



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

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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) Research/scholarly creative excellence/ Road to R1, 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) Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 3) News and Noteworthy.

### **Fall 2022**

- **September Board of Trustees Meetings Recap** – Yesterday and today, I had three opportunities to provide Academic Affairs updates to SMU's Board of Trustees:
  - **Committee of the Whole** – On Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup> the entire Board of Trustees convened as a Committee of the Whole to receive updates on SMU's current and future strategies to advance in both the

*U.S. News and World Report (USNWR)* and Carnegie Classification Research ranking systems, as well as on *Opportunity SMU*, a new fund to expand scholarships, financial aid, and student support programs. The heightened focus on social and economic mobility metrics by both ranking systems, both recently and moving forward, will require SMU's response and investment in order to meet our USNWR top 50 and Carnegie R1 goals. Chief Diversity Officer Maria Dixon Hall also provided her annual update on efforts toward greater diversity, equity and inclusion on campus.

- **Committee on Academic Affairs** – During Thursday afternoon's committee meeting, I reviewed our current and future strategies to advance in the USNWR and Carnegie rankings in greater detail. By comparing SMU's current and historic performance with that of USNWR top 50 and Carnegie R1 schools, I detailed which metrics should be our highest priority for improvement in the years to come.
- **Full Board** – On Friday morning, I shared a consolidated version of my presentation to the Committee on Academic Affairs and provided an update on fall 2022 enrollment.
- **SMU in Four: Year-One Progress and Common Curriculum Degree Planner is on the way** – Please see last week's [email](#) for an update on the first year of SMU in Four – the university's comprehensive plan to improve four-year graduation rates and retention. The SMU in Four team will host a year-one progress presentation on September 28 from 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm. [Please RSVP and join us in the Hughes-Trigg Student Center Auditorium.](#)

To aid undergraduate [Common Curriculum](#) students in their progress toward degree, the SMU in Four Technology Team is developing a new tool called HighPoint Degree Planner within my.SMU. This tool will help students and advisors develop and sequence a personalized path to on-time graduation. HighPoint Degree Planner will not only benefit students

and advisors but will aid academic departments in data-driven course scheduling and seat capacity planning. The new tool will launch to students on the Common Curriculum in November 2022.

In preparation, SMU in Four School Implementation Teams will work with academic departments to verify their degree plans within the HighPoint system. Instructions will be sent to department chairs (or a designee) for verification in September/October. Training and support sessions will be provided to the campus community and by request. [Read more about the Common Curriculum HighPoint Degree Planner.](#)

If you would like to remain updated on SMU in Four, [we invite you to subscribe to our blog](#) or [check out our updated website](#).

- **Backward Design, Forward Thinking: Plan Your Course with the End in Mind** – Did you know that most instructors design their courses around activities and methods rather than around their goals for student learning? The Center for Teaching Excellence and the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness want to help interested faculty turn this way of thinking on its head!

Join them for an introduction to Backward Design, a method of designing courses that is student-centered and goal oriented. Backward design will help you integrate authentic assessment into your course design process and help you create a structured learning experience that improves student understanding and performance as well as your ability to measure it.

Please click [HERE](#) to register for this one-hour workshop co-hosted by Center for Teaching Excellence and Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness **at 2:00pm-3:00pm on Friday, September 30**. Light refreshments and drinks will be provided.

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

- **SMU selected to join The American Council on Education's (ACE) Internationalization Lab** – We are pleased to announce that [SMU has been selected](#) as a member of Cohort 20 of the ACE Internationalization Lab. The Internationalization Lab is a guided, focused two-year process where selected universities review and analyze their current international assets and offerings, evaluate strategic opportunities for cooperation, partnerships, and outreach in the global sphere, and develop a comprehensive, institution-wide internationalization plan.

Through the internationalization process, SMU will identify opportunities to build on the connections, collaborations, and resources we have in house and to enhance our internationalization efforts, particularly in those areas that support our academic and research excellence goals.

Internationalization efforts on campus will be led by a steering committee composed of faculty, staff, and administrators from across campus. The Internationalization Lab process will involve collaboration with ACE and an assigned "Lab Leader." For SMU, this leader is Cheryl Matherly, Vice President and Vice Provost for International Affairs at Lehigh University. Invitations to join this committee will be sent out by the Provost's Office starting in late September. If you are interested in joining this effort to advance internationalization at SMU, please reach out to Associate Provost Dayna Oscherwitz at [oscherwi@smu.edu](mailto:oscherwi@smu.edu).

