

Weekly Update | May 5, 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

Board of Trustees spring meeting recap

This week, I had two opportunities to provide Academic Affairs updates to members of SMU's Board of Trustees.

Committee on Academic Affairs

To begin Thursday's committee meeting, Rob Frank, President of the Faculty Senate, delivered his annual report highlighting key accomplishments during the academic year. After reviewing a list of proposed curricular changes, I shifted focus toward SMU's current and future plans to grow our research and expand into the innovation and entrepreneurship lifecycle. We have done a good job doubling our research expenditures over the last decade, and we have now reached the point where we can grow proportionately in terms of innovation.

Corporate engagement will be vital to our plans for research and innovation, and SMU's Global, Online and Continuing Education (GOCE), through lifelong learning and workforce development, plays an important role with our corporate partners. I highlighted a few recent examples of GOCE's ability to develop customized content in response to corporate need. From there, I provided an update on enrollment projections for fall 2023 and concluded with an invitation to May's Commencement.

Full board meeting

In today's morning meeting, I shared a consolidated version of my Committee on Academic Affairs presentation to the full Board of Trustees.

Hilltop Excellence Awards

Last Friday, April 28, the annual Hilltop Excellence Awards recognized outstanding members of the SMU community. Each spring, the Division of Student Affairs hosts the awards ceremony, distributing 15 awards to students, faculty, staff, trustees and volunteers, who have been nominated by their peers, colleagues, professors and mentors. This year, 44 individuals were recognized for their exceptional work supporting the University. Congratulations to this year's award nominees and winners – your contributions make our campus a vibrant center of discovery, learning and service. And thank you to Student Affairs for hosting these awards and ensuring we take time to recognize our exemplary people. See a full list of [award winners here](#).

Philanthropist and Broadway producer gives \$15 million to Meadows School of the Arts

[G. Marlyne Sexton has made a generous gift](#) to Meadows School of the Arts to create a specialization in musical theatre that will prepare graduates for a lifetime of leading roles. Sexton's gift provides endowments and operating funds for both the new [G. Marlyne Sexton Institute for Musical Theatre](#) and the G. Marlyne Sexton Director of Musical Theatre, both of which are expected to start during the 2023-2024 academic year.

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

I will be concluding the informal conversations series by meeting with the Dedman School of Law faculty on May 9, at 10:00 a.m. in the Hillcrest Appellate Courtroom and Classroom in the Underwood Law Library. Thank you to the faculty who made the time for these meetings and have shared their perspectives.

Concluding Tate Lecture Series installment for the academic year

Tuesday, May 2 the [Tate Lecture Series](#) concluded its 41st season by hosting Martha Stewart for an afternoon discussion with students at the Turner Construction/Amazon Student Forum and an evening presentation to the SMU community at the Anita and Truman Arnold Lecture. Martha Stewart, the founder of Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, spoke about her multi-channel lifestyle company, and life as an entrepreneur. The Tate Lecture Series will commence again in September 2023.

Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

Biosciences professor receives \$3 million National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant for research on epilepsy

[Dr. Edward Glasscock](#), Associate Professor of Biological Sciences in Dedman College, has received a 5-year, \$3 million grant from the [National Institutes of Health](#) (NIH) for a study he hopes will lead to the identification of biomarkers to help identify people at risk for sudden unexpected death in epilepsy, known as SUDEP. Dr. Glasscock is currently collaborating with Leonidas Lasemidis of the [Barrow Neurological Institute](#) in Phoenix, Arizona, to investigate these health hazards. Read more about [Dr. Glasscock's research here](#).

Key leadership searches underway

[Peter O'Donnell Jr. Data Science Institute \(DSI\) Director](#)

Today, the search committee met with our executive search firm, Isaacson Miller, to review the current slate of applicants and to assess what adjustments, if any, are needed to establish 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

Economics professor selected as a 2023 Minnie Stephens Piper Professor

Dr. Elizabeth Wheaton-Paramo, Senior Lecturer and Research Assistant Professor in Dedman School of Humanities and Sciences' Department of Economics, has been recognized as a [Minnie Stephens Piper Professor](#). The program, which began in 1985, awards \$5,000 to "professors for superior teaching at the college level. Selection is made on the basis of nominations submitted by each college or university in the state of Texas." Congratulations, Dr. Wheaton-Paramo, for this honor and on your impactful teaching and instruction.

Perkins School of Theology faculty member elected vice-president and president-elect of the American Theological Society

Dr. Ruben L. F. Habito was named Vice-President and President-elect of the [American Theological Society](#) (ATS) for 2024 during the society's April meeting at the Princeton Theological Seminary. The ATS was founded in 1912 and is the oldest theological association in the U.S. Membership is by nomination and election and is limited to 100 active members at any given time. Dr. Habito has been an elected member since 2015.

William F. May Endowed Director of the Cary M. Maguire Center for Ethics & Public Responsibility awarded Visiting Fellowship at Harvard University's Edmond & Lily Safra Center for Ethics

[The Edmond & Lily Safra Center for Ethics](#) at Harvard has awarded Dr. Rita Kirk, Professor in Meadows School of the Arts' Corporate Communications and Public Affairs and William F. May Endowed Director of the Maguire Ethics Center, a Visiting Fellowship for the 2023-2024 academic year. This fellowship will support her research project: Election Integrity and the Politics of Trust. Part of this research project will be conducted at SMU in coordination with the Bush Library. Other portions will be conducted at the Kennedy Library and through connections with other Harvard Fellows.

Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute (DCII) colloquia on *Healthcare and Human Flourishing* opening doors for collaboration with the McDonald Centre for Ethics at Oxford University

Dr. Dallas J. Gingles, Perkins Fellow in Systematic Theology; Dr. Robin Lovin, Cary M. Maguire University Professor *emeritus* of Ethics; and Dr. Rita Kirk, William F. May Endowed Director of the Cary M. Maguire Center for Ethics & Public Responsibility, convened a year-long, interdisciplinary discussion that used Oxford scholar Josh Hordern's book as a foundation for the work with DCII. In addition to bringing partners together from DFW area hospitals, Children's Hospital supported these discussions with a matching \$4,000 grant that brought Professor Hordern to Dallas for a public speech and a series of private member discussions. The Maguire Ethics Center plans to continue this work through next year. Additionally, Dr. Gingles' research will be presented, by invitation of the

McDonald Centre for Ethics at Oxford University, in late June. Dr. Kirk will accompany Dr. Gingles to meet with the Oxford team and discuss future collaborations.

Two Cox School of Business students named in “100 Best & Brightest Undergraduate Business Majors Of 2023” by Poets & Quants

Madeline Langley (BBA '23) and Raleigh Dewan (BBA '23) were named among the “100 Best & Brightest Undergraduate Business Majors of 2023” by Poets & Quants.

Langley serves as the chief of external affairs for the Boulevard Investment Group, and she's been an Honor Roll student with High Distinction for six consecutive semesters. [Learn more about Langley.](#)

Dewan is the founder of the startup company SteadiSpoon™ which recently won first place in the Cox Graduate Entrepreneurship Club's Startup Launch Competition. [Learn more about Dewan.](#)

Dewan and Langley were nominated for this honor by Jim Bryan, Associate Dean of the BBA Undergraduate Program.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth G. Lobo, PhD

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Southern Methodist University

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

World Changers Shaped Here