

Weekly Update | January 26, 2024

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, 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](#). 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. Previous newsletters are available [here](#).

Today's update falls into five categories: 1) Spring 2024, 2) Academic Excellence, 3) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, 4) Inclusive Excellence, and 5) News and Noteworthy.

Spring 2024

Elisabeth Martin Armstrong Dean of Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences to conclude his service after 10 years

On Monday, January 22, [I sent a message](#) to the University announcing Thomas DiPiero, the inaugural Elisabeth Martin Armstrong Dean and Professor of World Languages and Literatures and English in the Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, had informed me of his intention to conclude his service as dean at the end of his second, five-year term, effective May 31, 2024. Tom's presence on campus, and within my leadership team, will be sorely missed.

I will begin meeting immediately with Dedman College faculty, executive board members, staff and students to inform my decision both on an interim dean and the composition of the search committee for the next permanent dean, both of which I hope to announce in the coming weeks.

In the interim, please join me in thanking Tom for his 10 years of service and congratulating him on a phenomenal career!

Executive Board Meeting recap

This week, I provided academic affairs updates during both the SMU-in-Taos Executive Board and the Cox School of Business Executive Board meetings.

Cox Executive Board

For the Cox Executive Board meeting this morning, my remarks covered three topics. I began by highlighting the SMU-led Texoma Semiconductor Tech Hub. I then presented data on the University's projected return by fall 2024 to near-record high full-time faculty counts. I concluded with the news that Thomas DiPiero, the inaugural Elisabeth Martin Armstrong Dean and Professor of World Languages and Literatures and English in the Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, plans to conclude his service effective May 31, 2024.

Taos Executive Board

In Thursday's Executive Board meeting, my remarks were a condensed version of those shared with the Cox Executive Board.

Nominations for the Hilltop Excellence Awards are now open

On Wednesday, January 17, the Division of Student Affairs [sent a message](#) regarding the [Hilltop Excellence Awards](#), SMU's most prestigious awards ceremony. These awards are distributed annually to recognize the outstanding accomplishments of SMU students, faculty, and staff. Awards include the "M" Award - the highest recognition bestowed upon a Mustang, the Presidential Awards of Excellence - Scholar Athlete, Leader, Volunteer, and more.

[Nominations for the Hilltop Excellence Awards must be submitted](#) by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, February 4, 2024.

Call for published works: Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute (DCII) Book Fest

The Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute (DCII) Book Fest is a celebration of all books published during the previous calendar year (2023) by SMU faculty and staff across all schools, colleges, and departments, and is co-sponsored by Dedman College and the Godbey Lecture Series.

If you are an author of a book published in 2023 (data on the copyright page inside the book), please submit your book's information through the [DCII Book Fest Submission Form](#) by Friday, March 1. All book submissions will be purchased to display at the Book Fest.

There will be a celebratory reception for the DCII Book Fest honorees on Wednesday, May 1, from 4-5 p.m. in the rotunda of Dallas Hall. Throughout this reception, attendees will participate in drawings and the winners will receive signed copies of the books written by SMU community members. Be on the lookout for further information on Book Fest and reception details from DCII.

Call for nominations: 2024 Public Scholar Lecture

The Cary M. Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility is excited to announce a call for nominations to select the 2024 Public Scholar Lecturer. The [Public Scholar Lecture](#) serves to honor an exceptional SMU faculty member whose research provokes ethical questions and demands public discourse. The selected faculty member will receive a \$750 research stipend and will be invited to present a public lecture on their insights and discoveries.

To learn more about the nomination process, or to nominate yourself or a colleague, please [submit your nomination here](#) by Friday, February 2.

Contact the Maguire Ethics Center at maguire_ethics@smu.edu with any questions.

Academic Excellence

Bridwell Library receives Lilly Endowment Planning Grant for its *Religious and Cultural Institutions Initiative*

SMU has been awarded a \$100,000 planning grant by the [Lilly Endowment, Inc.](#) for the *Religious and Cultural Institutions Initiative* at Bridwell Library. The planning grant will be used to evaluate and propose the best use of space for Bridwell's cultural artifacts and collections as well as update its exhibition technologies (lighting, designs, digital signage, cases, etc.).

