

## Weekly Update | March 10, 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

#### **SMU Giving Day this week on March 7**

Tuesday was SMU's annual Giving Day, a 24-hour opportunity to rally the Mustang community in shaping our future. In just one day, over 4,000 donors committed more than \$5.1M in support for the SMU people and causes that matter most to them. Thank you to all who participated and, by doing so, showed the world what Mustangs can do in just one day!

#### **DFW business leader and SMU alum gifts \$11M to SMU Ignited: Boldly Shaping Tomorrow**

Jack Knox '60 '63 has given \$11M to SMU's capital campaign in the hopes of strengthening the University's future and encouraging others to participate in the [capital campaign](#). President Turner and I both thank Mr. Knox for his generous gift and his continued support for SMU.

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

Over the course of the spring semester, I will be visiting each college/school for informal conversations open to all their faculty. The purpose of these meetings is to listen and to engage in conversation with no set agenda. I have met with the Lyle School of Engineering and Perkins School of Theology and thank the faculty who attended for making the time to participate and to share their perspectives. My next visit is scheduled with faculty from the Simmons School of Education and Human Development on March 29. Be on the lookout for information on subsequent visits, and I hope you will be able to attend.

## **Call for applicants for the 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 on Friday, April 14. [Click here](#) to learn more about becoming a Provost Faculty Fellow.

## **SMU's annual space allocation survey underway**

Representatives from SMU's schools and departments have commenced work on the annual space allocation survey and are currently reviewing, validating and revising data housed in STABLE, SMU's system of record, to understand how our space is allocated, utilized and shared. Work began with multiple kick-off meetings this week to review the survey's scope, process and timeline with a request to complete the survey by Friday, March 31. Thanks, in advance, to survey participants for prompt attention to this important request.

## **SMU's annual Honors Convocation and inaugural Celebration of Excellence Weekend**

Yesterday, I sent [a communication inviting faculty](#) to participate in our annual Honors Convocation on Friday, April 28, at 2 p.m. in McFarlin Auditorium. I hope you will be able to join us and thank you for your contribution to celebrating our students' achievements. Participating faculty are able to [RSVP here](#).

Especially exciting this year, Honors Convocation will commence the inaugural Celebration of Excellence Weekend (April 28–30) – where we will celebrate the accomplishments of SMU's undergraduate students from across campus. The celebrations will include inductions into honor societies such as Phi Beta Kappa and Hyer Society, along with the Hilltop Excellence Awards, and other events to recognize academic excellence.

We will be sending additional updates about Honors Convocation and Celebration of Excellence Weekend, so please be on the lookout for those.

# Road to R1/Scholarly and Creative Excellence

## Request for proposal (RFP): SMU – Bush Institute post-doctoral program

In 2022, the Office of the Provost, in partnership with the George W. Bush Institute, [created a post-doctoral fellowship program](#) with the goals of encouraging collaborative research between SMU and the Bush Institute and increasing the number of post-doctoral fellows at SMU. We are happy to continue this program by 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 post-doctoral 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 April 14 to [provost@smu.edu](mailto:provost@smu.edu) in 11-point or greater font and not exceeding two, 8.5. x 11 pages in length.

## Research and Innovation Week, March 20-25

[Research & Innovation Week](#) is SMU's annual showcase and celebration of the outstanding research being done by SMU students and other members of our community. Events will include the Undergraduate Poster Session on March 21, the Graduate Poster Session on March 22, and the Master of Fine Arts Qualifying Exhibition on March 25. Additionally, this year's Research and Innovation Week will host two exciting events in Hughes-Trigg Student Center Auditorium:

### Monday, March 20 is a [keynote talk by Taylor Shead](#)

Taylor Shead is the award-winning CEO and founder of STEMuli Studios and the 94th Black woman in history to raise over \$1 million in venture capital. Stephanie L. Knight, Dean of the Simmons School of Education and Human Development, will moderate the talk, which is titled "The Future of Dallas: Innovative Pathways to Technology for All." Refreshments will be available at 5:30 p.m., and the event will begin at 6 p.m.

