

Weekly Update | April 14, 2023

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) Spring 2023, 2) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 3) News and Noteworthy.

Spring 2023

Request for participation in “Equity and Transparency in Workload” survey

On April 4, the Equity and Transparency in Workload Working Group sent a survey, via email, to all full-time faculty, intended to gather feedback on campus efforts to continue improving equity and transparency in faculty workload. The email invitation asks faculty to complete the survey by April 17, and includes the [launch of a webpage](#) where more information about the working group's five-year plan can be found.

Quarterly Meeting with Black Unity Forum (BUF) on April 14

Today, President Turner, Vice President for Student Affairs K.C. Mmeje and I joined Chief Diversity Officer Maria Dixon Hall to meet with the BUF and answered questions submitted by members in advance.

CDO Dixon Hall gave a status update on meetings with Dr. Angela Dash, an expert in the field of evidence-based practices for at-risk populations, to establish ombuds support at SMU. She also reported on efforts underway, through the Office of Business and Finance, to support staff development. VP Mmeje shared steps being taken within his division to promote greater student awareness of available mental health resources and initiatives underway to better integrate SMU's athletes into student life.

My responses addressed questions about staffing levels in the office of financial aid as well as clarifications to the promotion and tenure process. I shared that the University has recently restructured the offices of Financial Aid and the Bursar to form a new Student Financial Services Unit. We will be hiring additional support staff, and reviewing salaries, for this unit to provide

enhanced support for our students. I also relayed information about the University-wide mentoring program for all entering faculty that will provide more formal mentoring for junior faculty members.

Thank you to BUF for their continued efforts toward inclusive excellence on our campus.

Provost participating in informal conversations with college/school faculty this spring

This past week, I met with faculty members from Meadows School of the Arts and Cox School of Business. Thank you to the faculty who participated and shared their perspectives during these insightful conversations. Please be on the lookout for information on subsequent visits, and I hope you will be able to attend.

Reminder: Call for applicants for 2023-2024 Provost Faculty Fellows

The [Provost Faculty Fellows Program](#) is currently taking applications from full-time faculty members to lead projects within the Office of the Provost that enhance our academic priorities. There are three open positions for the 2023-2024 academic year: 1) Graduate Assistantships Fellow, 2) SMU Internationalization Steering Committee Fellow, and 3) Communications and Research Infrastructure Fellow. Stipends and course reductions will be awarded to faculty selected for the program. Applications are due by end of day **today, April 14**.

Dallas CEO to give SMU's May 13 Commencement Convocation Keynote

Brian Tyler, CEO of McKesson Corporation, will be the featured speaker at SMU's May Commencement Convocation on Saturday, May 13. The ceremony is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. at Moody Coliseum and will be [streamed live online](#).

Tyler has led McKesson Corporation through a significant period of transformation, building upon the company's strength as a distributor to make an even greater impact in the areas of oncology and biopharma services. Recently, McKesson played a front and center role in COVID-19 relief efforts around the world, securing and delivering critical medicines and medical supplies to healthcare facilities and first responders, distributing COVID-19 vaccines and supply kits, and helping vaccinate the public through its Health Mart pharmacies in the U.S. and affiliated pharmacies across North America. Tyler's leadership empowers McKesson employees to lead with a growth mindset and deliver excellent results for customers and partners, while remaining focused on the company's purpose of advancing health outcomes for all. We look forward to his role in this spring's Commencement.

Road to R1/Scholarly and Creative Excellence

Second annual Research Computing Day on April 21

SMU's Center for Research Computing, in collaboration with the Data Science Institute, will be holding the second annual [Research Computing Day](#) on April 21 in the Hughes-Trigg Student Center. This event will highlight the latest SMU faculty and graduate student initiatives, with SMU faculty presentations and a graduate student research poster exhibition showcasing work that utilizes high-performance computing, artificial intelligence, and data analytics to address complex problems in science, engineering, economics, and other disciplines. Research Computing Day will also feature two keynote presentations; the first delivered by Jeff Hittinger of Lawrence Livermore National Lab and the second delivered by Mark Austin of AT&T.

Fellowships Day

Today, the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies and the Office of Student Academic Engagement and Success (SAES) are hosting [Fellowships Day](#) to increase awareness of external fellowship opportunities. Activities included multiple events for SMU students and faculty members, including the Graduate Fellowships Panel, Fulbright Launch, and Fellowships Celebration.

Thank you to the faculty and staff who coordinated and hosted these events. Increasing the number of SMU students awarded fellowships supports our road to R1, and finding sustainable ways to promote student application benefits both our University and our students.

If you have questions about student fellowships, please contact [Dr. Rachel Ball-Phillips](#), Director of Graduate Fellowships and Awards, or [Dr. Brandon Miller](#), Assistant Dean for University Honors Program and Fellowships.

