

Weekly Update | October 28, 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

Executive Board Meetings this Week

This week, President Turner, Vice President for Development and External Affairs Brad Cheves and I joined Dean *ad interim* Paul Krueger in a meeting with the Lyle School of Engineering's executive board.

Lyle School of Engineering

I updated board members on SMU's – and Lyle's – recent accomplishments in two of our four priority areas for academic affairs: 1) academic excellence and 2) research excellence, and provided introductions of our newest Deans – Jason Nance, Judge James Noel Dean of the Dedman School of Law, and Robin Poston, Dean of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies and Associate Provost for Graduate Education. I concluded with an update on our search for a new Dean of the Lyle School of Engineering.

Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Annual Budget Meeting Kickoff

The annual budget process, to establish the incremental budget for FY 2024, began this week with an initial meeting between President's Executive Council (PEC) members, President's direct reports, senior leadership from the Divisions of Business and Finance and Enrollment Services and the Council of Deans. As mentioned in previous emails, Academic Affairs is developing a three-year budget model to inform our investment strategy for FY 2024, 2025 and 2026.

In this week's kickoff meeting, attendees were invited to share their three-year budget strategies. In response, the Deans and I reviewed our high-level strategy for academic affairs and the areas of focus that will inform our budget requests this year and into the future. We will share additional information in subsequent newsletters as we conclude this year's budget planning phase.

Budget proposals will be reviewed by members of SMU's senior leadership team in January and February with final budget decisions announced in March 2023.

Continued Refinements to SMU's Adverse Events and Inclement Weather Response

Based on faculty and staff suggestions, as well as feedback stemming from the working group of faculty and academic staff assembled last academic year to review SMU's response to adverse events and inclement weather, the PEC decided in spring 2022 to return to our previous (prior to spring 2020) approach of canceling class during inclement weather. The relevant policies ([policy 7.7](#) and [policy 9.12](#)) were revised and are available on SMU's [university policy website](#).

This week, the PEC discussed additional refinements and approaches to improve communication. Be on the lookout for additional information before the end of this semester, including a standalone SMU website to aggregate the most up-to-date information on campus closure due to adverse events or inclement weather.

Reminders from Last Week

Invitation to participate in December commencement

Please access the [December Commencement RSVP](#) webpage to let us know if you will attend the December ceremony and participate in the academic procession. The deadline to RSVP for attending the ceremony is **Friday, December 2nd**, by 4:00 p.m. Clark Hunt '87, chairman and CEO of the Kansas City Chiefs and FC Dallas and member of SMU's Board of Trustees, will be the commencement speaker.

Prior to the ceremony, there will be a faculty breakfast beginning at 7:45 a.m. in the Miller Champions Club in the Miller Event Center, directly inside the entrance to the Coliseum on Binkley Avenue. [If you want to attend the breakfast, please RSVP by clicking here](#). The deadline to RSVP for the breakfast is **Friday, December 9th**, by 4:00 p.m.

If you need academic regalia, please contact your department administrator to determine the ordering process. Orders for faculty must be placed by **Tuesday, November 1st**, to ensure that regalia arrive in time. After this date, the bookstore will supply faculty with in-stock SMU regalia. More information can be found [here](#).

Call for Nominations: Faculty Teaching Awards

Each year, we have the honor to award a number of teaching awards to deserving SMU faculty, underscoring our commitment to excellence in teaching. Earlier this month, I sent the [following email](#) with a call for nominations.

Please, take a few minutes to nominate a deserving colleague by sending the name of your nominees to the Center for Teaching Excellence, cte@smu.edu. The deadline for nominations is today at 5:00 pm.

Road to R-1/Scholarly and Creative Excellence

SMU Biotech Research Moving into Pegasus Park

This week, SMU formally [announced its partnership](#) with Pegasus Park. SMU researchers from a wide array of disciplines – including biology, chemistry, computer science, engineering, education, and business – will participate in research, development and entrepreneurial activities under the SMU Institute for Computational Biosciences at Pegasus Park. Multiple SMU centers will work under the Institute, including the [Center for Drug Discovery, Design, and Delivery](#), Center for Computational Genomics, AI Institute for Precision Health and Center for Metaverse Immersive Technologies for Health Sciences. All of these are focused on bio-scientific discoveries leveraging advanced computational algorithms and technologies.