### Thursday, March 23, from 3:30-5 p.m., is a panel on ["Graduate Education and the Future of Research in North Texas"](#)

This will feature esteemed faculty from SMU and other North Texas universities:

- Stephen Arrowsmith, Associate Professor and Hamilton Chair in Earth Sciences, SMU
- Dinesh Bhatia, Professor of Electrical Engineering, UT Dallas
- Annie Ginty, Associate Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience, Baylor University
- Ramon Lopez, Professor of Physics, UT Arlington
- Floyd Wormley, Associate Provost for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies, TCU

The panel will be moderated by Suku Nair, Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer.

## Key leadership searches underway

### **Peter O'Donnell Jr. Data Science Institute Director**

This week, Dr. Suku Nair, Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer, convened the search committee's kickoff meeting for SMU's inaugural Peter O'Donnell Jr. Director of the Data Science Institute, and I delivered a charge to outline my aspirations for this strategic leadership position. We plan to fill the position before the fall 2023 semester.

Representatives from our executive search firm, Isaacson Miller, also spent time this week meeting with members of both the Data Science Institute Advisory Board and the Data Science Cluster Hire Task Force, as well as with select faculty to inform the position description that will guide our search.

Be on the lookout for additional information in subsequent newsletters. Continued thanks to Peter Moore for serving as Data Science Institute Director *ad interim* until our new director arrives.

## **News and Noteworthy**

### **SMU researchers contributed to published Texas geothermal energy report**

Dr. Mark Hand from Dedman College's department of Political Science and Maria Richards from the College's Roy M. Huffington department of Earth Sciences both contributed to "[The Future of Geothermal in Texas Contemporary Prospects and Perspectives](#)" report. This report has established the model that [Project InnerSpace](#) will use to study geothermal resources in Oklahoma, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, West Virginia, Idaho, Nebraska, Arkansas, Montana, and Louisiana starting this semester.

### **Meadows professor inducted into the American Advertising Federation's Southwest Advertising Hall of Fame**

Advertising professor Gordon Law, Executive in Residence in the Meadows School of the Arts' Temerlin Advertising Institute and Provost Faculty Fellow, has been inducted into the [American Advertising Federation's Southwest Advertising Hall of Fame](#). The Southwest Hall of Fame encompasses Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Arkansas, and honors industry professionals who have distinguished themselves in their careers, contributed to the betterment of advertising and its reputation, and made volunteer efforts outside the workplace.

### **SMU chemistry professor awarded Wilkinson Prize for innovative software in scientific computing**

Dr. Devin Matthews, Assistant Professor in Dedman College's department of Chemistry, has been awarded the 2023 [James H. Wilkinson Prize for Numerical Software](#). This award is given by the [Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics \(SIAM\)](#) every four years to recognize researchers in the early stages of their careers who have created an outstanding piece of numerical software, or to individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to an existing piece of numerical software. Matthews and his colleague Field G. Van Zee, researcher at UT Austin, will be awarded the prize later this month at the [2023 SIAM Conference on Computational Science and Engineering](#), where Matthews will also be delivering the keynote address.

## **Cox faculty member honored with the Athena Leadership Award by the Dallas Regional Chamber**

Dr. Candice Lucas-Bledsoe, director of the Action Research Center and SMU Cox research professor, was honored yesterday with the Athena Leadership Award by the Dallas Regional Chamber at their 25th Women's Business Conference. The Dallas Regional Chamber bestows this award upon "exceptional women who excel in their careers, contribute to their communities, and develop future leaders."

## **Chronicle of Higher Education Virtual Forum: ChatGPT and Other Cutting-Edge Learning Tech**

Candace Walkington, Associate Professor in the Simmons School of Education and Human Development's department of Teaching and Learning, was interviewed earlier this week during *The Chronicle of Higher Education's* virtual forum on "ChatGPT and Other Cutting-Edge Learning Tech," sponsored by the [Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies](#). Dr. Walkington spoke about the role of AR, VR, and AI technologies in education. More information and a recording of the forum are [available here](#).

Sincerely,



Elizabeth G. Loba, PhD

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Southern Methodist University

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

**World Changers Shaped Here**