

Weekly Update | December 9, 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

Farewell Reception for Dean Craig C. Hill

On Thursday, President Turner and I hosted a farewell reception for Perkins School of Theology's Dean Craig C. Hill, Leighton K. Farrell Endowed Dean and Professor of New Testament. As announced earlier this year, he will retire as Dean on December 31, 2022 and will remain a member of the Perkins faculty until December 31, 2023.

Craig became the school's 11th Dean in July 2016. During his years at Perkins he led a thorough study and reorganization of the Office of Enrollment Management, doubling new student enrollment from 2016-2017 to 2019-2020. Under his leadership, financial aid to students increased by 50 percent. Hill broadened academic offerings to include the development of the Baptist House of Studies, the Black/Africana Studies and a healthcare chaplaincy program. In addition, a \$7 million renovation of Perkins' renowned Bridwell Library was completed in 2021, enabling significant acquisitions, such as the collection of the World Methodist Museum.

Craig's presence and leadership will be missed, but we are pleased that Bishop Michael McKee has agreed to serve as Dean of the Perkins School ad interim effective January 1, 2023 and until a permanent Dean has been named.

Final Grades Deadline

On-time grade submission supports our students in a variety of ways, such as ensuring that student 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](#).

Updated Procedures for Operation of Sub-Compact Utility Vehicles On Campus

SMU has updated its sub-compact utility vehicle operations procedures on campus. A summary of changes can be found in a campus-wide [announcement](#) sent on December 5th. Golf carts, low speed vehicles, neighborhood electric vehicles, and utility carts are all included in these [procedures](#), which fall under University Policy 11.6. Please review these procedures carefully and reach out to Brandon Chance (bchance@smu.edu) in the Office of Risk Management with any questions.

Reminders from Previous Weeks

Degree Planner Tool is Live

To aid undergraduate Common Curriculum students in their progress toward degree, the SMU in Four team has introduced [a new tool called Degree Planner within my.SMU](#). Degree Planner will not only benefit students and advisors but will aid academic departments in data-informed course scheduling and seat capacity planning.

This tool will help students and advisors develop and sequence a personalized path to on-time graduation. A [4-minute introductory video](#) for advisors was also published. The new tool was available to students beginning November 29, but formal student communications and an adoption campaign will commence in the spring semester. Faculty advisors and staff advisors are encouraged to sign up for one of six identical workshops to learn more about the tool. A registration link is available in Tuesday's email from smuinfour@smu.edu.

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.

SMU in Four Year-one Progress Report Available

The SMU in Four team has released the year-one progress report on [SMU's Quality Enhancement Plan](#). Updates are provided on early-alert mechanisms, undergraduate academic advising, technology enhancements, and gateway & introductory courses. Plus, student retention and graduation numbers are shared along with goals for year two of the five-year initiative. [View the report.](#)

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.

We received 37 proposals by the first draft November 23, 2022 deadline and want to remind all submitters that the final submission deadline is December 16, 2022, via email to [Suku Nair, Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer](#).

SMU Invited to Submit Phase 2 NSF Engines Proposal

SMU has been invited to submit a Type-2 NSF Engines proposal for \$160M with a focus on Remote Sensing of Geohazards of the Gulf Coast. The overarching objective of our project is to provide timely information on geohazards including land subsidence in the Gulf Coast to the public as well as to decision makers and to protect national assets from the past, ongoing and upcoming hazards through a combination of state-of-art technology and multi-disciplinary investigation with remote sensing, data science (deep/machine learning), hydrology, and geology/geophysics. SMU's established strength in this area, our recent faculty cluster hire in earth hazards and national security and our new NVIDIA DGX SuperPod have us well positioned. In addition, and in response to NSF's request for collaboration across institutions, corporations and government, we have assembled a large group of researchers and experts from universities, industries, and government agencies in Texas and other gulf coast states to partner with us in this monumental, world-changing undertaking. My thanks to Suku Nair, Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer, Zhong Lu, Professor and Shuler-Foscue Chair Dedman College's

Roy M. Huffington Department of Earth Sciences; and many other SMU faculty across the university for taking the lead in developing this proposal.

