

Weekly Update | August 18, 2023

Elizabeth G. Loba, Ph.D. Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dear Faculty and Staff,

As the summer comes to a close and we prepare for the start of the fall semester, I want to convey my sincerest thanks to our faculty and staff. First, thank you to those who have spent their summer on-campus teaching classes, working on incredible research projects, and/or ensuring our campus continues its daily operations. Next, thank you to all those who have spent weeks prepping for classes and coordinating our Stampede and welcome events for all our undergraduate and graduate students both new and returning. We greatly appreciate the hard work you've put in during this heat-filled summer. I hope that you were able to take time to rest and are prepared to enter the academic year with vigor.

This newsletter is the final installment of my summer 2023 communications. Now that the semester is starting, I will return to the normal weekly cadence of disseminating a newsletter every Friday for the duration of the fall 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](#).

Today's update falls into three categories: 1) Summer/Fall 2023, 2) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 3) News and Noteworthy.

Summer/Fall 2023

Students arrive/return to the Hilltop

For those who are already on campus, you will have undoubtedly noticed students filtering back to SMU, ranging from members of the incoming law student cohort and MBAs participating in orientation to Resident Assistants attending training and preparing our residential halls. Over this past week, our new and returning students have moved back onto the Hilltop and are now enjoying Stampede and connecting/reconnecting with friends and Dallas.

Classes for the fall semester will start this Monday, August 21, and run until Monday, December 4, after which reading days and examinations will commence until December 13. For additional information on the fall 2023 schedule, please refer to the [SMU Academic Calendar](#).

As is typical with the first several days of classes, many students will be scrambling to find their classrooms and might possibly be lost. During this time, I ask for your patience as our newest

Mustangs find their way around campus. If you have time, perhaps offer a welcome and helpful guidance as they navigate their new surroundings.

Fall General Faculty meeting next Wednesday, August 23

The fall 2023 General Faculty meeting will take place on Wednesday, August 23, in the Oren Family Auditorium, Hughes-Trigg Student Center. Faculty are invited to participate in the Welcome Reception beginning at 3:00 p.m. with the meeting to begin promptly at 3:45 p.m. As per tradition, the President of the Faculty Senate, Michael Harris, Professor and Department Chair in Simmons School of Education and Human Development's Department of Education Policy and Leadership, will deliver the Faculty Senate's report, newly promoted faculty will receive their regalia, and President R. Gerald Turner will deliver his annual address to the faculty. We look forward to seeing you there.

Office of Student Academic Engagement and Success announces organizational updates and resources to support our students

I encourage you to review [this week's message](#) from Sheri Kunovich, Associate Provost for Student Academic Engagement and Success, announcing recent organizational updates and resources her office has developed to support the academic success, retention, and degree completion of all our students. A heightened focus on graduation and retention rates is a core component of our strategy for even greater academic excellence, and I am thankful for your ongoing support and commitment to helping our students and SMU achieve our goals in this area.

Stay Safe with SMU Aware and other campus safety resources

Download the new SMU Aware Safety App

This mobile app allows one-button calls to SMU Police and other emergency and non-emergency assistance, quickly report an incident or connect with someone you trust for a virtual "Friend Walk" across campus. Download at [Apple](#) or [Google](#).

Stay informed with SMU Aware

The [SMU Aware website](#) is SMU's hub for emergency and safety information during an active incident or severe weather. You can also follow SMU Aware on [social](#) media for timely updates.

"Avoid, Deny, Defend" in an active threat

Know what to do in case of an active threat to campus. Remember the "Avoid, Deny, Defend" model SMU has adopted. Watch [this video](#) for life-saving strategies to follow.

Be mindful of pedestrians and drivers

Whether you are walking, driving, or biking, pay extra attention around streets and crosswalks. Follow all traffic laws, including speed limits, and watch for pedestrians. Always use designated crosswalks and look both ways before you step into the street.

Your actions can make a difference. Thank you for your commitment to the wellbeing of our campus community.

Call for January Term class proposals

The January Intersession, or Jan Term, will be offered in person both on the Dallas campus and at SMU-in-Taos, providing students with intensive and experiential learning opportunities.

The 2024 Jan Term calendar consists of eight instructional days across the January 2-12 date range, with classes meeting from 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. and again from 1:00–4:00 p.m.

We invite you to submit a course proposal, which is **due no later than Friday, August 25, 2023**. All faculty (including emeriti, adjunct, part-time, and visiting) are eligible to apply. Instruction is done on an off-load basis, in addition to one's normal teaching load for the fall and spring semesters. Additional information about compensation, proposal forms, and how to apply, [can be found here](#).

