

Weekly Update | August 30, 2024

Provost and Senior 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, 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 submit your ideas through our story form via the button below. Suggestions received before noon on Tuesday will be reviewed and considered for publication in that week's Friday newsletter. Others will be held until the following week.

[Submit your story](#)

Previous newsletters are [available here](#).

Today's update falls into four categories: 1) Fall 2024, 2) Academic Excellence, 3) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 4) News and Noteworthy.

Fall 2024

Welcome back to campus

I am excited to welcome everyone back to campus as we start a new academic year. I hope you each had a rejuvenating summer and enjoyed diving back into the familiar patterns that accompany the fall semester.

The start of the academic year always has numerous announcements and reminders, and this year is no exception. I would like to draw your attention to a couple of important news items that have come out over the past two weeks.

Pedestrian and Driver Safety

The [SMU Police Department sent a message](#) on August 27, asking the SMU community to take note of important safety reminders when traversing campus.

They recommend getting to know campus and becoming familiar with crosswalks and traffic flow as well as staying alert whether walking or driving, especially along campus roadways. Make sure to always use

the designated crosswalks and look both ways when crossing. In turn, when driving, obey all traffic laws, yield the right of way to pedestrians and adhere to posted speed limits.

Remember, the use of privately-owned electric scooters and other personal mobility devices must follow [University policy](#).

Fostering a strong and positive campus community

With respect to our goals for inclusive excellence, I'd like to take this opportunity to remind everyone that we are in a presidential election year with heightened societal discourse and that this fall will also mark the one-year anniversary of the conflict between Israel and Hamas. In the spirit of our community, where every Mustang is valued, I encourage you to be welcoming to all our students, faculty and staff. In keeping with our core belief, that every Mustang is valued, Chief Diversity Officer Maria Dixon Hall [sent a message](#) to the SMU community on August 29, detailing ways we can all contribute to creating a welcoming atmosphere. Please read through the letter if you haven't already.

SMU President R. Gerald Turner announces transition plans for 2025

On August 27, [President R. Gerald Turner sent a letter](#) to the SMU community announcing his plans to end his presidency after the current academic year. President Turner will transition from the Presidency of SMU when the 11th President and CEO of SMU takes office, likely on June 1, 2025. At that time, with Board approval, President Turner will become President Emeritus of the University reporting to the President to continue full-time to support the development and external affairs of the University, including the *SMU Ignited* Campaign, as the new President and Board deem appropriate.

I would like to take a moment to personally thank President Turner, for all he has done for the University. It has been a privilege to serve this institution alongside him for the past four years as SMU continues to reach new heights in its academics, research and athletics. Over the course of his 30-year tenure, President Turner has led with exceptional commitment and vision, and his legacy will continue to inspire us as we seek to achieve, sustain and push past our aspirations for excellence.

Adjusted Schedule for BYU Game on September 6

On August 27, [President Turner sent a letter](#) to faculty and staff regarding an adjusted work schedule on September 6, 2024. Please read the letter if you have not already done so for additional details and instructions.

To relieve extra congestion on campus from the Friday night football game against BYU on September 6, regular employees who do *not* have game day-related duties are permitted to leave campus at 1 p.m. and, where feasible, finish their workday remotely.

Course instructors may have questions about college/school-specific academic continuity. For college/school-specific instruction questions please reach out to your unit's contact listed below.

1. Cox School of Business: *Grad programs*: Julie Maass, jmaass@smu.edu, 214-768-3537
2. Cox School of Business: *BBA Programs*: Jim Bryan, jbryan@smu.edu, 214-768-1322
3. Dedman College: Tom Carr, tcarr@smu.edu, 214-768-3460
4. Dedman School of Law: Christine Leatherberry, cleatherberry@smu.edu, 214-768-4670
5. Guildhall: Gary Brubaker garyb@smu.edu, 214-768-5143 or Mary Endsley mendsley@smu.edu, 214-768-5130
6. Lyle School of Engineering: Nancy Huff, nhuff@smu.edu, 214-768-6347 or Saraj Sedaghatzadeh, ssedaghatzadeh@smu.edu, 214-768-6766
7. Perkins School of Theology: Pam Goolsby, pgoolsby@smu.edu, 214-768-2251
8. Meadows School of the Arts: Gretchen Smith, gesmith@smu.edu, 214-768-2937
9. Simmons School of Education and Human Development: Francesca Go, fgo@smu.edu

Call for applications: 2024-2025 academic year Connect Faculty for Residential Commons

The Offices of Residence Life & Student Housing (RLSH) and Social Change and Intercultural Engagement (SCIE) within the Division of Student Affairs invite faculty members to apply for the role of [Connect Faculty in the Residential Commons](#) for the 2024-2025 academic year. The Connect Mentorship Program (affectionately known by students as "Connect") is a transformative, year-long initiative designed to empower and retain students of color at SMU.

