

## Weekly Update | December 16, 2022

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

Dear Faculty and Staff,

These weekly updates will serve as a tool to keep you informed and engaged with SMU's Academic Affairs division as, together, we work toward achieving the goals that fall within our four priority areas through 2025: 1) Academic Excellence/ *US News and World Report* Top 50, 2) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, 3) 2016 – 2025 Strategic Plan, and 4) Inclusive Excellence.

If you have suggestions for what we should include in future communications, please send your ideas to this [email address](#). Previous newsletters are available [here](#).

Today's update falls into three categories: 1) Fall 2022, 2) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 3) News and Noteworthy.

### Fall 2022

#### End of semester holiday wishes

On behalf of the Provost's Office team, I wish you all a safe and happy holiday season. It is an honor and privilege to work alongside you every day as we define and execute SMU's academic strategy. Unless the need arises, this will be the final newsletter of the fall semester. We will resume distribution on Friday, January 13, 2023.

I would encourage faculty to attend the spring General Faculty Reception and Meeting on Wednesday, January 18th in the Hughes-Trigg Student Center where I will have the opportunity to discuss SMU's trajectory and recent progress toward achieving our academic goals during my spring faculty address. The reception will begin at 3:00 p.m. in the Lower Level of Hughes Trigg, and the meeting will begin at 3:45 p.m. in the Hughes Trigg Auditorium.

#### Reminders from Previous Weeks

##### Final grades deadline

On-time grade submission supports our students in a variety of ways, such as ensuring that students have their academic records in order for graduation, internships, enrollment, petitions, extracurricular activities and more. All faculty received a reminder this week that grades are due within 72 hours of the scheduled final exam. For questions about procedures, [please visit this FAQ](#).

##### *SMU offers flu shots at the Dr. Bob Smith Health Center*

Vaccination can help you minimize your chance of getting the flu. We encourage all SMU students, faculty, and staff to get their flu shot. Click [here](#) for more information on available options.

##### December Commencement on December 17th

[December Commencement](#) will take place at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow, December 17th in Moody Coliseum. Clark Hunt ('87) will be our commencement speaker.

Doors open at 8:00 a.m. and guests are encouraged to be seated by 8:45 a.m. [Security screening](#) is in place. Guest tickets are not required for this event. Seating is general admission. If the venue reaches capacity, guests will be directed to a simulcast location. The ceremony will also be live streamed at [smu.edu/live](http://smu.edu/live).

## Road to R-1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

### Update on Proposals for FY 2024 Congressional Earmark/Appropriation Process

Thank you to our faculty for a strong response to this fall's call for proposals for consideration as a part of the U.S. Congress' FY 2024 earmark and/or appropriations process.

First draft proposals were due November 23, 2023, to be eligible for consideration and today is the final submission deadline. As of this morning, we had received 37 proposals. [Suku Nair](#), Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer. Suku and I will review these proposals next week to make final determinations with hopes of putting forward 20 proposals for consideration at the federal level.

### SMU to open new Institute for Computational Biosciences at Pegasus Park

SMU will open its new Institute for Computational Biosciences at Pegasus Park, as also reported by [Dallas Morning News](#) and [Dallas Innovates](#). Our Pegasus Park location will give students and faculty members the opportunity to interact with others at the biotech hub.

### Key leadership searches underway

#### Dean, Lyle School of Engineering

Two finalists came to campus last week and three more this week for in-depth interviews with campus stakeholders. Our plan remains to name a new Dean by early 2023.

As a reminder, all candidates arriving to Campus should remain confidential. Please do not share candidates' names or visits with anyone outside of SMU. My thanks to Dean Sam Holland and the search committee for their outstanding work recruiting this strong class of candidates.

## News and Noteworthy

### Provost Annual Report Now Available Online for Viewing

The 2022 Provost's Annual Report is now available [online for viewing or printing](#). It represents just a fraction of the many accomplishments that, working together, we have been able to achieve in the past year in our quest for greater academic excellence. Special thanks to Travis Nolan, a junior from Dallas who is studying biology and geology with a goal to work in paleontology after graduation. Travis folded all origami featured in the report, including the Peruna on the front cover.

### Meadows faculty take the Big Apple by storm this week

This has been an outstanding week in New York City for SMU and Meadows, with a number of faculty members' accomplishments on display across the city:

- The Philadelphia Orchestra commissioned an original work from Meadows music composition faculty member Xi Wang that they performed in Philadelphia last weekend and at Carnegie Hall this week. See [here](#) for recent coverage.
- Tashima Thomas, Assistant Professor in Art History, has a major exhibition in Tribeca titled Flora Fantastic: Eco-Critical Contemporary Botanical Art. Details are [here](#).

- Faculty members Aaron Boyd, Chair of Strings/Director of Chamber Music, and Pierre Lapointe, Adjunct Associate Professor of Viola, will be performing [Bach at Lincoln Center](#) this evening.

### **New reports available from SMU DataArts**

SMU Data Arts released two research reports this week, one on the Ford Foundation's \$250M inclusivity investment and the [Arts Vibrancy Index](#), revealing the large, medium and small cities around the country with the most vibrant arts communities.

### **Simmons' math education expert speaks to *Dallas Morning News* about recent national drop in K-12 math scores**

New national math scores reflect a steep drop in K-12 math performance since 2020. Math comprehension is key for those entering STEM careers, math education expert Candace Walkington told the [Dallas Morning News](#).

Sincerely,



Elizabeth G. Loba, PhD

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Southern Methodist University

<https://www.smu.edu/provost>

**World Changers Shaped Here**