Call for President's Partners Grants

The President's Partners Program was inaugurated by SMU's President, R. Gerald Turner to support teaching and research efforts by faculty and staff. All full-time faculty and staff are eligible to apply for grants of up to \$5,000. These grants fund equipment that enhances the work of faculty and staff in furthering our commitment to the SMU experience. This can include materials related to teaching and research or administrative and support supplies. Applications should be submitted to the Provost's Office at facultysuccess@smu.edu no later than Friday, December 16th. Each application will be reviewed by a committee comprised of faculty and staff. Application instructions and a cover sheet template can be found [here](#).

Sam Taylor Fellowship Call for Proposals Announced

All full-time faculty are encouraged to apply for awards of up to \$2,000 through the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM). Information about the award parameters, eligibility requirements, and the application process can be found at <https://www.gbhem.org/sam-taylor-fellowship-fund/>. This award was established by the late Sam Taylor to fund continuing education and development of faculty members at United Methodist-related colleges and universities in Texas. All faculty applications are submitted as one institutional packet with letters of support from the Deans and the president of the university, per the guidelines of the GBHEM; therefore, the internal SMU deadlines for the award are today, December 9th, for applications to be submitted to the respective Deans' offices, and Friday, December 16th, for the full application to be submitted to the Office of the Provost at facultysuccess@smu.edu. Questions about the process and final submissions should be directed to facultysuccess@smu.edu.

Key Leadership Searches Underway

Dean, Lyle School of Engineering

Last week, search committee members and I conducted confidential interviews with ten semifinalists. After deliberations, we narrowed the field to five finalists. Two finalists came to campus this week with three more scheduled next 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.

SMU Law Students Support Child Poverty Action Lab Study

SMU law students collected the data for a Child Poverty Action Lab study revealing that appearing in court with legal representation during eviction proceedings significantly increased the chances of Dallas County tenants staying in their homes. The story was covered by the [Dallas Morning News](#).

SMU Names New Assistant Dean for Scholars Programs

[Dr. Angela Jeon-Huh joined SMU on December 5th](#) as the Assistant Dean for Scholars Programs within the Provost Office. As the Assistant Dean for Scholars Programs, Dr. Jeon-Huh will work closely with campus colleagues to support the academic and personal success of the Hunt Leadership Scholars and President Scholars Programs.

SMU Alum Receives Prestigious International Award

Julia Grace Walker ('21) was awarded a 2023 Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Fellowship following a highly competitive nationwide contest. A distinguished panel selected her out of almost 900 outstanding candidates. The Rangel Fellowship, funded by the U.S. Department of State and administered by Howard University, supports extraordinary individuals who want to pursue careers in the Foreign Service of the U.S. Department of State. The Rangel Fellowship will support Julia Grace through a two-year master's degree in an area of relevance to the Foreign Service. It will also provide extensive professional development opportunities, including internships, mentors, and skills training. As part of the Rangel Program, Julia Grace will work for a Member of Congress on issues related to foreign affairs in summer 2023. In the summer of 2024, the U.S. Department of State will send her overseas to work in a U.S. Embassy or Consulate to get hands-on experience with U.S. foreign policy and the work of the Foreign Service. Upon successful completion of the program, Julia Grace will become a U.S. diplomat in summer 2025, embarking on one of the most challenging and rewarding careers of service to her country. She will work to promote peace and prosperity around the world.

SMU Theater Graduates Garner National Fame in T.V. and Film

[Sarah Shahi in DC Comics movie *Black Adam*](#)

Theater graduate Sarah Shahi plays Adrianna, a character fighting dark forces in the DC Comics movie *Black Adam*. She told [My San Antonio](#) that she is honored to be a Middle Eastern woman portraying a Middle Eastern character.

[David Barrera in Netflix's series *Dahmer*](#)

Theatre graduate David Barrera plays Chief Philip Arreola in Netflix's new series, *Dahmer – Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*. He was recently featured in the [My Rio Grande Valley 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