The Connect Faculty meet monthly with 10-12 Connect Students who live in their affiliated Commons to provide support and champion their success. The role includes hosting monthly gatherings in the Commons, sharing valuable information and resources, helping students set and achieve their goals, and offering support as they navigate their college journey.

This rewarding role comes with a program budget, allowing faculty to create memorable experiences that make a difference, and \$2,000 in additional compensation. RLSH is looking for faculty passionate about student success and who want to get involved in the Residential Commons.

Questions about the program and interest in serving as Connect Faculty can be directed to Dr. Brittany Billar, director of Academic Initiatives in RLSH, at bbillar@smu.edu.

Fall 2024 General Faculty Meeting recap

Thank you to all faculty who were able to attend this week's fall General Faculty Meeting on Wednesday. We were grateful to Dr. David Sedman, Faculty Senate President, for providing an update on the Senate's plans, goals and priorities for the coming year. We look forward to partnering together with the Senate in support of SMU's academic mission. It was my honor with President Turner to present our most recently tenured and promoted faculty with their new regalia. Our faculty are central to SMU's ambitions, and those recognized during the faculty meeting represent the best of SMU across all our schools and colleges. Congratulations, again, to our newly promoted faculty.

Academic Excellence

Update: Cox School of Business dean search

On August 26 and 27, Jason Nance, chair of the Cox School of Business dean search committee and Judge James Noel Dean of the Dedman School of Law, representatives from Korn Ferry, our external search consultant, and I conducted listening and learning sessions with key stakeholders to inform the position description that will guide our search for the next Cox School of Business dean. We were able to engage a broad range of stakeholders including President Turner, the President's Executive Council (PEC), SMU's academic deans, associate provosts, Cox School of Business faculty and staff, along with Cox undergraduate and graduate students.

The search committee's initial fall meeting will occur on September 11, 2024.

Thank you to all the search committee members for agreeing to participate in this important search, and thank you to Jason P. Nance, Judge James Noel Dean of Dedman School of Law, for serving as the search committee chair.

We will continue to share updates regarding this search in upcoming newsletters.

Update: Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences dean search

The search for the next Elisabeth Martin Armstrong dean of Dedman College began in March and is now well underway. The search committee remained heavily engaged over the summer through weekly email updates on candidate outreach and applications. The committee reconvenes in early September to review the emerging candidate pool.

Thank you to the entire search committee for their service in this important search, and thank you to Robin Poston, dean of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies, for serving as the search committee chair.

We will continue to share updates on this search in upcoming newsletters.

Update: Perkins School of Theology dean search

On August 27 and 28, Peter Moore, chair of the Perkins School of Theology dean search committee and chair of Dedman College's Department of Mathematics, and representatives from [Storbeck Search](#) our external consultant, and I conducted listening and learning sessions with key Perkins stakeholders to inform the position description to guide our search for the next Perkins School of Theology dean. Participants included President Turner, the President's Executive Council (PEC), SMU deans from across campus, Perkins School of Theology faculty, staff and graduate students.

Virtual meetings with the Perkins Executive Board will be scheduled within the coming weeks.

Thank you to all the search committee members for agreeing to participate in this important search, and thank you to Peter Moore for serving as the search committee chair.

We will continue to share updates regarding this search in upcoming newsletters.

Expanded testing services and updated policies at the University Testing Center

The [University Testing Center](#) (UTC) is embarking on its third year of operation and is now in [phase three of its rollout](#). As part of phase three, the UTC expanded credit-by-exam offerings for SMU students and community members this summer and began supporting placement tests for chemistry, math, and second language courses. This fall, the UTC will offer limited make-up testing services to support faculty with test administration.

The UTC has also updated policies regarding test submissions and registrations. Course instructors must submit exams at least five business days in advance and upload testing documents to the UTC portal at least two business days in advance for test registration and submission. Students must register at least three business days before the test. This will allow us to serve the maximum number of students effectively and efficiently.

