

Weekly Update | May 31, 2024

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dear Faculty and Staff,

I hope you are having a restful and productive summer. Whether you are teaching, conducting research, or preparing exhibits or performances, your contributions are greatly appreciated and valued in our quest for even greater academic quality. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to SMU's academic mission.

As mentioned in the [final Weekly](#) of the spring 2024 semester, I plan to send these updates twice during June and July and once in August prior to the start of the fall semester. If you have suggestions for what we should include in future communications, please [submit your ideas through this form](#). Previous newsletters are available [here](#).

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

Summer 2024

Tuesday's inclement weather

Texas' infamous summer weather has already delivered a round of hazardous storms to our region. While SMU thankfully did not have to shut down campus operations this week, I would still like to take this opportunity to remind you of [SMU's adverse and inclement weather policy](#). This policy was informed by a faculty and academic staff working group in 2023, resulting in an improved process and communication plan for faculty, staff and students.

As a reminder, please check [SMU Aware](#) for operational updates as well as the latest weather information. Thank you for your resilience and flexibility in the midst of challenging situations.

Linda Wertheimer Hart and Milledge (Mitch) A. Hart III endow leadership positions at SMU's Center for Presidential History

The directorship of [SMU's Center for Presidential History](#) is being named in honor of David Gergen, whose long career includes service as a prominent journalist, advisor to four presidents, educator and political analyst.

The endowment for the David Gergen Director of the SMU Center for Presidential History has been made possible through a [\\$1 million gift to SMU from longtime University benefactors Linda Wertheimer Hart '65 and Milledge \(Mitch\) A. Hart III](#).

Gergen has a long-standing relationship with SMU, having served on 27 occasions as a featured moderator at the University's [Willis M. Tate Distinguished Lecture Series](#) for which the Harts are sponsors.

New Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) announced

Join us in welcoming Constantin Icleanu, Senior Lecturer of Spanish in Dedman College's Department of World Languages and Literatures, as the incoming CTE Director beginning June 1. His appointment as CTE Director follows a three-year term by Karen Thomas, who is transitioning into her new role as associate dean of inclusive excellence at the Meadows School of the Arts. We are grateful for Karen's leadership and look forward to collaborating with Constantin in the years ahead. For more information, please reach out to cte@smu.edu.

Academic Excellence

Student Academic Engagement and Success to host feedback and listening sessions to refine Celebration of Excellence week activities

Student Academic Engagement and Success (SAES) has scheduled three feedback and listening sessions, the first of which took place last week, to gather feedback from faculty and other campus partners about refining SMU's Celebration of Excellence Week activities, including Honors Convocation. In the spirit of continuous improvement, SAES invites SMU faculty and staff who have been involved in these important year-end academic activities to share their perspectives on the successes and challenges of these events.

The components of SMU's Celebration of Excellence Week are meant to provide our students opportunities for celebration and tradition, and SAES values your input to ensure that they maximize impact for all participants. SAES wishes to thank everyone involved in supporting these significant events and is especially grateful to those who are able to attend one of the remaining two sessions (details and registration below).

Session Two: Zoom

Date: June 13

Time: 3:30–4:30 p.m.

[Registration link for session two](#)

Session Three: Zoom

Date: July 25

Time: 11 a.m.–12 p.m.

[Registration link for session three](#)

Expanded College-level Examination Program (CLEP) Testing now available at University Testing Center

The [University Testing Center](#) is pleased to offer expanded College Level Examination Program (CLEP) testing beginning June 2024.

Testing is available by appointment to any SMU student or community member seeking academic credit for previous academic work. At SMU course credit is awarded when a student achieves a score of 60 points or above (out of 80 possible points).

For a list of the 2024-2025 CLEP exams accepted, instructions on signing up for testing, and receiving scores, reference the [SAES CLEP test blog post here](#).

Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

SMU researchers combine two therapeutic approaches to improve students' positive moods and ease negative moods

With depression rates rising among young people on university campuses, a team of SMU researchers, Alicia Meuret, professor and director of the Anxiety and Depression Research Center at SMU; Divya Kumar, former SMU doctoral student in clinical psychology and current postdoctoral fellow at Harvard/McLean Hospital; Sarah Corner, SMU doctoral student in clinical psychology; and Richard Kim, SMU data scientist, have been investigating effective treatments. The team found that combining two different therapeutic approaches demonstrated effectiveness in improving students' overall mental health. Combining behavioral activation therapy augmented with savoring helped students experience improvements in both positive and negative moods. Behavioral activation is a therapeutic approach that alleviates depression by increasing engagement in meaningful activities while savoring focuses on increasing one's capacity to cultivate enjoyable experiences.

Their study, entitled "[A randomized controlled trial of brief behavioral activation plus savoring for positive affect dysregulation in university students](#)," was published in the *Behavior Research and Therapy* journal.

Moody Graduate School announces fellowship winners

The Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies' [Fellowships Office](#) would like to recognize SMU's recently-announced recipients of prestigious national and international fellowships.

Fulbright Awards

[Fulbright Scholarships](#) are funded by the U.S. Department of State to "expand perspectives through academic and professional advancement and cross-cultural dialogue." This year, two SMU graduate students were awarded prestigious Fulbright Research Scholarships, and one SMU graduate student was named an alternate for the Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship.

Jasmine Carty is a recent graduate of the M.S. in Counseling program at Simmons School of Education and Human Development and will use this award to conduct a research project titled "Identity Development, Migration, and Mental Health" through an affiliation with the University of Luxembourg.

Jennifer Laffick, an art history Ph.D. student at Meadows School of the Arts, received the Université Grenoble Alpes award to conduct research for her dissertation "Neoclassicism's Atlantic Currents: French Painting and Power in the Early 19th Century."

