



Elizabeth G. Lobo, Ph. D.
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Office of the Provost

May 20, 2022

Dear Colleagues:

Thank you for your interest in, and commitment to, advancing SMU's academic mission. These weekly updates will serve as a tool to keep you informed and engaged with SMU's Academic Affairs division as, together, we manage a safe, healthy and productive spring semester. 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](#).

Spring 2022

- **Update on Covid-19 protocol sunseting** – Having concluded the spring 2022 semester, please remember that [SMU has now sunset most of our COVID-19 pandemic protocols](#) as of May 15, 2022.

Our Campus will move to mask-optional, except for the Dr. Bob Smith Health Center. COVID-19 case management, required case reporting, voluntary vaccination reporting and the daily dashboard will all be discontinued. However, the [Mustang Strong website](#) will continue to provide basic pandemic information and updates.

Employees and their dependents can still receive the COVID-19 vaccine and booster shots at the Dr. Bob Smith Health Center throughout the summer and into the fall. [Check the website for summer hours](#) of

operation. Also, no-cost [COVID-19 testing is available through your medical provider](#).

SMU building and facilities crews began removing pandemic-related signage around campus on May 16th. If you have signs in your classroom, office or hallway referencing masks or other COVID-19 policies, please remove them to prevent confusion.

Departments and units should check websites and other online resources to ensure that any outdated references to COVID-19 or SMU pandemic protocols are removed. If desired, [a link to the Mustang Strong website](#) can be provided for the latest information.

Thank you for your continued commitment to keeping our campus healthy and for the great lengths you have taken these past two years in service to our students and our community.

- **Faculty support available to build professional websites on people.smu.edu** – [People.SMU](#) allows faculty, staff, students, and SMU organizations to quickly and easily build and customize websites. Faculty members can have one individual site and multiple additional sites to facilitate academic, teaching, or research needs.

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) offers a [WordPress consultation service](#) to help faculty create professional sites. Click here for more information on the service and to [book an appointment](#) with a consultant.

Road to R1/Scholarly Creative Excellence:

- **SMU Supercomputing Updates: Launch of NVIDIA SuperPOD, M3 Updates, & Center for Research Computing (CRC) Newsletter** – After a long wait, all of the pieces of SMU's new NVIDIA DGX SuperPOD are

finally assembled and being prepared by the Office of Information Technology (OIT) for faculty use! The first round of SuperPOD on-boarding will begin the week of May 23rd when our High-performance Computing (HPC) support team will begin migrating several projects to our new system.

Initial SuperPOD on-boarding projects will focus on developing workloads in the areas of artificial intelligence/machine learning, molecular dynamics, and GPU algorithm development. In the weeks ahead, additional on-boarding and training will be provided. As we launch the SuperPOD, we are also excited to announce that after almost twelve months of writing, vetting, and awarding a new RFP, the joint CRC and OIT team, led by Dr. Tom Hagstrom, a contract has been completed to build the next generation HPC environment: M3. To learn more about M3 plans, the SuperPOD and other exciting HPC updates, please access the most recent CRC newsletter [here](#). Thanks to this incredible CRC/OIT partnership, the table is truly set for game-changing computation research at SMU!

- **SMU leaders go to Washington D.C. in June to discuss earmarks** – The Office of Research, working in coordination with SMU faculty and in consultation with executives from Clark Hill – SMU’s federal government relations advisors – has identified several federal grant opportunities earmarked for the federal FY 2023 budget that align with SMU faculty members’ research strengths. To advocate for SMU’s faculty proposals, Clark Hill is arranging a visit to Capitol Hill for SMU leadership June 13 – 16. During these meetings in Washington D.C., we will have the opportunity to meet with members of Congress (Senate; House) and represent SMU’s strengths prior to the finalization of FY 2023 budget allocations.
- **SMU/Bush Institute post-doctoral program update** – Thanks to the 12 faculty teams who submitted responses to our request for proposals (RFPs) for our new post-doctoral program with the Bush Institute. Next week, Jim Quick, Associate Provost for Research and Dean of the Moody School, and

I meet with representatives from the Bush Institute to review submissions. I hope to announce next year's three recipients within the next few weeks.

- **Key leadership searches underway:**

- **Dedman Law Dean** – After consulting with Dedman Law faculty, the search committee provided their recommendations on our finalists. I hope to announce a new Dean in the coming weeks.
- **Vice Provost for Research (VPR) and Chief Innovation Officer (CIO)** – We completed the campus visit and interviews with our fourth finalist this week. In consultation with the search committee, we are making plans to bring an additional candidate to campus in June. Be on the lookout for additional information and how to participate in the campus Vision Talk.

As [announced today](#), Suku Nair, Director of the AT&T Center for Virtualization and University Distinguished Professor in the Lyle School of Engineering's Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, will serve as Associate Provost for Research *ad interim* until a Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer is appointed.

- **Dean of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies and Associate Provost for Graduate Education** – Candidate negotiations are underway, and I hope to announce a new Dean for the Moody School in the coming weeks.

As [announced today](#), Renee McDonald, Dedman College's Senior Associate Dean for Research and Academic Affairs and Professor of Psychology, will serve as Dean *ad interim* of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies and Associate Provost for Graduate Education *ad interim* until we are able to fill the permanent position.

- **Lyle School of Engineering Dean** –The search committee for the permanent dean will be appointed and charged at the start of the fall 2022 semester and Sam Holland, Dean of the Meadows School, will chair the committee.

News and Noteworthy:

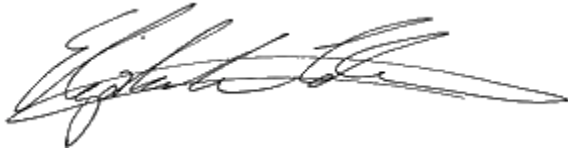
- **SMU faculty and staff receive additional Hilltop Excellence Awards** – The [Hilltop Excellence Awards](#) is SMU's most prestigious awards ceremony, annually recognizing the outstanding accomplishments of students, staff, and faculty at SMU. Each spring, the Division of Student Affairs invites nominations from the entire SMU community.

In last week's newsletter, I recognized recipients of the "M" award. This week, I wanted to feature additional faculty who received much-deserved recognition during the event:

- Outstanding Faculty/Staff Volunteer – Owen Lynch, Associate Professor and Altshuler Distinguished Professor of Corporate Communications in the Meadows School of the Arts' Division of Corporate Communication and Public Affairs.
- Willis M. Tate Award – Mark Fontenot, Clinical Professor and Assistant Department Chair in the Lyle School of Engineering's Department of Computer Science.
- Extra Mile Award – Denver Brittain, Adjunct Faculty in the Lyle School of Engineering's Department of Computer Science; Alejandro D'Brot, Lecturer in Dedman College's Department of Biological Sciences; Madhura Kulkarni, Adjunct Professor in the Cox School of Business Department of Marketing.

- **Announcing new Faculty in Residence for fall 2022 (FiR)** –Acting on the recommendation of the FiR Recruitment and Selection committee, last week we [announced](#) that Ashley Stone, Clinical Assistant Professor in the Simmons School of Education’s Department of Education Policy and Leadership, will begin service this fall as a FiR in McElvaney Commons. Congratulations, Dr. Stone! And, thank you to all our faculty applicants.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth G. Lobo', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Southern Methodist University
<https://www.smu.edu/provost>

World Changers Shaped Here