User videos and step-by-step instructions for using the UTC Portal are available for both [students](#) and [professors](#) on the [UTC website](#). UTC staff members are available for one-on-one consultations by appointment virtually or in person during UTC operating hours, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. weekdays.

Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

Simmons School of Education and Human Development-led research team awarded \$2.48 million grant from National Science Foundation

Quentin Sedlacek, professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning at the Simmons School of Education and Human Development, is leading a multi-university research team that recently received a \$2.48 million collaborative research grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF). The five-year grant, Amplifying Diverse Voices in STEM Education (ADVISE), will fund an SMU-led collaboration among nine colleges and universities to study the role that invited guest lecturers can play in promoting inclusivity and student success in undergraduate STEM education. [Learn more about the project here.](#)

Faculty in natural sciences, mathematical sciences, or engineering who might be interested in participating in the project can contact Dr. Sedlacek at qsedlacek@smu.edu.

The Scarlet Letter Musical by Dedman College of Humanities and Social Sciences faculty member to be featured in a concert presentation in New York City

New York City cabaret venue The Green Room 42 will host a concert of the new [The Scarlet Letter Musical](#) by Christine Hand Jones, lecturer in the Department of English at Dedman College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and her colleague Kenady Sean.

The concert will feature Ximone Rose (Death Becomes Her, Lempika) as Hester Prynne and Cara Rose DiPietro as Pearl, with additional cast to be announced. The performance is directed by Daniella Caggiano (Fun Home), with music direction by Halle Mitchell of an all-female band. The concert is produced by innovative national and international new theatre incubators Broadway DNA and MusicalWriters.com, connecting new work with regional and world premiere opportunities.

The performance is scheduled for September 6, 2024, at 7 p.m. EST, with a live stream available for those unable to attend in person. For tickets and additional information, visit [TheGreenRoom42](#).

News and Noteworthy

Dedman College of Humanities and Social Sciences professor receives Lenssen prize from American Association of Philosophy Teachers

Dr. Alida Liberman in the Department of Philosophy at Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences has been awarded the [Lenssen prize](#) from the [American Association of Philosophy Teachers](#) (AAPT) for their published work, "[In Defense of Doing Philosophy “Badly” or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Imperfection.](#)"

The Lenssen Prize is awarded to the best essay on the general theme of philosophy teaching that has appeared in the previous two calendar years before the AAPT biennial workshop-conference. Criteria used for evaluating essays include significance, impact, originality and quality of writing.

First Amendment Clinic at Dedman School of Law to receive prestigious James Madison Award

[The First Amendment Clinic](#) at the SMU Dedman School of Law will receive the prestigious [James Madison Award](#) for its work protecting the constitutional rights of free speech and free press.

The Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas bestows the award for outstanding commitment to the principles of the First Amendment and open government. The foundation will present the 2024 award at its state conference on September 13, in Austin, TX.

SMU's First Amendment Clinic focuses on First Amendment issues, including freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly and petition. The clinic assists journalists and others who need legal help to safeguard their First Amendment rights. It collaborates with private law firms in select cases and cooperates with other law school clinics across the country.

Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies kicks off fall semester with Resource Fair, Ice Cream Social and Graduate Program Representative Meetings

The Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies is welcoming graduate students and faculty who lead their programs back with a number of events.

On Friday, August 23, Moody School held a Graduate Resource Fair, with 27 offices that provide services and support to graduate students hosting tables in the Frances Anne Moody Hall Atrium. This annual event complements the Moody School's virtual orientation for graduate students who, along with inviting returning students and postdoctoral scholars, learn about resources available to them.

This afternoon, the Moody School held an Ice Cream Social for graduate students on the Moody Hall patio to welcome graduate students and postdocs back to campus with a refreshing treat. This event is part of a line-up of social activities organized by the Moody School throughout the year to foster a community of graduate students and postdocs across programs.

Yesterday and today, the Moody School held breakfast and lunch meetings with department chairs and directors of graduate studies for programs at Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, Lyle School of Engineering, Meadows School of the Arts, and Simmons School of Education and Human Development. These meetings serve to share information about the services and support offered by the Moody School and to thank faculty leaders with whom the Moody School works closely.

The Moody School will be holding more activities, events, and workshops for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars throughout the year. Information about upcoming events can be found on the [Moody School's website](#).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth G. Loba".

Elizabeth G. Loba, PhD
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
Southern Methodist University
<https://www.smu.edu/provost>

SMU