropology under President Charles Briggs, and prepared a robust proposal for the Graduate Research Fellowship Program. The dissertation research she is planning targets the intersection of race, inter-generational food insecurity, and gendered family values and roles.

Art History Ph.D. student **Arvin Maghsoudlou** was awarded a [Metropolitan Museum of Art Fellowship](#) for the 2021-2022 academic year. Arvin studies often-overlooked art and objects from late antique Iran and Western Asia (200-900 CE), focusing on the materiality of precious metal objects from the Sasanian Empire, the last Persian imperial dynasty before the Muslim conquest in the mid-seventh century. The fellowship will support him for one year as he pursues his doctoral research, including a 12-month residency at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Arvin's doctoral studies have also been supported by an SMU University Ph.D. Fellowship, administered by the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies.

Art History Ph.D. student **Danya Epstein** was awarded the 2021-2022 [Carter Manny Research Award](#) from the Graham Foundation, to support her research on Phoenix-based Hopi artist and architect Dennis Numkena (1941–2010), a polymath practitioner who broke barriers for Native Americans as the first Native American architect to helm his own firm. Danya also advanced the writing of her doctoral dissertation, based on this research, at a



Dissertation Writing Bootcamp offered by the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies in August.

Recent Molecular and Cellular Biology Ph.D. alumna **Dr. Lauren Ammerman** was featured in an article in *The Dallas Morning News*. The article, "[SMU study shows how a 'good' protein can remove a toxic protein related to Alzheimer's](#)," highlights research Lauren conducted with her dissertation adviser Professor John Wise and other colleagues at SMU, including fellow Biology Ph.D. alum James McCormick. Lauren's doctoral studies at SMU were supported by a University Ph.D. Fellowship, and she was one of the first students to complete her degree with the support of a Moody Dissertation Fellowship provided by the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies. She is now a postdoctoral researcher at UT Southwestern.

The Data Science Institute has focused this year on encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration, including research projects and learning activities. Two graduate students were selected to work on evaluation of a Dallas economic development program funded by JP Morgan Chase, called the [PRO neighborhood Initiative](#). The project team includes Dr. Cullum Clark from the Bush Institute and SMU alum **Celesstia Valdez**, the PRO Neighborhoods coordinator from a participating nonprofit.

Four of SMU's MFA actors - Felipe Carasco, Olivia De Guzman, Victoria Cruz and Carson Shofner are currently in rehearsals for *A Christmas Carol* at the Dallas Theater Center. This continues SMU's long collaboration with the Tony-award winning theater. Earlier this year, Dallas Theatre Center produced the world premiere of prize-winning playwright and SMU alum Jonathan Norton's play *Cake Ladies* starring MFA Actor Bradley Atuba.

Recent [Engaged Learning Fellow](#) news:

Audrey Courreges '21 will present her paper, which discusses different school formats and the emotional well-being of adolescents on the autism spectrum, at the Society for Research on Adolescence (SRA) in New Orleans in March 2022.

Zack Demaree '21 recently interviewed a number of successful people, such as President Gerald Turner and Dallas Mayor Eric Johnson, for his project "Foundations: The Road to Success."

Gabrielle Gard '22 was awarded the prestigious Goldwater Scholarship this summer, which will enable her to continue researching inhibitors that re-sensitize drug-resistant cancer cells.

Alumni, **Greg Guggenmos**, won Humanity in Action's Landecker Democracy Fellowship, which provides a year of financial support to recipients so that they can develop projects that reinvent democratic spaces, strengthen social cohesion and build connections across communities. Only 30 Landeckers are awarded each year!

## **STUDENT PUBLICATIONS**

Students across SMU are publishing in remarkable and distinctive outlets supported by the university as well as national and peer-reviewed outlets. When you have time, take a look at the [\*Journal of Undergraduate Research\*](#), [\*Kairos Creative and Literary Magazine\*](#), [\*Hilltopics Opinion Paper\*](#), [\*SMU Look Style Magazine\*](#), and the campus newspaper [\*Daily Campus\*](#).

India Simmons (alumni) and, Nia Kamau (Class of 2022) have a forthcoming article in the peer-reviewed journal of the *Texas Oral History Association*, *Sound Historian*.

Sincerely,



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**World Changers Shaped Here**