

## Weekly Update | March 17, 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](#).

As we wrap up SMU's Spring Break 2023, I am hopeful that each of you found ways to rest and recharge in preparation for the remaining eight weeks of the spring term. 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

#### **Recovering classroom contact hours disrupted by this semester's winter storm**

In early February 2023, SMU canceled classes for three days in response to inclement weather. Pursuant to that cancellation, [I convened an ad-hoc committee](#), including the Academic Policies Committee of Faculty Senate, to recommend a strategy for making up the missed contact hours resulting from these cancellations.

Based on their response, I have recommended – and the President's Executive Council (PEC) has approved – that all missed contact hours will be made-up through asynchronous instruction. Regarding inclement-weather cancellations moving forward, I have consulted with President Turner and the PEC, and we have collectively determined that SMU will rely on asynchronous make-up of contact hours during any future events that result in the cancellation of classes.

To support this, I have asked each Dean to work with their faculty to create a detailed plan that outlines, by college/school, the specific approach to making up missed contact hours in individual departments. See the full announcement about inclement weather policies and how we plan to move [forward here](#).

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

As I have shared previously, 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.

### **Request for participation in SMU's annual space allocation survey**

Representatives are on the second week of completing the space allocation survey and have reported solid progress. Today, the STABLE team is conducting a "halfway point check-in" with survey participants to ensure the survey remains on-track to conclude by Friday, March 31. Thanks, in advance, to survey participants for prompt attention to this important request.

## **Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence**

### **Darwin Deason Institute for Cyber Security awarded new research contract**

Principal Investigator (PI) Mitch Thornton, and Co-PIs Duncan MacFarlane and Eric Larson from the Lyle School of Engineering, will be investigating the security of a recently-invented hardware authentication circuit that is embedded inside a photonic integrated circuit known as a physically unclonable function (PUF). The PUF circuit was invented by MacFarlane, Thornton and Anametric, Inc. in a previously funded research effort. This new investigation will involve determining if the PUF is susceptible to new and emerging attacks based on generative-adversarial networks (GANs) that are a form of neural network used by cyber security adversaries.

Since June 2018, Anametric, Inc. has provided approximately \$2.6M to support this research, which includes a signed licensing agreement with SMU for two patents and five pending patents. This is an excellent model for technology transfer, as this partnership not only generates licensing-based revenues but also brings research funding to further advance SMU's intellectual property portfolio.

### **Research and Innovation Week, March 20-25**

Next week is SMU's annual [Research & Innovation Week](#) showcase celebrating the outstanding research being done by SMU students and faculty, and is open to the SMU community and the public.

**Keynote Talk**

This year's keynote talk, "[The Future of Dallas: Innovative Pathways to Technology for All](#)," a conversation between Taylor Shead, CEO and founder of STEMuli Studios, and Stephanie Knight, Dean of the Simmons School of Education and Human Development, will take place on Monday, March 20 from 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. in the Hughes-Trigg Student Center Auditorium immediately after a reception with refreshments at 5:30 p.m. in the same location. A livestream of the talk will be [available here](#).

#### **Undergraduate Poster Session**

Research posters will be presented by SMU undergraduates from across campus and prizes will be awarded. [This session](#) will be held on Tuesday, March 21 from 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. in the Hughes-Trigg Student Center Ballroom.

#### **Graduate Poster Session**

Research posters will be presented by SMU graduate students, postdocs, and undergraduate poster session winners. Additional prizes will be awarded. [This session](#) will be held on Wednesday, March 22 from 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. in the Hughes-Trigg Student Center Ballroom.

#### **Graduate Education and the Future of Research in North Texas Panel**

[This panel](#) will feature esteemed faculty from SMU and other North Texas universities, and will be moderated by Suku Nair, Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer. The panel will take place on Thursday, March 23 from 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. in the Hughes-Trigg Student Center Auditorium with a reception and refreshments immediately following at 5:00 p.m. in the same location. A livestream of the talk will be [available here](#).

#### **Master of Fine Arts Qualifying Exhibition**

Meadows School's Art MFA students will present and display their thesis exhibition. [The opening reception](#) is on Saturday, March 25 from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. in the Pollock Gallery located inside Expressway Tower. The exhibition will continue through April 15.

I hope you will be able to attend these events to support our students and fellow colleagues and I look forward to seeing you there.

### **Key leadership searches underway**

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

Last 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.

