

Weekly Update | November 15, 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

Update: Dedman College dean search

The search for the next Elisabeth Martin Armstrong dean is nearing its conclusion. Stakeholders had opportunities to meet in person with all four of our candidates from November 4 through November 12. Thank you to all who participated in the process and for sharing your perspectives on each of the finalists with whom you were able to engage. We remain on track to name the new dean in December.

As a reminder, I ask that you please help us to maintain the confidentiality of the candidates' identities. This includes refraining from contacting colleagues elsewhere about any candidate at this point in the process. It is because of the remarkable achievements and opportunities at SMU that some of these accomplished leaders are willing to invest in this process from which only one candidate will be appointed. We are fortunate to have attracted an exceptional cohort of leaders, and we want to be respectful and considerate of them, their interest in SMU, and their standing at their current institutions. Due diligence is being done by the committee and search consultants. Thank you for your understanding of this request.

Scurlock Chair Search Committee meeting update

Last month, the search began for the Elizabeth Scurlock University Professor of Ethics in Artificial Intelligence, one of SMU's two university-level professorships. The Scurlock Chair, established over 30 years ago by the generosity of the Blanton family, gives us the opportunity to bring yet another world-renowned scholar to campus and positions us to elevate our profile and impact in the worlds of Artificial Intelligence and Ethics.

This search is co-chaired by Drs. Neena Imam, Peter O'Donnell Jr. Director of the O'Donnell Data Science and Research Computing Institute (ODSRCI), and Rita Kirk, William F. May Endowed Chair of the Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility and Professor in Meadows' Division of Corporate Communication and Public Affairs.

The [Search Committee](#) met this week to review and finalize the [position description](#) that will inform this strategic search. We look forward to sharing additional information in subsequent newsletters.

Provost Leadership Seminar Series

Each year, the Office of the Provost invites a team of emerging leaders who have been nominated by their dean to a weekly seminar series that provides in a collegial weekly gathering over lunch the opportunity to engage in conversations with other campus leaders and colleagues.

Congratulations to this year's participants. You can review the full roster for our 2024 participants at the [following link](#).

Academic Excellence

SMU alum gifts \$1 million to expand Meadows Scholars scholarship fund

A [\\$1 million gift](#) from Gayle Stoffel '66 expands the student scholarship fund she and her late husband, Paul Stoffel, III, established to assist SMU Meadows Scholars. Established in 2015, the Gayle and Paul Stoffel Endowed Meadows Scholar Fund was augmented in 2018 and again with this latest \$1 million gift. The fund supports SMU Meadows' longest running scholarship program, which attracts students who meet rigorous criteria for both academic and artistic acumen.

Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

Reminder: Call for Proposals: SMU – George W. Bush Institute Post-doctoral Program

Last month, my office [announced](#) the continued partnership between SMU and the Bush Institute through an [RFP](#) that will provide annual funding for three new post-doctoral fellows. All SMU tenured and tenure-track faculty are eligible to submit proposals and to serve as Principal Investigator (PI). All SMU faculty, including non-tenured-tenure-track faculty, may serve as co-PI on proposals and awards. Proposals must be submitted by November 15, 2024, to provost@smu.edu in 11-point or greater font and not exceed two, 8.5. x 11 pages in length.

SMU launched Ph.D. program in Data Science this fall

SMU welcomed its first class of Ph.D. students in data science this fall. Our program is distinctive because of its highly interdisciplinary nature. Most existing Data Science Ph.D. programs are either housed in a single department, such as Statistics, Computer Science, Operations Management, or

Business Analytics; or they focus on a single disciplinary area of research, such as Business or Medicine.

SMU's Data Science Ph.D. is offered through the Department of Statistics and Data Science, which belongs to three different academic units: The Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, the Cox School of Business, and the Lyle School of Engineering. Faculty from all three of these schools and colleges participate in the program, and faculty outside of those academic units—such as the Meadows School of the Arts, the Dedman School of Law, and the Simmons School of Education and Human Development—can also offer courses and advise Ph.D. students. Click [here](#) for a list of current Data Science Ph.D. program faculty.

Cox School of Business hosts inaugural 'Cowntown' Accounting Research Conference

Last week, Cox School of Business and the Naveen Jindal School of Management at the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) hosted the inaugural Cowntown Accounting Research Conference on Thursday, November 7, and Friday, November 8, in the James M. Collins Executive Education Center on campus.

More than 60 faculty, representing universities from across the country, participated in this year's inaugural event designed to encourage debate and discussion around important accounting research topics. Congratulations and thank you to the faculty and staff from SMU Cox and UTD's Jindal School for making this impactful event possible.

Inclusive Excellence

International Student and Scholar Services celebrates International Education Week

The International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) Office is excited to celebrate the invaluable contributions of SMU's international students and research scholars during the upcoming International Education Week. With over 1,400 international students representing 83 countries, our campus is a vibrant tapestry of cultures.

Each year, the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education designate a week in November to highlight the benefits of international education and exchange. This year, SMU will join in the celebration from November 18 to November 22, hosting various events to honor the diverse cultures within our community.

For more information about [International Education Week](#) and our planned activities, please visit the ISSS Office website.

News and Noteworthy

2024 Rosine Smith Sammons Lecture in Media Ethics brings Chuck Todd to SMU

Join us in the Oren Family Auditorium in the Hughes-Trigg Student Center on Tuesday, November 19, at 7:00 p.m. for the 2024 Rosine Smith Sammons Lecture in Media Ethics where Chuck Todd, NBC News' Chief Political Analyst and former moderator for Meet the Press, will be speaking about election coverage, public perception, and the changing media landscape. Chuck Todd is a three-time Emmy® Award winner for his contributions to NBC News' election night and breaking-news coverage, and has also served as NBC News' Chief White House Correspondent.

Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences faculty member publishes essay in The New York Times

Jonathan Malesic, Adjunct Lecturer in Dedman College's Writing and Reasoning Program within the Department of English, recently published a guest essay on the reading life of college students in *The New York Times*. In his piece, "There's a Very Good Reason College Students Don't Read Anymore," Malesic links the decline in college students' reading habits to a societal shift that favors individual marketability and 'vibes' rather than intellectual effort.

In addition to teaching SMU students, Professor Malesic is an essayist and journalist with two decades of experience teaching writing and religion at the university level. His essays have appeared in the *New York Times Magazine*, the *New Republic*, *Washington Post*, the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and many others.

SMU Lyle Faculty elected as a Fellow of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE)

Kathleen M. Smits, chair of Lyle's Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Solomon Professor for Global Development, has been elected as a Fellow of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) in recognition of her groundbreaking work in environmental and water resources engineering. A professor at Lyle and Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Air Force Reserves, Dr. Smits is known for her research on multiphase flow, pipeline leak detection, and climate modeling. With over 80 peer-reviewed publications and more than \$22 million in research funding, her election as an ASCE Fellow honors her significant contributions to both engineering and education.

Congratulations, Dr. Smits, on this well-earned recognition.

Sincerely,



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