Austin Miller is a Ph.D. student in the William P. Clements Department of History at Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences and was named an alternate for the Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in Norway.

NSF-Graduate Research Fellowship

The [NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program](#) (NSF-GRFP) is a highly competitive national program that aims to ensure the quality, vitality, and diversity of the United States' scientific and engineering workforce. The five-year fellowship program's goal is to broaden the participation of the full spectrum of diverse talents in STEM by providing three years of financial support.

This year, Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences' Department of Anthropology Ph.D. student and Moody Graduate Fellow, Erik Schlicht, was awarded the NSF-GRFP for his research on the relationship between land use and wildfires in the American West.

Philanthropic Educational Organization (PEO) Scholar Award

The [PEO Scholar Awards](#) were established in 1991 to provide substantial merit-based awards for women in the U.S. and Canada pursuing a doctoral degree.

Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences' Department of Anthropology Ph.D. student Nicolette Edwards was awarded a PEO Scholar Award to complete her dissertation "Investigating Women's Provisioning Efforts in the Ethnoarchaeological Record of Central African Forest Foragers."

PEO International Peace Scholarships

The [PEO International Peace Scholarship](#) was established in 1949 to provide scholarships for women from other countries to pursue graduate studies in the U.S. International Peace Scholarship recipients carry the spirit of PEO back to their home countries where the degrees they have earned will positively impact lives around the globe. This year, two SMU international graduate students received this award.

Linda Mishell Jaramillo Urrega is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Lyle School of Engineering and was awarded an International Peace Scholarship to support her research on using knowledge-based community engagement to assist women in artisanal mining communities in Colombia with a focus on environmental priorities.

Yang Liu, a Ph.D. student in the Department of Anthropology at Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, was awarded an International Peace Scholarship to support her medical and psychological anthropology research on post-partum depression in urban China.

Graduate students interested in applying for external fellowships, scholarships, and grants, should contact Dr. Rachel Ball-Phillips, director of graduate fellowships and awards at the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies, at rmball@smu.edu.

Lyle School of Engineering professor emeritus published in quarterly scientific journal

Professor Emeritus Frederick R. Chang from the Department of Computer Science at Lyle School of Engineering recently [published an article](#) in the quarterly journal *Issues in Science and Technology* about the awareness and limitations of generative AI tools. *Issues in Science and Technology* is published by the [National Academy of Sciences](#) in conjunction with Arizona State University and “is a forum for discussion of public policy related to science and technology.”

Inclusive Excellence

Second AAPI Voices in Higher Education Annual Symposium held at SMU

The Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute’s (DCII) Asian Studies and Asian American Experiences Research Cluster organized the second [Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander Voices in Higher Education Annual Symposium](#) on April 16, 2024, on SMU’s main campus. The event was led by Professor Piyawan Charoensap-Kelly from the Division of Corporate Communication and Public Affairs at Meadows School of the Arts, Professor LaiYee Leong from the Department of Political Science at Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, and Rachel Ball-Phillips Ph.D., director of graduate fellowships and awards at the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies.

The symposium brought together an interdisciplinary group of scholars nationwide to discuss this year’s theme: community building and resilience. During the event, participants discussed current issues and new research findings pertinent to the AAPI community in higher education to promote inclusion, empowerment, and solidarity among AAPI individuals and their allies. This event was part of the AAPI Heritage Month celebration at SMU, attracting over 130 faculty, staff, and students from SMU and nearby colleges and community members from the DFW area. Attendees provided highly positive feedback during and after the event with recurring comments, such as “thought-provoking,” “informative,” “inspiring,” and that the event “created solidarity on our campus and the greater North Texas community.”

The symposium was made possible through the generous support of DCII, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI), the Asian Studies Program, the Center for Teaching Excellence, and the Women and LGBT Center. SMU’s Asian Council students also rendered invaluable assistance. Photos from the symposium are available [here](#).

News and Noteworthy

Lyle School of Engineering Dean leads AI panels at American Society for Engineering Education’s (ASEE) Engineering Deans Institute (EDI)

Mary and Richard Templeton Dean of Lyle School of Engineering, Nader Jalili, served as a lead organizer for [several sessions](#) of this year’s [ASEE symposium](#), held on April 14-16 in San Diego, CA. Dean Jalili led discussions on navigating the impact and future trends of AI in higher education and how AI can bridge academic research and industry expectations. Learn more about [this year’s ASEE, including key take-aways, here](#).

DCII hosted Energy, Environment, and Natural Resources Colloquium

Monika Ehrman, professor at Dedman School of Law; Alex Chase, assistant professor in the Roy M. Huffington Department of Earth Sciences at Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences; James Coleman, professor at Dedman School of Law; and Chris Hill, adjunct professor at Lyle School of Engineering, co-chaired the [SMU Energy, Environment, and Natural Resources Colloquium](#) on May 3, 2024, in Frances Anne Moody Hall. This day-long event brought together a dynamic blend of experts from law, engineering, earth sciences, humanities, and business fields to discuss pressing issues in environmental justice, sustainable technologies, natural resource investigation and management.

Generously sponsored by the DCII, the Colloquium was the final event in the DCII's Big Challenge Series, which focused on climate resilience and united two DCII Research Clusters, "Energy & Environmental Systems" and "Subsurface Resources," primarily led by Monika Ehrman and Alex Chase. This colloquium was a focal point for interdisciplinary collaboration, attracting 70 professionals, academics, and students interested in the complexities involved in energy production, natural sciences, resource management, environmental justice and policy. The event concluded with a series of lightning round presentations by graduate students from Lyle School of Engineering, Dedman School of Law, and Dedman College's Roy M. Huffington Department of Earth Sciences, showcasing their research on topics ranging from methane detection to the socio-economic impacts of resource extraction.

Sincerely,



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