University Testing Center (UTC) to enter Phase II of its opening this fall

The [University Testing Center](#) (UTC), which opened in Clements Hall last August, is currently entering phase two of its three-phased implementation plan. During phase one, the UTC began providing accommodated testing services previously proctored by [Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies](#) (DASS). Phase two will expand testing services to student-athletes during their sport's competition season. To support this phase by increasing student group access, we are migrating to [test scheduling software](#) from the [DASS Link](#). The new software will offer a comprehensive, streamlined approach for delivering academic testing and credit-by-exam services to SMU students and will enable the expansion of these services to local community partners during the phase three expansion that is planned for spring 2024. Professors can [schedule one-on-one consultations](#) for in-person orientation to the new platform.

The UTC is certified by the [National College Testing Association](#) (NCTA) and adheres to professional standards ensuring exam integrity and accessibility for both examiners and examinees.

Faculty and staff volunteers needed to assist with SMU Fulbright applicant interviews

Each year, the Office of National Fellowships works to prepare both graduate and undergraduate students to compete in highly competitive fellowships and scholarship applications. One of these fellowships is the [Fulbright U.S. Student Program](#), the country's premiere international education exchange program. Graduating seniors, current graduate students, and alumni apply to conduct independent research, study for master's degrees, and teach English in over 140 countries.

In the past three years, 14 SMU students and alumni have received Fulbright awards to support their work in countries such as Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Finland, Kazakhstan, Poland, South Korea, Taiwan, and Uzbekistan.

Dr. Brandon Gray Miller, Assistant Dean for University Honors Program and Fellowships, assists with [undergraduate student fellowships](#), and Dr. Rachel Ball-Phillips, Director of Graduate Fellowships and Awards assists with graduate student fellowships. Together, they are looking for faculty and staff participants who can assist with campus interviews for our Fulbright applicants. Campus interviews are an essential part of the application process, and faculty and staff participation is critical for the submission of competitive Fulbright applications. The interviews will be held in person on September 29 and September 30. If interested, [please indicate your availability here by September 1.](#)

Do you know of a student who might be interested in the Fulbright program? Send your nomination to fulbright@smu.edu.

Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

SMU receives its first Cancer Prevention Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) Scholar Award

This week, CPRIT'S governing board approved over [\\$49M in new cancer research and prevention grants](#) during its quarterly meeting. Among these grants, CPRIT approved the first CPRIT Scholar Award to SMU with a \$2M grant to recruit Dr. Annika Wylie to the University. Dr. Wylie's research into the tumor suppressor p53 gene has positioned her for research with impact as we seek to understand cancer biology.

Lyle School of Engineering Dean co-authors mechanical engineering textbook

Nader Jalili, Mary and Richard Templeton Dean of the Lyle School of Engineering has co-authored a mechanical engineering textbook entitled, "Dynamic Systems and Control Engineering." Dean Jalili and his co-author, Dr. Nicholas W. Candelino, Control Systems Research Engineer at General Electric (GE) Research, have worked steadily on this project for the past 20 years. The text will be available later this month in both hardback and e-Text from [Cambridge University Press](#) and will be published in time to reflect the Dean's SMU credentials.

Key leadership searches underway

Peter O'Donnell Jr. Data Science Institute (DSI) Director

Last week, the search committee conducted on-campus interviews for two finalists and hosted the third and last finalist today. After reviewing the feedback submitted by interviews on each candidate and consulting with the search committee and key campus stakeholders, we plan to enter negotiations with hopes to name our new director this fall.

As always, thank you to Suku Nair, Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer, for chairing the search committee, and to Peter Moore, who is serving as the DSI Director *ad interim* and the Center for Research Computing Director *ad interim* until the new Director arrives.

News and Noteworthy

Assistant Provost for SMU's Global, Online and Continuing Education appointed to the Learning Technology Advisory Committee (LTAC) of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Michael J. Robertson, Assistant Provost for SMU's Global, Online and Continuing Education, has been appointed to the [Learning Technology Advisory Committee](#) (LTAC) of the [Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board](#). The LTAC evaluates the role that learning technology plays in Texas higher education via policy research and discussion while reviewing institutional proposals for distance education doctoral programs. The LTAC informs the Coordinating Board about how distance education and computer-assisted instruction further the mission to improve Texas higher education.

Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences Professor recognized at the 2023 International Congress on Medieval Studies

At the May 2023 International Congress on Medieval Studies, the world's largest medieval conference, Bonnie Wheeler, Professor in Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences' departments of English and Medieval Studies, received a multitude of honors for her lifelong contributions to the field of Medieval Studies. Professor Wheeler was awarded the 2023 Medieval Foremother Prize for her extensive publications and support for research on medieval women. Two conference sessions were offered in recognition of this honor: "Women and Authority in Medieval Literature," which included a paper on "Medieval Divas: Between Passion and Power" presented by former SMU colleague Irina Dumitrescu, and "Medieval Foremothers and their Afterlives." Two additional sessions were held, hosted by alumnae of the prestigious Bonnie Wheeler Fellowship, which was founded in Professor Wheeler's honor to provide aid to mid-career women medievalists. Additionally, sessions were organized by the National Committee on Teaching Medieval Studies (TEAMS), entitled "Magistra Doctissima: Celebrating Professor Bonnie Wheeler's Contributions to Medieval Studies," which included her former SMU doctoral student Dr. Charles Wuest as one of the four speakers. TEAMS has now founded the national "Bonnie Wheeler Outstanding Professor Award" to be presented annually at the International Congress on Medieval Studies. Congratulations to Professor Wheeler for this much-deserved recognition and thank you for the contributions in scholarship, teaching and service you have made over the course of your exemplary career.

Lyle School of Engineering Professor to moderate keynote panel for the 20th Anniversary National Nanotechnology Initiative (NNI) Symposium

Ali Beskok, Brown Foundation, Inc. Professor in Lyle School's Department of Mechanical Engineering and Associate Dean for Research Innovation and Industry Partnerships, has been invited to moderate the keynote panel at the upcoming National Nanotechnology Initiative (NNI) Symposium entitled "Enabling the Nanotechnology Revolution: Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the 21st Century Nanotechnology Research and Development Act." The symposium is being hosted by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine on October 10, in Washington D.C. at the National Academies' building.

Office of Global, Online and Continuing Education hosting first Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) Implementation Conference

SMU's Office of Global, Online and Continuing Education (GOCE) is excited to announce its first-ever [Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification \(CMMC\) Implementation Conference](#) on Tuesday, October 10, in Moody Hall. This immersive event will focus on cybersecurity and [Department of Defense](#) (DoD) contracting. SMU's Chief Information Security Officer (CISO), George Finney, will present the keynote address. SMU community members are eligible for discounted registration with code: CMMC20. [Register for the conference here](#).

SMU co-sponsors Resiliency in Mining Communities workshop at Universidad Nacional de Colombia

On July 18–19, SMU co-sponsored and led a Resiliency in Mining Communities workshop at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia (UN), Medellin campus, Colombia. The workshop was led by faculty and graduate students from SMU, including Professor Kate Smits, Solomon Professor for Global Development and department chair in the Lyle School of Engineering's Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, and Ph.D. student Linda Urrego, as well as faculty and graduate students from Colorado School of Mines, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and UN. The project, funded by the National Science Foundation Partnerships in Research and Education (PIRE) program, aims to understand the social, environmental, and technical dynamics of small-scale mining systems in Colombia. SMU's research team, led by Professor Smits, integrates technical aspects of environmental engineering and environmental restoration into stakeholder engagement and community-centered design to address the technical and socio-technical programs in mine production and reclamation, focusing predominantly on issues important to women miners. The workshop, attended by small-scale miners from Colombia, the Colombian Ministry of the Environment and Mining, and academics from across Colombia, focused predominantly on the environmental impacts and potential solutions to environmental issues specific to women mining operations, highlighting the challenges and potential solutions based on women's knowledge.

Dedman School of Law receives Alfred P. Sloan Foundation grant to support energy justice workshops

The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation has approved Dedman School of Law's grant proposal to fund two workshops on [Energy Justice in the Energy Transition](#), as part of a special issue in [Progress in Energy](#) journal on the same subject.

SMU is the lead institution for the grant. Monika U. Ehrman, Professor of Law in the Dedman School of Law, is the PI and guest editor of the special journal issue, along with her co-PIs Anna Broughel (Economics) at Johns Hopkins University, Debanjana Das (Climate Science) at Howard University, and Erin Mayfield (Sustainability Engineering) at Dartmouth College. The special journal issue and ensuing workshops' aim is to provide a timely and impactful showcase of the latest research and future directions in energy justice in the context of the energy transition to facilitate discussions between academics and policymakers.

SMU Continuing and Professional Education's (CAPE) Artificial Intelligence Program featured in Forbes

SMU Continuing and Professional Education's (CAPE) new boot camp in artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) was [featured in a Forbes article](#) along with eight other university programs, including those at The Ohio State University, Michigan State University, and University of Denver. In partnership with [edX](#), SMU CAPE, and other universities will offer the [24-week online program](#) for students who want to build skills in these emerging technologies but may not have prior technical AI training. The first class will begin in September. The longer, foundational boot camp follows the successful launch of an advanced [10-week AI micro boot camp this summer](#). More than 50 students from SMU and other universities across the country joined the first online cohort. Both new noncredit certificate programs complement SMU's graduate programs focusing on emerging technologies: Lyle School's computer science program with a specialization in artificial intelligence, Dedman College's data science master's degree with machine learning specialization, and Meadows School's new creative technology master's degree program.

Sincerely,



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Southern Methodist University

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

World Changers Shaped Here