

Weekly Update | May 26, 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) Summer 2023, 2) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 3) News and Noteworthy.

Summer 2023

SMU+GSV Mission Summit Recap

This week, SMU partnered with Global Silicon Valley (GSV) to host a [mission summit on May 22–24](#). Over 900 people attended this multi-day event where, across 35+ sessions, more than 115 world class speakers from investment, government, entrepreneurship, education, and philanthropy communities came together to discuss how to keep mission and purpose at the heart of entrepreneurship.

The Summit's opening night reception was held at the [George W. Bush Presidential Center](#) with remarks from Rob Kaplan, former President and CEO of the [Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas](#) along with a fireside chat from Ben Nelson of Minerva University and Michael Moe, Founder and CEO of [GSV](#). The [Texas Cup](#), a pitch competition for university students, also took place during the Summit, where over 100 presentations were submitted from 13 colleges and universities. The winner was Storyit – and congratulations to Branson Packard and Campbell Wilkerson, the SMU representatives on the Storyit Team.

Last night the Summit concluded at The Rustic where the winners of the Texas Cup were announced and Clark Hunt ('87), Chairman and CEO of the Kansas City Chiefs gave closing remarks.

SMU hosting Southwestern Graduate School of Banking (SWGSB) at Cox School of Business

Starting Tuesday, May 30, and lasting through Friday, June 9, 2023, SMU will be hosting the 66th academic session of [SWGSB](#). This residential academic program draws nearly 400 bankers and dignitaries who are either actively leading their divisions or preparing to do so. Registration and orientation will take place on Tuesday, May 30 in the James M. Collins Executive Education Center Lobby, after which an opening leadership reception and informal dinner will be held. On June 9,

commencement will be held at the George W. Bush Presidential Center where more than 300 guests are expected, which would be an all-time attendance record. The graduation address will be delivered by the Honorable Gentner Drummond, recently sworn in as the 19th Attorney General of Oklahoma.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact David Davis by phone, 214-274-6461, or email at ddavis@smu.edu.

May Term/Summer Term

While the Dallas campus may seem quiet this week, 2,400 Mustangs are continuing their studies in Summer Intersessions both at home and abroad. Nearly 600 students are completing May Term courses in Dallas and at our beautiful [SMU-in-Taos](#) campus in New Mexico. Another 1,400 graduate and undergraduate students have already enrolled in courses in Summer and August Terms. Mustangs are also fulfilling our “world-changer” mission by traveling and [studying abroad this summer](#). 439 students will participate in 23 programs abroad, 13 of them led by SMU faculty. We are excited for this return to pre-pandemic levels of engagement.

Offering over 400 courses, [intersessional programs](#) play an important part in helping students stay on track for graduation, expand their horizons of knowledge and experience, and make the most of their academic careers. Thank you to all the faculty, staff, and students that make these important programs possible.

Reminder: Faculty salary benchmarking study

Representatives from the faculty, Faculty Senate, Office of the Provost, Office of University Decision Support, and Business and Finance will come together this fall as a task force to examine faculty salaries for both the tenure/tenure-track and non-tenure-track levels. Task Force [participants have been confirmed](#) and over these coming summer months, the Office of the Provost will begin gathering data to support the Task Force’s activities which will take place throughout the 2023–2024 academic year.

Modified newsletter release schedule

Now that we are moving into the summer months, as we have done in previous years, the cadence of my Weekly emails will change. With many faculty and staff on breaks and taking vacations over the summer, and absent the need for additional communication, I will send two Weekly Updates in June, two Weekly Updates in July, and one Weekly Update prior to the start of the fall 2023 semester in August. Once the fall semester begins, I will return to the regular weekly Friday email pattern.

Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

Simmons School of Education & Human Development selected to participate in study funded by the LEGO Foundation

Simmons’ [Center on Research and Evaluation](#) (CORE) will join Temple University in conducting a “Learning through Play” [national study funded by The LEGO Foundation](#). The foundation has awarded \$19.98 million to support the study, which will include Simmons leading the Dallas site and receiving \$2.8 million over five years for their work. A pilot study will take place during the 2023-2024 academic year, with the full study beginning in 2024-2025. CORE Executive Director, Dr. Annie Wright, will serve as the Principal Investigator (PI), with CORE Assistant Director, Dylan Farmer, and Dr. Toni Harrison-Kelly, Executive Director at the SMU Budd Center, serving as Co-PIs.

Call for Proposals: Provost’s Science & Engineering Postdoctoral Fellowships

To support our goals for research excellence and Carnegie R1, we are announcing the Provost's Science and Engineering Postdoctoral Fellowships Program. This new initiative will provide \$55,000 stipends plus standard SMU benefits for one year to postdoctoral scholars who will be affiliated with science and engineering departments, programs, centers or institutes, as defined by the ACE Carnegie Foundation. Up to 10 postdoctoral positions will be funded for one year through this program with selection priority given to proposals that can guarantee funding for subsequent years.

Proposal review will start **June 1, 2023**, and continue on a rolling basis thereafter. Proposals must be pre-reviewed by the PI's school or college Dean's Office by sending proposals to the following school or college contacts for pre-review:

- Dedman College: [Renee McDonald](#), Senior Associate Dean
- Lyle School: [Dinesh Rajan](#), Senior Associate Dean
- Simmons School: [Anthony Petrosino](#), Associate Dean
- Guildhall: [Mary Endsley](#), Executive Assistant
- Other schools: Please contact the school Dean's Office

More information and instructions can be found in the [call for proposals](#). Please reach out to your school or college Dean's Office point of contact for questions about the pre-review process. Additional questions may be directed to [Robin Poston](#), Dean of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies.

