

## Weekly Update | November 1, 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, 4) Inclusive Excellence, and 5) News and Noteworthy.

## Fall 2024

### **In-person interviews begin next week with Dedman College Elisabeth Martin Armstrong Dean finalists**

The Dedman College Dean Search Committee and I completed first-round interviews last week with 10 outstanding candidates. To remain competitive with other high-profile universities pursuing some of the individuals in our finalist pool, we have made the decision to accelerate our search timeline. We will begin the on-campus interview process next week and conclude by Monday, November 11.

Earlier this week, I sent an [email to Dedman College faculty and staff](#) with information on how to participate in the Vision Talks to be offered by each of the Dedman College dean finalists between Monday, November 4, and Monday, November 11. Thank you Dedman College colleagues in advance for attending as many of these meetings as possible.

## **SMU to serve as voting location on November 5**

On Tuesday, November 5, the Hughes-Trigg Student Center will serve as a community voting location for the 2024 presidential election. This on-campus polling station will be available from 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. in Hughes-Trigg Ballrooms A and B.

Also on election day, SMU's Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility will host a voter information table in the Hughes-Trigg Student Center for anyone who has questions about the voting process. They will provide sample ballots, nonpartisan resources, "I voted" stickers and opportunities for student voters to share what they hope to see from the presidency over the next four years.

For information on the Dallas County Elections Department's voting requirements, visit [here](#).

## **2024 Holiday Message from the Provost and the Senior Vice President for Student Affairs**

On Tuesday, October 29, Senior Vice President for Student Affairs, K.C. Mmeje, and I [sent a message](#) about resources available to the SMU community to support navigating the challenging emotions and stressors that can arise during the holiday season.

[Please read the message](#) if you have not already done so to learn more about the on-campus resources SMU provides. We ask each of you to be mindful of signs of stress in yourself and those around you, and reach out or encourage others in need of support to reach out for support to utilize these resources.

Best wishes for a happy and productive holiday season.

## **Homecoming 2024**

Each year during Homecoming, SMU welcomes former and future generations of Mustangs to campus to join our on-campus community in a time of celebration. Homecoming events have taken place across campus this week – undoubtedly you have seen the painted wooden Perunas on the Dallas Hall Lawn that welcome the Homecoming season – and they will continue through the weekend.

During this time, as alumni return to the Hilltop, families come to visit their students and our community gathers on campus for camaraderie or to witness SMU's first ACC Homecoming football game, it is possible that traffic will be heavier than normal or that some of our visitors may struggle to locate buildings. Please be patient and kind to everyone throughout this week and help where you can.

Event highlights will include game day on Saturday, November 2, with the Homecoming parade at 4 p.m. and football game kick-off against Pittsburgh at 7 p.m. For additional schedule and event information, click here for [student-centered activities](#) and here for [alumni-centered activities](#).

Pony up!

## **Provost monthly lunch at the Commons Table next week**

On Monday, November 4, from 12–1 p.m., I will be having lunch in the Faculty-Staff Dining Room located in Umphrey Lee. The "Commons Table," created by the Faculty Senate and the Faculty Club, is designed for community members who come to meals by themselves or in small groups and wish to socialize with others to promote faculty and staff community. I look forward to seeing you there and hope you will join me for a relaxed lunch and conversation.

## Academic Excellence

### **Academic Development for Student-Athletes (ADSA) requesting academic feedback to support student-athletes**

The Academic Development of Student-Athletes (ADSA) program is committed to working with faculty to ensure student-athlete success at SMU. Twice each semester, ADSA solicits feedback from instructors to align with key academic milestones such as Early Progress Reports (EPRs), Mid-Term Progress Reports (MPRs), and the final withdrawal deadline.

On Monday, November 4, a feedback request will be sent to instructors who have current student-athletes enrolled in their classes. The feedback request will come directly from [ADSA@smu.edu](mailto:ADSA@smu.edu). Feedback sent to ADSA helps the team provide individualized early intervention and support for student-athletes who are facing academic challenges.

Thank you for your continued partnership in supporting student-athlete success.

## Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

### **New SMU faculty member at Lyle School of Engineering and colleagues publish study in Nature Sustainability journal**

Recently arrived Lyle School of Engineering faculty member, Donghai Wang, Brown Foundation Chair in Mechanical Engineering and Professor of Mechanical Engineering, in partnership with colleagues at The Pennsylvania State University, has had a [study published](#) in *Nature Sustainability*.

The research team found a way to make lithium-sulfur (Li-S) batteries last longer and operate with higher energy than existing renewable batteries. They made this advance by preventing Li-S batteries from producing an unwanted side effect known as polysulfide dissolution that appears over time, shortening their lifespan.

Learn more about the [collaborative research project here](#).

### **Lyle School of Engineering professor and multidisciplinary team of researchers receive National Science Foundation (NSF) grant to improve weather safety**

Professor Barbara Minsker, Bobby B. Lyle Endowed Professor of Leadership and Global Entrepreneurship in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Lyle School of Engineering, and a multidisciplinary team of researchers from the University of Massachusetts, Texas Tech University, The University of Texas Arlington, and The University of Oklahoma along with personnel from the National Severe Storms Laboratory and the National Center for Atmospheric Research have received a [National Science Foundation](#) (NSF) Planning Grant to revolutionize how weather warnings are issued in the U.S. in an effort to improve community safety.

