

## Weekly Update | December 13, 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 five categories: 1) Fall 2024, 2) Academic Excellence, 3) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 4) News and Noteworthy.

## Fall 2024

### Upcoming important dates for fall 2024 semester close-out

As most of you are undoubtedly aware, we are now on day two of exams, which are scheduled through December 18 (with the exception of Sunday). SMU's December graduation ceremonies will take place next weekend. Rotunda Recessional will occur on Friday, December 20, at 5 p.m., starting at the Flagpole on the Main Quadrangle. This is an important tradition for undergraduate students, signaling the end of their time as a student and the beginning of their membership in the SMU alumni family.

Concurrently, doctoral graduate students will participate in the Moody Doctoral Hooding Ceremony. More information on this new event, which has been a part of All-University Commencement, follows below.

The December Commencement is scheduled for Saturday, December 21, 2024, at 9 a.m., in Moody Coliseum. Richard Ware, II '68, a longtime member of SMU's Board of Trustees and a celebrated West

Texas banker, will be the featured speaker. Ware, who has been recognized with SMU's Distinguished Alumni and Mustang awards, has a legacy that includes a proud SMU family of graduates and generous contributions to SMU's growth and student life.

More information about [December ceremonies can be found here](#).

## **December's Commencement to introduce standalone Doctoral Hooding Ceremony**

Beginning this December, graduation ceremonies will include a new event: the Moody Doctoral Hooding Ceremony. On Friday, December 20, at 5:00 p.m., in the Frances Anne Moody Hall Auditorium, all graduating recipients of D.Eng., D.L.S., D.Min., D.P.M., Ed.D. and Ph.D. degrees will participate. During the ceremony, advisors and school/college deans will hood graduating doctoral students and Robin Poston, Dean of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies and I will preside over the event.

More information will be available on the [December Commencement website](#) and any questions can be directed to Alan Itkin, senior assistant dean for academic affairs, at [aitkin@smu.edu](mailto:aitkin@smu.edu).

## **Task Force for Promotion Guidelines for Interdisciplinary Scholarship**

On Monday, November 25, [I sent an invitation](#) to members of the SMU faculty to participate in a Task Force for Promotion and Tenure Guidelines for Interdisciplinary Scholarship. Research, creative scholarship, teaching, and service represent essential aspects of our institution's mission and impact that requires innovative and flexible standards for evaluating contributions across diverse fields. As we seek to build a framework that is fair, transparent, and reflective of the value and complexity of interdisciplinary work, faculty perspectives will be integral. Invited faculty have demonstrated expertise and dedication to advancing scholarship. See a [list of committee members here](#).

The Task Force will convene in mid-January 2025 and will meet twice monthly through the spring term to develop recommendations that will be presented to the deans, the Faculty Senate, the President's Executive Council and myself.

## **Reminder: Important change coming for logging on to SMU digital platforms**

SMU is changing its Single Sign-On (SSO) service to take advantage of new user conveniences and the latest security capabilities.

From now until December 26, everyone can log on to SMU systems with either their SMU ID (8-digit employee ID) or their NetID. For almost all users, your NetID is your SMU email address ([yourname@smu.edu](mailto:yourname@smu.edu)). OIT has created a new My Profile page, <https://myprofile.smu.edu>, where you can confirm your NetID.

On December 26, during winter break, SMU will transition to accepting only the NetID. We strongly encourage everyone to begin logging in with their NetID as soon as possible to get used to the upcoming change.

[More information is available here.](#)

# Academic Excellence

## **SMU in Four publishes Year-Three Progress Report**

The SMU in Four team has released its Year-Three Progress Report on [SMU's Quality Enhancement Plan](#).

The report includes updates on early-alert mechanisms, undergraduate academic advising, technology enhancements, and gateway and introductory courses. Key metrics, such as retention/graduation rates, and goals attained in year three of this five-year initiative, are also presented.

You can download the [SMU in Four Year-Three Progress Report here](#). Questions regarding the report or supporting presentation can be directed to [smuinfour@smu.edu](mailto:smuinfour@smu.edu).

## **The Office of Student Success and Retention to host 2023–2024 Exit and Leave of Absence Survey Results presentation**

Exit and Leave of Absence Surveys are SMU's student-oriented questionnaires that track external attrition, whether through a formal exit or for a Leave of Absence. These surveys support and assist SMU personnel in identifying key drivers of student satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and attrition. The Office of Student Success and Retention facilitates the collection, analysis, and dissemination of survey findings to the campus community.