Reminder: Request for Proposals – SMU/Bush Institute post-doctoral program

The [SMU/Bush Institute post-doctoral program](#) was established in 2022 in partnership with the George W. Bush Institute to encourage collaborative research between the two institutions and to increase the number of post-doctoral fellows at SMU. We are funding three more post-doctoral positions for the 2023 academic year. Funding is limited to one year (12 months) per post-doctoral fellow, and preference will be given to proposals that are able to provide a second year of funding for the requested postdoctoral fellow and to proposals from Principal Investigators (PIs) at the rank of Assistant Professor.

All SMU tenured and tenure-track faculty are eligible to submit proposals and to serve as PI. All faculty, including teaching and professional (non-tenure track) full-time faculty, may serve as co-PI on proposals and awards. One proposal may be submitted per year per PI. There are no restrictions on the number of proposals on which a faculty member can serve as co-PI. Proposals must be submitted by **today, April 14** to provost@smu.edu in 11-point or greater font and not exceeding two, 8.5. x 11 pages in length.

Key leadership searches underway

Peter O'Donnell Jr. Data Science Institute Director

Our executive search firm, Isaacson Miller, assisting us with the search for the Peter O'Donnell Jr. Data Science Institute Director, has published the [position profile online](#), developed collaboratively with the search committee that is chaired by Dr. Suku Nair, Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer. Thank you to Dr Nair and the search committee for their work in shaping this position, a key first step as we advance toward identifying the institute's next director, whom we hope to have in place by the fall.

As you will see in the position description, the individual who fills the DSI director role will oversee both SMU's Data Science Institute and the Center for Research Computing CRC. Tom Hagstrom, professor of Mathematics in Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, will complete his term as director of the CRC on May 31, 2023. Effective June 1, 2023, Peter Moore will serve as both the DSI Director and CRC Director *ad interim* until the new director arrives.

Please join me in congratulating Peter, and in thanking Tom, for their service to data science, research computing and to SMU!

Be on the lookout for additional information in subsequent newsletters.

News and Noteworthy

Faculty member from Meadows School of the Arts awarded Guggenheim Fellowship

Associate Professor of Film and Media Arts, Amber Bemak, has been awarded a [Guggenheim Fellowship](#) for 2023 in filmmaking. The fellowship is awarded by the John Simon Guggenheim

Memorial Foundation to support the “pursuit of scholarship in any field of knowledge and creation of any artform, under the freest possible conditions” by individuals with exceptional scholarly/creative ability and “exhibit great promise for their future endeavors.”

SMU’s dean of Admission appointed Assistant Vice Provost

SMU has achieved remarkable success in recruiting and enrolling increasingly talented and diverse classes of new students. That success comes in large part thanks to the leadership of Elena Hicks, whom I am delighted to share now assumes the title Assistant Vice Provost & Dean of Admission. This promotion recognizes Elena’s commitment to both SMU’s enrollment goals as well as her strong leadership in the national college admission profession. Please join me in congratulating Elena.

SMU student journalists win ten state journalism awards from Texas Intercollegiate Press Association’s (TIPA) annual conference

SMU students [received accolades](#) across SMU’s three student journalism and media outlets: The Daily Campus, SMU Look and SMU-TV, this past week at the annual TIPA conference. These highly competitive awards recognized work completed in 2022 by SMU students who competed against Division I universities, including UT-Austin, Baylor University, and Texas A&M.

Each of SMU’s journalism and media outlets is overseen by a faculty advisor who mentors students as they create compelling media. Professor Jacqueline Fellows, professor of practice and Digital Studio Manager in the Department of Journalism at Meadows School of the Arts oversees all aspects of the SMU Daily Campus, SMU’s student newspaper. Professor Jenny B. Davis, professor of practice in the Department of Journalism, oversees SMU LOOK magazine, SMU’s student fashion magazine. Professor Charlotte Huffman, interim broadcast executive-in-residence in the Department of Journalism, oversees SMU-TV, SMU’s student cable channel. Thank you to Professors Fellows, Davis, and Huffman for their work with their respective media outlet.

Dallas Literary Festival (DLF) held first in-person festival on SMU Campus March 12-22 to build a bridge between SMU and the community

Community partners started this year’s festival on March 12, and held events throughout the Dallas Fort Worth area and in underserved communities until March 17. The main festival events were at Dallas Hall on March 18-19, at the African American Museum on March 20, and ended with the final keynote speaker on March 22 at McFarlin Auditorium. Over the course of this year’s festival, over 40 events were hosted in and around DFW.

Student Night at the Bush Museum honors 10th anniversary of Presidential Center’s founding

On Thursday, April 13, the [George W. Bush Presidential Center](#) hosted “Student Night at the Museum” honoring the 10th anniversary of the library’s founding. The Bush Center includes the George W. Bush Presidential Museum, which examines the consequential times during which President Bush served, and the George W. Bush Institute, a nonpartisan independent policy organization focused on ensuring opportunity for all, strengthening democracy, and advancing free societies. The Bush Center has created a positive impact both on the SMU campus and around the globe in its past ten years of work, and we look forward to years of continued partnerships between SMU and the center.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth G. Loba, PhD

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Southern Methodist University

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

World Changers Shaped Here