



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

- **Willis M. Tate Distinguished Lecture series opens its 41st season** – On Tuesday, September 20 the Tate Lecture Series opened its 41st season by hosting an evening with *New York Times* op-ed columnists Thomas Friedman and David Brooks. Regarded as one of the country's finest platforms for distinguished and engaging discussions, the Tate Lecture Series provides unique opportunities for student interaction, faculty discourse and community debate with world changers and raises funds for

academic scholarships and student programs. Click [here](#) for more information on this year's Tate Lecture Series events.

- **University welcome for Robin Poston** – Thank you to the faculty and staff who joined President Turner and me in officially welcoming Robin Poston, Dean of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies and Associate Provost for Graduate Education, to the university during Monday's University Welcome reception. Robin comes to SMU from the University of Memphis where she served as Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School since 2018. She has already shown great leadership establishing strategic direction for the Moody School in line with our research aspirations. She is an incredible new member of our already strong leadership team, and I have confidence in her ability to help SMU reach our Carnegie R1 goal.
- **Provost's New SMU Leadership Seminar Series begins this week** – Over the last decade, the Office of the Provost has hosted 10 annual seminar series, the "Emerging Leaders Seminar Series" to support faculty interested in potential leadership roles as they learn more about the various campus partners and units. This year, with such a large number of new faculty joining SMU in key leadership roles from department chairs, deans, and associate provosts, the program this year will shift for one term to a "New SMU Leadership Seminar Series," design to support our new colleagues in connecting and engaging with the campus leaders who have served as guest speakers in the past years. The topics range widely from Diversity Office; Development and External Affairs; the Board of Trustees; Enrollment Management; Student Affairs, and more.
- **Place-based Community Engagement Symposium October 3 and 4** - Join [Engage Dallas](#) in partnership with [Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute](#), [Center for Teaching Excellence \(CTE\)](#), [Office of General Education](#), and [Residence Life and Student Housing](#) for a symposium featuring Dr. Erica Yamamura and Kent Koth - authors of [Place-Based](#)

[*Community Engagement in Higher Education: A Strategy to Transform Universities and Communities*](#). The authors will distinguish place-based community engagement as a strategy that prioritizes a campus-wide and education-centered approach, compared to other individual/office-level (e.g. service learning pedagogy) and economic (e.g. anchor institution) strategies. Plus, learn about how faculty, staff, and students at SMU can connect to [Engage Dallas](#) and build our collective capacity for community engagement on the Hilltop. [Learn more about the program sessions, dates/times, and RSVP.](#)

- **Reminders from last week's newsletter:**
 - **SMU in Four: Year one progress update taking place next week** – 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.](#) 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** – As mentioned in [last week's newsletter](#), I would like to invite all interested faculty to join the Center for Teaching Excellence and the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness for an introduction to Backward Design, a method of designing courses that is student-centered and goal oriented. Backward design will help faculty integrate authentic assessment into the course design process and help create a structured learning experience that improves student understanding and performance as well as faculty's 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

- **Transforming Visual Arts education, Meadows School redesign and dedication** – Last Friday, the Meadows School of the Arts [celebrated the dedication](#) of its enhanced and inspiring visual arts facilities. The \$34M redesign, which was announced in 2019, supports the major goals of *SMU Ignited: Boldly Shaping Tomorrow*, the University's multiyear \$1.5 billion campaign for impact. These facilities will empower outstanding students in their artistic and academic endeavors, enrich teaching and research performed both on and off campus, and enhance our community through creative expression and collaboration. Thank you to all the donors who made this transformation possible, led by the Meadows Foundation, Gene and Jerry Jones, Nancy C. and Richard R. Rogers and G. Marlyne Sexton and Family.
- **Accelerating student success among first-generation and low-income students** – SMU, and higher ed in general, is committed to increasing our focus on access and affordability to meet the needs of our changing society. Initiatives like *Access SMU*, *SMU in Four*, *Rotunda Scholars* and *Mustang Scholars* are key components of our strategy to recruit, retain and graduate high merit/high need students and are priorities within our *Opportunity SMU* initiative.

This summer, SMU received a \$50,000 grant from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to develop strategies that accelerate student success among first-generation and low-income students. As a first step, we hosted a planning workshop this week with SMU faculty, staff and high school counselors to establish greater understanding of our current efforts and to identify gaps. Members of our Master's of Arts in Design Innovation (MADI) team facilitated the workshop with plans to host a similar session for some current students who identify as first-generation or who are Pell-eligible.

Dr. Molly Ellis, Director for Strategic Initiatives in the Office of Faculty Success, will submit the workshop's findings to THECB later this fall with

hopes of receiving an additional \$250,000 for further implementation funding.

- **Reminder: Moody School Doctoral Completion Grants and Dean's Postdoctoral Fellowships** – Through the generosity of the Moody Foundation's landmark \$100M gift, the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies has been able to set aside funding this year for two initiatives aimed at helping our PhD students finish their degrees and launch successful careers.
 - **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 open soon and will be due in October. Be on the lookout for an email from the Moody School, re-enforced in the newsletter, with the call for nominations!
 - **Moody School Dean's Postdoctoral Fellowships** will fund one-year postdoctoral fellowship positions in the 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.

Questions can be directed to Dr. Alan Itkin (aitkin@smu.edu).

- **Requests for research projects to be submitted to Congress for consideration** – Later this fall, we will be hosting 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. See [this email](#) for additional information.

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 Tuesday, September 27th. I will continue to provide regular updates in subsequent newsletters.

News and Noteworthy

- **SMU researcher explores the role empathy may play in music** – A recent study by an international team of researchers suggests a linkage between those who understand the emotions of others and those who interpret emotions conveyed through music. The [findings](#) were published recently in *Emotion*, a scientific journal of the American Psychological Association. This study was led by Benjamin A. Tabak, Assistant Professor in Dedman College's Department of Psychology and Director of the Social and Clinical Neuroscience Lab at SMU.
- **Perkins faculty member named recipient of the Distinguished Service Award by the General Commission on Archives and History**
 - Congratulations to Priscilla Pope-Levison, Research Professor of Practical Theology in the Perkins School of Theology. She was named the

2022 recipient of the Distinguished Service Award by the General Commission on Archives and History at the agency's annual meeting on September 16, 2022. In recognizing Dr. Pope-Levison, Archives and History leadership cited her groundbreaking research into the lives of the United Methodist denomination's pioneers, especially women in evangelism.

- **Call for Nominations: Presidential Recognition Awards** – As mentioned last week 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 by Monday, September 26 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** – Also mentioned last week, 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,



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World Changers Shaped Here