

Weekly Update | November 22, 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

Thanksgiving Holiday

This year, the Thanksgiving Holiday falls on Thursday, November 28. In observation, University offices will be closed on Thursday and Friday, November 28–29. Additionally, no classes are scheduled for Wednesday, November 27, to give students the opportunity to travel to family and loved ones for the holiday.

Due to this shortened work week, there will not be a newsletter next Friday.

I hope you are all able to take time to rest and visit with those closest to you, and I look forward to seeing you back for the last leg of the semester.

Academic resources to support students through finals

The [Academic Skill Development \(ASD\) team](#) is ready to assist students in successfully finishing the semester and preparing for finals. There are a number of ways ASD provides support. Students may [attend a Preparing for Finals workshop](#), use finals preparation tools available at smu.edu/StudySkills, and/or [schedule and attend academic counseling](#).

The Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture has joined Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences to expand access to humanities and civic leadership education

The [Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture](#), a forum for important civic conversations that have shaped its namesake city for more than 40 years, has joined the SMU Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences. The institute's board of directors voted to gift its assets to SMU, guaranteeing that its vital work will continue in perpetuity.

The transfer of assets has a value of approximately \$12 million, including endowment and operational funding and the proceeds from the sale of the institute's longtime headquarters on Routh Street.

Since 1980, The Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture has helped the city leverage insights from the humanities in very practical ways – mining literature, philosophy and sciences for the roadmaps toward civic progress. The institute encourages public engagement with everything that shapes the human experience, from book and film discussion groups to short courses on emerging topics such as artificial intelligence, to readings of literary classics and slam poetry. Its publications, conferences, and salon-style approach to topical discussions have always been fueled by the motivation to bring bright minds together.

Science Information Center building demolition: Impact on library operations

From Monday, November 25, through Friday, December 13, crews will fully separate the Science Information Center (SIC) building from Fondren Library. This process will involve significant noise and potential risks to student and staff spaces on two levels of Fondren due to the adjacency of the walls being removed. Out of an abundance of caution, the first and second floors of the Link will be closed during standard construction hours (7 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., Monday – Friday).

Key Impacts and Adjustments:

- *Entrances and exits:* The east and west exterior entrances to the Link will be closed from 6:30 AM to 5:30 PM. Three entrances/exits will remain open on the south side (near HTSC), the north side (Starbucks entrance), and the west side (old Fondren steps).
- *Student Access and study spaces:* While Fondren Library will remain open 24/7 leading up to finals, one area of the Link with 60 seats and five study rooms will be unavailable during the daytime. This popular space for students will be available at all other times after construction ceases for the day. All other library spaces will remain accessible 24/7.
- *Relocations and support:* Impacted personnel and service points are being relocated with signage directing students to alternative assistance locations.
- *Noise levels:* Construction will cause elevated noise levels throughout the library. The Centennial Reading Room and Prothro Commons, both facing the construction site, will likely be among those most affected.

SMU athletic teams setting program and national records this season

As you know, SMU joined the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) this year on July 1, officially moving our athletic teams into the top tier of national athletic conferences. Our student-athletes have entered this new era with great enthusiasm and inspiring success, setting multiple program and national records. I would like to highlight a select few of our teams' accomplishments so far in this, our inaugural, ACC season.

SMU Football

The SMU Football team remains the only team undefeated in ACC play (currently 6-0). The team is ranked #12 in the most recent Coach's Poll and #13 in the most recent AP Poll. The *Dallas Morning News* has covered SMU football extensively this past year, and [here is the most recent article](#), a glowing review of our student-athletes.

SMU Volleyball

The SMU Volleyball team has been ranked in the top 25 and top 10 this year for the first time in program history and is currently sitting at #7 nationally. In route to these high rankings, our team has defeated the #1 and #2 ranked teams in the nation during the season, a feat no other volleyball team in the country has achieved this year.

At the start of the season, Mustang fans joined together to set a SMU volleyball attendance record at Moody Coliseum of 6,773 attendees.