- **Announcing Moody School Doctoral Completion Grants and Dean's Postdoctoral Fellowships** – The Moody School has set aside funding this year for two initiatives that are intended to help PhD students finish their degrees and launch successful careers. Thanks to Dean Robin Poston and her team for this strategic resource utilization, made possible by the Moody Foundation's landmark \$100M gift, in line with our academic and research goals:

- **Moody School Doctoral Completion Grants** are intended to help SMU PhD students defend their dissertations and complete their degrees in the Fall 2022 or Spring 2023 semester. They provide funding for stipends, research materials, and other expenses as needed. Nominations will be submitted by departments and will include a letter of support from the department chair or director of graduate studies and a timeline, signed by the student and their advisor, listing the steps remaining for the student to finish their dissertation along with an expected completion date for each step. Nominations will open soon and will be due in October. Be on the lookout for the call for nominations!
  
- **Moody School Dean's Postdoctoral Fellowships** will fund one-year postdoctoral fellowship positions in academic year 2023-2024 for a limited number of PhD students who complete their degrees by the end of the Spring 2023 semester. Fellowships will be in the student's home department and under the mentorship of a tenured/tenure-track faculty member in the department. Proposals for these fellowships will include a description of research and/or teaching responsibilities required as part of the fellowship, a mentoring plan, and a description of any matching funds available from the department or school. The call for proposals will go out next month, and proposals will be due in January, 2023.

Please share this information with colleagues in your departments and get them thinking about students who would benefit from these initiatives. Questions can be directed to Dr. Alan Itkin ([aitkin@smu.edu](mailto:aitkin@smu.edu)).

- **Requests for Research Projects to be Submitted to Congress for Consideration** – Last week, I sent the [following message](#) to faculty with a request for research projects to be submitted to the U.S. Congress as a part of the FY 2024 earmark and/or appropriation process.

Later this fall, we will be hosting a federal research workshop on campus. I would ask each of you to consider how your work may benefit from federal investment, and I encourage you to join us at the town hall portion of the workshop. More information about the FY 2024 submission process and federal research workshop will be forthcoming in the weeks ahead. Thank you, again, for your great work in support of SMU's research mission.

- **Key Leadership Searches Underway:**

- **Lyle School of Engineering** – Last month, 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, Dean of the Meadows School of the Arts, for agreeing to chair this committee.

The search committee's kickoff meeting will take place on Thursday, September 27. I will continue to provide regular updates in subsequent newsletters.

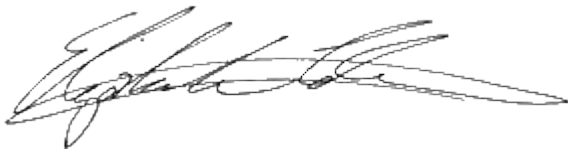
### **News and Noteworthy**

- **Meadows Dedicates its Newly-renovated Visual Arts Facilities** – To conclude this week's Board of Trustees meetings, it was wonderful to celebrate the dedication of Meadows' transformed visual arts facilities. We are thrilled about – and grateful for – these new, inspiring spaces to support the creative contributions of SMU's incredibly talented and aspiring artists.
- **Call for Nominations: Presidential Recognition Awards** – Do you believe a staff member has gone above and beyond in their service to SMU? Nominations are being accepted for this year's Presidential Recognition Awards. These annual awards recognize the outstanding contributions of benefit-eligible staff and are offered and managed through a partnership

between SMU's Staff Association and Human Resources. You can learn more about the four awards – including eligibility and requirements – and submit nominations through the following [website](#). Please take a moment and nominate staff members whom you feel deserve special recognition for their contributions to the life of the University and its community.

- **Perkins School of Theology Faculty Member's New Book Receives Pulitzer Prize Nomination** – Congratulations to Professor Harold Recinos, Professor of Church and Society in the Perkins School of Theology, for receiving a Pulitzer Prize nomination in poetry for his new book, *The Days You Bring* (2002).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth G. Loba", with a long, sweeping 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**