The announcement was featured in several online publications including the [Dallas Morning News \(Full Article\)](#) and [Dallas Innovates](#). In addition to SMU faculty tenants, Pegasus Park hosts potential partners and collaborators from a range of academic, medical, corporate and non-profit institutions. We are excited for this new opportunity to pursue world changing research for good.

Federal Research Workshop on Thursday, October 27 and Friday, October 28

Yesterday, SMU hosted a federal research workshop on campus to support the development of research projects to be submitted to the U.S Congress as part of the FY 2024 earmark and/or appropriation process.

Thanks to those faculty who were able to participate. We look forward to your proposals. For those who were unable to attend, please access either the video recording [here](#) or the presentation [here](#). For more information or questions, contact [Suku Nair](#), Associate Provost for Research *ad interim*.

Key leadership Searches Underway: Lyle School of Engineering

In August, I launched [the search committee](#) for our next Dean of the Lyle School of Engineering. My thanks to committee members for their service and to Sam Holland, Algur H. Meadows Endowed Dean of the Meadows School of the Arts, for agreeing to chair this committee.

Click [here](#) to review the position description that is now being broadly advertised and please share it with colleagues within your network. I will continue to provide regular updates in subsequent newsletters.

News and Noteworthy

Endowed Deanship to Empower the Future of Dedman College

Last week, SMU [announced](#) a \$5M gift from Liz and Bill Armstrong to endow and name the dean position for the Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences. This historic gift, part of the \$1.5B *SMU Ignited* capital campaign, will provide permanent funding for the academic leader of Dedman College, and Dean Tom DiPiero will serve as the inaugural Elisabeth Martin Armstrong Dean of Dedman College.

SMU's Deason Institute to Partner with Goldman Sachs and Prairie View A&M for Cyber Security Research

The Lyle School of Engineering's [Darwin Deason Institute for Cyber Security](#) is [partnering with global financial services company Goldman Sachs](#), with support from Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU), for research designed to detect and defend against cyber threats related to employees working remotely.

SMU Faculty Member and Student Co-Author Paper Published in the Journal of East Asian Studies

Hiroki Takeuchi, Associate Professor of Political Science and Director of Undergraduate Studies in Dedman College's Department of Political Science, has co-authored a paper with SMU undergraduate Hamilton Scholar and Tower/Hill Fellow Keely McNeme. Their paper, "The Domestic Political Economy of Japan's New Geoeconomic Strategy," was published in the *Journal of East Asian Studies*. This is the second time Professor Takeuchi has co-authored an article with an SMU undergraduate for publication and is a wonderful example of the world-changing impact research can have on undergraduates. Congrats, and thank you, Hiroki and Keely!

SMU Faculty Named Tech Titans Award Finalists

Congratulations to Jessie Marshall Zarazaga, Clinical Associate Professor in the Lyle School of Engineering's Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Director of Lyle's Sustainability and Development Program, and Corey Clark, Assistant Professor in Lyle's Department of Computer Science and Deputy Director for Research in SMU's Guildhall, upon [being named finalists](#) for the Technology Association of Texas' annual Tech Titans awards.

Boaz Commons Hosts Honest Conversation with Two World Changers

This week, Boaz Commons invited Colin Allred, our district's Congressman, and Congressional candidate Antonio Swad for a conversation in the lead up to this year's election. Thank you to Jack Levison, W.J.A. Power Professor of Old Testament Interpretation and Biblical Hebrew in the Perkins School of Theology and Boaz Commons Faculty in Residence, as well as the Maguire Center for Ethics for supporting this exciting opportunity for our students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth G. Loba". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Elizabeth G. Loba, PhD

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Southern Methodist University

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

World Changers Shaped Here