Over the next year, this planning grant will be utilized to create and write the full-grant proposal, which is due at the end of 2024. If awarded, this project could receive up to \$2.5 million.

University Testing Center updates

The [University Testing Center](#) (UTC) has completed its first operation phase since opening in August 2022. Beginning this summer, the UTC will expand services to include standard academic make-up testing, fee-based testing for non-SMU students in the local community and credit-by-exam testing (CLEP) for some SMU courses.

Scheduling testing appointments

Testing at the UTC is done by appointment on weekdays between 8:30 and 3:30 p.m. with extended hours during final exams. Appointments must be made at least 48 business hours before classroom testing dates, using the UTC Portal at <http://www.smu.edu/utcportal>.

The UTC Portal's updated exam submission process allows professors to determine when eligible students can test at the UTC, automatically upload tests by course name and section number, and retrieve completed tests with proctoring documentation. The UTC, located in the basement of Clements Hall, invites faculty to tour the facility, meet the staff and have a one-on-one consultation to make the testing experience easier for you and your students. Reach out to the UTC staff with any questions at universitytestingcenter@smu.edu.

Scantron Exam processing at the University Testing Center ends May 10

UTC scanning and reporting service for exams utilizing Scantrons will end after AY 2023-2024. Official announcements will be sent periodically to faculty users through various channels so they may prepare for alternative assessment methods.

Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

SMU hosts Texoma Semiconductor Tech Hub proposal review with guests from local and national government

Yesterday, Thursday, January 25, in SMU's Frances Anne Moody Hall Auditorium, President Turner; Dr. Suku Nair, Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer; Bobby B. Lyle, member of SMU's Board of Trustees; and I along with members from the SMU-led Texoma Semiconductor Tech Hub consortium joined together to meet with congressional representatives to preview the team's in-flight proposals. As a reminder, tech hub proposals are due by February 29, 2024, to compete for up to \$75 million in federal funding this fiscal year.

Thursday's meeting follows an event that the [Texoma Semiconductor Tech Hub consortium convened at Austin College](#) to review and refine their proposals.

Thank you to everyone who has participated in the consortium. Our outstanding progress to date would not be possible without your contributions and support. Further information about the proposals will be included in future newsletters.

Lyle School of Engineering faculty member selected for the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Faculty Early Career Development Program (CAREER) award

Professor Digvijay Boob from the Department of Operations Research & Engineering Management at Lyle School of Engineering has been selected by the [National Science Foundation](#) to receive a [Faculty Early Career Development Program \(CAREER\)](#) award. The CAREER award is one of the NSF's most prestigious awards to support "early-career faculty who have the potential to serve as academic role models in research and education and to lead advances in the mission of their department or organization."

The nearly \$600,000 grant will fund Professor Boob's project "Foundations of semi-infinite and equilibrium constrained optimization." [Read the abstract here.](#)

Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies announces Research and Innovation Week dates

Research and Innovation Week gives SMU the opportunity to showcase some of the most exciting research being done by our undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty. Members of the SMU community and the public are invited to join and learn about the groundbreaking research taking place on our campus.

This year, Research and Innovation Week will take place on April 1-5, 2024.

Learn about the events scheduled for [Research and Innovation Week here.](#)

SMU, University of Houston and University of Arkansas engineering team receives National Science Foundation (NSF) grant

SMU professor Harsha Gangammanavar from the Department of Operations Research & Engineering Management at Lyle School of Engineering has partnered with Yisha Xiang from the University of Houston and Wenchao Zhou from the University of Arkansas to acquire a \$505,785 grant from the [National Science Foundation](#) (NSF).

The grant will support the researchers as they pursue their project "Integrated Framework for Cooperative 3D Printing: Uncertainty Quantification, Decision Models, and Algorithms." [Read the abstract here.](#)

SMU's Hughes Fellow in Creative Writing's poem published by prestigious national journal

Hughes Fellow in Creative Writing, [Samyak Shertok](#), in Dedman College's Department of English, is having his poem "[A Blessing](#)" published in [Poetry](#), one of the leading monthly poetry journals in the English-speaking world.