Provost Summer Research grants

Thank you to all those who applied and to all those who encouraged their doctoral students to apply for Provost's Summer Research Grants. In less than two weeks this call received many quality applications, and we have now closed the application cycle.

Congratulations to the students, and thank you to their advisors, who were awarded Provost's Summer Research Grants:

- Meghan Lowrey, Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, Department of Anthropology
- Anne Parfitt, Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, Department of Anthropology
- Priscila Heira Martinez, Simmons School of Education and Human Development, Liberal Studies
- Rashida Shafiq, Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, Department of History
- Bonnie Reynolds, Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, Department of Anthropology
- Jennifer Laffick, Meadows School of the Arts, Division of Art History
- Nusaiba Chowdhury, Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, Department of Anthropology

Key leadership searches underway

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

Over the next several weeks, the search committee and our executive search firm, Isaacson Miller, are continuing to collect strong applications for this position. We look forward to having a complete and highly competitive candidate pool by mid-June.

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 starting June 1, 2023, Center for Research Computing Director *ad interim*, until the new Director arrives. Be on the lookout for additional information in subsequent newsletters.

News and Noteworthy

Inaugural Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Voices in Higher Education Symposium

The [Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute's](#) Asian Studies and Asian American Experiences Research Cluster organized the inaugural [Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander Voices in Higher Education Symposium](#) on April 25 at SMU. Led by Dr. Piyawan Charoensap-Kelly of Meadows School of the Arts' Division of Corporate Communication and Public Affairs, Dr. LaiYee Leong of Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences' Department of Political Science, Dr. Rachel Ball-Phillips of Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies, and Dr. Wookun Kim of Dedman College's Department of Economics, this event brought together an interdisciplinary group of scholars nationwide to discuss issues and new research findings pertinent to inclusion, empowerment, and solidarity among AAPI and allies.

This event was part of the AAPI Heritage Month celebration at SMU and attracted faculty, staff, and students from SMU and nearby colleges as well as community members from around the DFW area. Photos from the symposium are available [here](#) and below.



University of Connecticut Inducts Dean Jalili into its Academy of Distinguished Engineers

Nader Jalili, the Mary and Richard Templeton Dean of Lyle School of Engineering was inducted into the [UConn Academy of Distinguished Engineers Class of 2023](#) on May 11 surrounded by the University of Connecticut's School of Engineering's faculty, staff, alumni and friends who had gathered to celebrate. Dean Jalili earned his Doctorate in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Connecticut.

The UConn Academy of Distinguished Engineers is a highly selective and esteemed community of accomplished University of Connecticut School of Engineering alumni and friends who have made exceptional contributions to their fields of engineering. Membership in the academy recognizes an individual's significant achievements and leadership in their profession, as well as their commitment to the advancement of engineering education and research. Congratulations to Dean Jalili for this recognition.



Ph.D. Students Participated in Moody School Boot Camp to Boost Fellowship Application Success

During the week of May 15-19, 26 Ph.D. students participated in a Fellowships Writing Boot Camp with a curriculum designed by [Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies](#). During that week, students learned how to write effective fellowship applications and produced over 100 drafts of application components. Students also received individualized writing support, and completed applications for a variety of fellowships including the [NSF-GRFP](#), [Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Innovation Fellowship](#), [Fulbright awards](#), the [Charlotte Newcombe Fellowship](#), the [Spencer Dissertation Fellowship](#), and the [AAUW International Fellowship](#).

Do you have a graduate student interested in applying for fellowships? They can contact [Dr. Rachel Ball-Phillips](#), Director of Graduate Fellowships and Awards, to learn more.

SMU Global, Online and Continuing Education (GOCE) launching second year of AT&T Data Science Scholars

[GOCE](#) is excited to launch the second year of the [AT&T Data Science Scholars](#) program. This initiative offers an eight-week boot camp and subsequent internship for students to explore data science using AT&T systems. With a 25% increase in student intake over last year, more aspiring data scientists can gain valuable field experience. Last year's success is evident in AT&T hiring three program participants as full-time data scientists. We value the significant contributions of AT&T's VP of Data Science, Mark Austin, and SMU faculty member, Dr. Bivin Sadler, in driving this program's success. This program not only enhances students' data science skills but also prepares them for a promising career in industry, serving as a powerful student recruitment channel. We extend our gratitude to all involved and congratulate this year's participants.

Cell phone data from 2021 winter storm shows Dallas is resilient

An SMU research team, led by Nicos Makris, Addy Family Centennial Professor in Civil Engineering in the Lyle School of Engineering, is investigating how resilient Texas cities are after natural disasters

impact city operations by analyzing anonymous cell phone data of residents. Dr. Makris has looked at Houston cell phone data after Hurricanes Harvey (2017) and Irma (2017) and is now looking at Dallas' data during the [2021 winter storm](#).

The research team found that Dallas' rapid recovery indicates a great degree of resilience. Similar findings occurred in the Houston study, with residents being able to return to their normal/pre-emergency routines almost immediately.

Dr. Makris' team includes Gholamreza Moghimi, SMU postdoctoral research fellow; Eric Godat, team lead for research and data science in SMU's Office of Information Technology (OIT); and Tue Vu, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning Research Scientist.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth G. Loba". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Elizabeth G. Loba, PhD

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Southern Methodist University

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

World Changers Shaped Here