The research team looks to shift weather warnings from a broad meteorological focus to a more personalized, human-centered approach. Their project will work toward creating a system that can deliver personalized weather warnings, starting with flash floods.

[Learn more about this impactful research project here.](#)

### **Robert C. Womack Endowed Chair in Engineering recognized as Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry**

Faculty member MinJun Kim, Robert C. Womack Chair in Engineering and professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering at the Lyle School of Engineering, has been recognized as a Fellow of the [Royal Society of Chemistry](#).

This award recognizes Professor Kim's respect from his international colleagues in the field and his impact on the field of chemical science. Being a Fellow will also open new avenues for collaboration and growth within an international network of professionals.

Congratulations, Professor Kim.

## **Inclusive Excellence**

### **Perkins School of Theology professor awarded Excellence in Interfaith Relations Award**

Faculty member Robert Hunt, professor of Christian mission and interreligious relations and director of global theological education, was recently [honored by the Islamic Society of North America \(ISNA\)](#) with the Excellence in Interfaith Relations Award.

In bestowing the award, ISNA leaders cited Professor Hunt's work promoting interfaith relations through many years as a participant in international dialogue events, helping organize and lead Faiths in Conversation dialogue groups, engaging Perkins School of Theology students in interfaith dialogue, and working with the [Thanks-Giving Foundation and its Interfaith Council](#).

Congratulations to Professor Hunt on this well-deserved recognition and thank you for your service to the community.

### **Lyle School of Engineering professor receives prestigious 2024 award from INFORMS Society**

Sila Çetinkaya, Cecil H. Green Professor of Engineering and department chair of Operations Research and Engineering Management at Lyle School of Engineering was awarded the [2024 Award for the Advancement of Women in Operations Research and Management Science in Academia](#) from [INFORMS](#).

The award was presented at the 2024 [INFORMS annual meeting](#) in Seattle, WA on Sunday, October 20, in recognition of Professor Çetinkaya's significant contribution to the advancement and recognition of women in the field of Operations Research and Management Science.

Congratulations to Professor Çetinkaya on this recognition.

## News and Noteworthy

### Technology-Enhanced Instruction and Learning (TEIL) Research Cluster hosting seminar on bridging the gap between AI and collaborators

Professor Corey Clark, deputy director of Guildhall and professor in the Department of Computer Science at Lyle School of Engineering, will be discussing his innovative research at the [Technology-Enhanced Immersive Learning](#) (TEIL) Research Cluster's upcoming seminar. His presentation, "Bridging the Gap in AI: From Language Models to Intelligent Collaborators" will take place on November 8, 12–1 p.m. in the Frances Anne Moody Hall Auditorium. Lunch will be available for participants before the presentation from 11:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

The TEIL seminar series lectures are designed to be interactive and engaging for SMU faculty, staff, and students, fostering new insights and collaborations in innovative research on technology-enhanced immersive learning and development.

### Lyle School of Engineering's Center for Digital and Human Augmented Manufacturing now open

Lyle School of Engineering is hosting the grand opening of its new [Center for Digital and Human Augmented Manufacturing](#), today, November 1.

The [5,000-square-foot center](#) will explore how digital modeling, simulations, augmented reality, robotics, automation, and artificial intelligence will shape the future of engineering and Industry 4.0. Combining academia with industry partnerships, SMU will be able to take pioneering strides in the realms of digital innovation.

Take a look at the new center and learn from Lyle School faculty, staff and students about its [innovative plans here](#).

### Meadows School of the Arts celebrates Barbara Hill Moore

Meadows School of the Arts invites the SMU campus community to join them in celebration of Professor Barbara Hill Moore's 50 years at SMU. The event "A Grand Night for Singing: Celebrating 50 Years of Music, Mentorship, and Mustangs" is a free concert to be held on Friday, November 8 at 7:30 p.m. in Caruth Auditorium.

[RSVP for this black-tie affair here.](#)

### Department of English's Project Poëtica hosting inaugural Artist in Residence for reading and weeklong residency

On Monday, November 4, Erika Meitner, [Project Poëtica](#) Inaugural Artist in Residence, will present a public reading of recent work and sign copies of her latest book, *Useful Junk*, at the Bridwell Library at 4 p.m. The event is free and open to all; Meitner's latest book will be available for purchase. You may [register for the event here](#).

Erika Meitner is the author of six books of poems, including *Ideal Cities* (HarperCollins, 2010), which was a 2009 National Poetry series winner; *Copia* (BOA Editions, 2014); *Holy Moly Carry Me* (BOA Editions, 2018), which won the 2018 National Jewish Book Award in Poetry, and was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award; and *Useful Junk* (BOA Editions, 2022). Meitner's poems have been

anthologized widely, and have appeared in publications including *The New Yorker*, *Oxford American*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *The New Republic*, *Poetry*, *Orion*, *The Believer* and elsewhere.

### **SMU hosted leading technologist and visionary for a presentation on the intersection of education and AI**

Last Friday, October 25, Dave Copps, CEO of [Worlds.io](https://www.worlds.io), came to SMU to deliver his presentation "Educating for Tomorrow: Harnessing Human Potential in the Age of Artificial Intelligence." This was a unique and rare opportunity, especially for those interested in the intersection of AI and education, to listen to a leading technologist and visionary.

The event was co-hosted by Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, Dedman School of Law, SMU Libraries, Lyle School of Engineering, and Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies.

Sincerely,



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

**SMU**