Lisa Miller, director of Student Success and Retention, and Jay Guillory, success coach from Student Success and Retention, will discuss results from the 2023–2024 exit and leave of absence survey results on Monday, December 16, from 10–11 a.m. in Junkins Building, Room 112.

[RSVPs are encouraged](#); walk-ins are welcome. Student Success and Retention can also provide analysis relevant to your division, area, or office. Learn more about this [customized service here](#).

## **Celebrating academic success from the 2023–2024 academic year: SMU students receive external fellowship awards**

Last week, Robin Poston, Dean of Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies and associate provost for graduate education, and Rachel Ball-Phillips, director of graduate fellowships and awards, submitted an encouraging report on External Fellowship and Award Advising for graduate students. I am pleased to share some highlights.

Over the past three years, SMU has seen an 18% increase in total fellowship applications and a 48% increase in total fellowship awards. Additionally, through the establishment of the pilot incentives program in 2023, three SMU graduate students secured external awards equal to the internal funding dollars required to cover their stipends for the 2024-2025 academic year.

# Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

## Announcing Provost Research Fellowship award recipients

In the fall 2024 semester, the Office of the Provost, in conjunction with the Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer and the University Research Council, selected the recipients of the Provost Research Fellowship. This fellowship was open to current SMU tenured faculty nominated by their dean or the Faculty Senate, and nominations were evaluated based on the nominated faculty member's scholarly contributions over the past decade.

Join me in congratulating the following 2024–2025 Provost Research Fellows:

- Adam Jasienski – Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies, Art History, Meadows School of the Arts
- Christopher Roos – Professor, Department of Anthropology, Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences
- Julie Patterson Forrester Rogers – Professor of Law, Dedman School of Law

## Two articles by Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences professor to be reprinted by esteemed university presses and new article accepted for publication

Professor Pauline Newton, senior lecturer in the Department of English at Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences will have two articles reprinted in prestigious journals and has announced the upcoming publication of a third. Her 2014 article “Walking with Her Muse: An Interview with Shirley Geok-lin Lim” will be reprinted by the [University Press of Mississippi](#). Professor Newton's article “Collecting Seeds of Destiny in Li-Young Lee's The Wing Seed: A Remembrance” will be reprinted by [Cambridge Scholars Publishing](#). Additionally, her review of “The Postcolonial Millenium: New Directions in Malaysian Literature in English (eds. Grace V.S. Chin and Mohammad A. Quayum)” is forthcoming in the [Southeast Asian Review of English](#).

## News and Noteworthy

### Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences faculty member receives 2024 O'Brien Award

On December 4, the [Human Rights Educators USA](#) (HRE USA) named Dr. Rick Halperin, director of the SMU Human Rights Program, as the winner of its 2024 [O'Brien Award for Human Rights Education](#).

Established in 2015 and given annually in memory of Edward O'Brien, pioneer human rights educator, the O'Brien Human Rights Education Award seeks to honor outstanding contributions to human rights education in the United States. The 2024 award was presented to Dr. Halperin at HRE USA's Human Rights Day Celebration on Tuesday, December 10.

## **SMU Guildhall invites faculty and staff to the GameLab Annual Fall Expo on December 16**

Faculty and staff are invited to SMU Guildhall's annual "Bagel Day" celebration. This event celebrates the Guildhall's Team Game Production classes' completion of the latest round of Capstone and team game projects.

This year's event will recognize student games finished in the fall 2024 semester, including Cohort 33's Capstone games and Cohort 34's Team Game Production I tablet games.

Join Guildhall to celebrate, grab a bagel, and play the newly completed games on December 16, from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m., at Gerald J. Ford Hall, Room 201. [Please RSVP here](#) if you are planning to attend.

## **SMU Western Christmas Revue with the Light Crust Doughboys on December 19**

Join SMU Libraries on December 19, at 7 p.m. in Perkins Chapel for the SMU Western Christmas Revue with the Light Crust Doughboys. The concert will be followed by a reception at Bridwell Library in the Gill Hall and Blue Room.

The concert is free and open to the public with free parking provided on Bishop Blvd. [You may RSVP here.](#)

Sincerely,



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