To receive publication in the highly selective, >100-year-old journal, writers and poets submit work through a series of three increasingly critical editorial rounds. The journal touts a publication rate of approximately one percent, earning its reputation as one of the most selective in academia.

Inclusive Excellence

Engage Dallas launches spring book club

SMU's [Engage Dallas](#) program is launching the [Engage Dallas Book Club](#) starting this February with the book *Paved the Way* by Collin Yarbrough. Sign up for the book club and [learn more about meeting times here](#).

Engage Dallas is a place-based community engagement initiative via SMU's Residential Commons to address community needs within South and West Dallas. The initiative is a long-term, university-wide commitment led by students to partner with residents, organizations, and other leaders to positively impact the community.

The Engage Dallas Book Club is an opportunity to further the dialogue and learning that our campus and community partners have been having over the last year.

News and Noteworthy

William F. May Endowed Director of the Cary M. Maguire Center for Ethics & Public Responsibility selected as evaluator by the National Science Foundation (NSF)

Dr. Rita Kirk, William F. May Endowed Director of the Cary M. Maguire Center for Ethics & Public Responsibility and Professor in the Meadow's School of the Arts' division of Corporate Communication and Public Affairs, has been selected as an evaluator by the [National Science Foundation](#) (NSF). She has been tapped to serve as a reviewer for the "[Democracy, Governance, and Trust](#)" (DGT) initiative of the [Trans-Atlantic Platform for Humanities and Social Sciences](#) (T-AP). The [National Endowment for the Humanities](#) and the National Science Foundation represent the United States in this exciting and dynamic collaboration between countries in Africa, Europe, and North and South America. The purpose of the DGT initiative is to support the very best international collaborations in the humanities and social sciences that examine some aspect(s) of democracy, governance, and trust.

Meadows School of the Arts professor has latest work on exhibit in Philadelphia's Mütter Museum

Meadows School of the Arts' Division of Advertising Willie Baronet's latest work, created in partnership with photographer Leah den Bok, is currently in exhibition at the College of Physicians of

Philadelphia's [Mütter Museum](#). The exhibit, *Unhoused: Personal Stories and Public Health*, is on display through August 5, 2024, in the Thomson Gallery.

This is the second time the two artists have collaborated on an exhibition, the first occurring [at SMU this past fall](#). Their new exhibit has received significant local media coverage including articles in [The Philadelphia Tribune](#), [The Philadelphia Inquirer](#) and [WHYY](#), along with a television news spot on [ABC 6 Action News](#).

SMU Continuing and Professional Education (CAPE) announces launch of Tech CxO Excellence Certificate

Continuing and Professional Education (CAPE) is excited to announce the February launch of the [Tech CxO Excellence Program](#), a partnership between CAPE and Tech [CxO Launch Pad](#). This unique program is taught by industry experts who are, or have served, in prominent roles from CIOs to CTOs, offering unparalleled insights and real-world experiences. Designed to empower aspiring and current technology leaders, the program covers a comprehensive curriculum in leadership, cybersecurity, financial planning, and performance management. Participants will embark on a transformative journey guided by seasoned industry experts, gaining the skills and knowledge needed to excel in technology leadership roles. The program, set to commence on February 8, promises a dynamic and forward-thinking approach to tech leadership education.

Lyle School of Engineering alumnus conducts innovative research for neurological conditions at UT Southwestern Medical Center

David Wang, a Lyle School graduate in electrical engineering, is formulating breakthrough innovations in understanding brain-specific disorders. During his time at SMU, Wang collaborated with Dr. Brad Lega of UT Southwestern Medical Center (UTSW), focusing on electrical brain stimulation for memory improvement. Now, as a clinical research manager at UTSW, Wang works in the neurosurgery department using deep brain stimulation to develop implantable brain devices targeting disorders such as memory loss and epilepsy. Read more about David Wang's research [here](#).

Sincerely,



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

SMU.

World Changers Shaped Here