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's Chief Diversity Officer named 2023 Education Champion by the Congressional Award Program**

Maria Dixon Hall, Chief Diversity Officer, has been named the 2023 Education Champion by the Congressional Award Program. Presented on behalf of the joint leadership of the U.S. Congress and

the Congressional Award Board of Directors, the award is given to a member of the private sector who is making a difference in the lives of the young people they support. Dixon Hall received the award in late February and was presented the award by her former student, Mateo Magdaleno, an SMU alumnus and member of the Congressional Award Foundation Board of Directors.

### **Library project archivist processing Ebby Halliday papers resulting from an earlier gift from the Ebby Halliday Foundation**

SMU Library's project archivist Krishna Shenoy is processing the Ebby Halliday papers at DeGolyer Library to preserve and make accessible the work of Ebby Halliday, the "First Lady of Dallas Real Estate." Ebby Halliday (1911-2015) lived to be 104, and on her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday began saving the many birthday cards, photos and newspaper articles she received. We thank the SMU Libraries for their archival work that will allow these papers to be available to scholars and the public.

### **Meadows School Advertising students win record-breaking number of American Advertising Federation's (AAF) Dallas ADDY Awards and advance to regional competition**

SMU made an impressive showing at the American Advertising Federation's Dallas chapter competition for the ADDY awards recognizing "the creative spirit of excellence in the art of advertising." Of the 30 student awards distributed, 26 of them went to SMU. Students brought home 16 Silver awards, the student "Best of Show" award, and nine Gold awards breaking their own record of Gold awards from last year. Since students did not win anything less than a Silver award, every entry will move forward to the regional competition where they will compete with Gold and Silver winners in AAF's District 10, which includes Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana.

### **SMU Global, Online and Continuing Education (GOCE) named finalist for national award**

SMU GOCE is proud to be a finalist for this year's Excellence in Recruitment and Admissions Innovation award at the annual Salesforce Education Summit. The award goes to a higher education institution that uses Salesforce in innovative, forward-looking ways to transform recruitment and admissions. Over the past year, SMU GOCE has implemented Salesforce chatbots across the SMU Continuing and Professional Education (CAPE) website to provide real-time program information to prospective students. Providing an exceptional student experience is a pillar of SMU and is supported through innovative efforts like this one. Support SMU GOCE by voting for them before March 20 on [this website](#). Over 500 schools and 3,000 attendees are expected to attend the Salesforce Education Summit, hosted this year in Dallas. Awards will be announced and presented on April 11.

### **Two undergraduate students awarded U.S. Department of State's prestigious Critical Language Scholarship**

Two undergraduate students were awarded the U.S. Department of State's prestigious [Critical Language Scholarship](#) (CLS). The CLS covers all expenses for an eight-to-ten-week immersive summer abroad experience for undergraduate students to learn one of 14 languages important for American national security and economic prosperity. Rodney Johnson, who graduated in fall 2022

with a Bachelor of Arts in international studies, will be studying Arabic this summer in either Jordan, Morocco, or Oman. EJ Rorem, a third-year political science and statistical science major, will be travelling to Dushanbe, Tajikistan this summer to continue learning Persian. EJ is a member of the Dedman College Scholars, Tower Scholars, and University Honors Program.

### **Second-year Journalism major selected as one of 12 students nationally to join Institute for Responsible Citizenship's 2023 cohort**

Kirk Ogunrinde, a second-year journalism major, was selected to join this year's [Institute for Responsible Citizenship](#) cohort. Each year, the institute selects African American male college students for a summer intensive leadership development seminar and placements in high-level professional internships in Washington, D.C. This is a very competitive award as the institute receives hundreds of applications each year. Only one SMU student has received this award previously.

### **SMU faculty member selected by the U.S. Department of State as a Fulbright U.S. Scholar for 2023-2024**

Dr. Kelly McKowen, Assistant Professor in Dedman College's department of Anthropology, has won a [Fulbright Scholar Award](#) for the upcoming academic year that will be used to fund research travel to Norway. Fulbright Scholar Awards are prestigious and competitive fellowships that provide unique opportunities for scholars to teach and conduct research abroad. Fulbright scholars also play a critical role in U.S. public diplomacy, establishing long-term relationships between people and nations.

Despite it being spring break, you can see that we had quite a bit to report this week. Congratulations to all of these incredible students, faculty and staff on their accomplishments.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth G. Loba, PhD

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Southern Methodist University

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

**World Changers Shaped Here**