SMU Men's Soccer

SMU Men's Soccer broke into the top 10 earlier this season and currently sits at #15. Our team also won their ACC championship first round game and made it to the ACC championship quarterfinals.

Congratulations to all of our student-athletes and coaches who have performed above and beyond this season, making our presence known in the ACC and beyond. Pony up!

Academic Excellence

Student journalists win 13 prestigious National Journalism Awards

Meadows School of the Arts' [student journalists recently took home a record 13 national media awards](#) in two highly competitive contests, a haul that included honors across reporting, editing, audio production, graphics, and design and layout categories.

Students won 11 national Pinnacle College Media awards for 2024 at the College Media Association's (CMA) conference in New Orleans. The CMA is the nation's largest organization dedicated to serving collegiate media advisers, and its Pinnacle Awards honor the best college media organizations and individual work.

Meadows students also received four nominations and two awards from the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) at its conference in Chicago. NABJ's Salute to Excellence awards recognize the best student journalism covering the Black experience and addressing issues affecting the Black community.

Congratulations to these outstanding student journalists and their faculty mentors.

Four faculty members selected for new Moody Outstanding Mentor Awards

The Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies and the Center for Teaching Excellence are pleased to announce the inaugural recipients of the new Moody Outstanding Mentor Awards, which recognize exceptional mentoring of graduate students and postdoctoral scholars by SMU faculty.

Starting this year, four awards will be given each year. Moody Outstanding Mentor Awards provide a fund of \$10,000 to support research and professional development expenses for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars under the awardee's mentorship. In addition, awardees each receive \$1,000 for their personal use from SMU's Fikes Fund.

This year's recipients are:

- **Kevin Gunter**, senior lecturer and coordinator of class piano, Division of Music, Meadows School of the Arts.
- **MinJun Kim**, professor and Robert C. Womack Chair, Department of Mechanical Engineering, Lyle School of Engineering.
- **Tim Salmon**, professor, Department of Economics, Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences.
- **Candace Walkington**, Annette and Harold Simmons Chair and Professor, Department of Teaching and Learning, Simmons School of Education and Human Development.

Congratulations to this year's Moody Outstanding Mentors.

Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

SMU researchers to collaborate on the DFW Clean Ports Project backed by Environmental Protection Agency grant

SMU researchers and the Southern Dallas Inland Port Transportation Management Association are working with officials from the City of Wilmer and the City of Arlington to address air quality around key logistics hubs in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Backed by a [2024 Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) Clean Ports Program grant](#), the [DFW Clean Ports Project](#) seeks to support sustainable economic growth while enhancing community health.

The research team, led by Lyle School of Engineering Professors Khaled Abdelghany and Scott Douglas, associate vice provost for research, will focus on measuring diesel emissions from trucks at two key sites: the Dallas Intermodal Terminal (DIT) in Wilmer and the Dallas Intermodal Center (DIC) in Arlington. By using sophisticated sensor technology and data analysis, they aim to establish an accurate emissions baseline and explore practical strategies for reducing air pollution around these terminals.

SMU's involvement adds a significant scientific component with researchers specializing in remote sensing and transportation analysis contributing technical expertise to measure emissions at an unprecedented level of precision in the DFW area.

SMU graduate student alumni awarded inaugural Fulbright-John Lewis Award

The [Moody Fellowships Office](#) is proud to announce that SMU alumna, Jasmine Carty has been selected as one of the 23 members of the inaugural class of [John Lewis Civil Rights Fellows](#). The M.S. in counseling alumna previously won a Fulbright award, announced in May of this year, and now, from that group, has been selected as a John Lewis Civil Rights Fellow.

For her Fulbright and John Lewis Fellowship-sponsored research at the University of Luxembourg, Carty is guiding adolescents and young adults through a critical examination of their unique identity experience, resulting in a narrative expression of how the intersection of culture, migration, and public policy impacts their mental health and wellness.

This prestigious fellowship, [recently announced by President Biden](#), is a significant recognition of her dedication to civil rights and leadership in advancing social justice.

Graduate students interested in applying for external fellowships should connect with the [Moody Fellowships Office here](#).

Winners of the Three Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition announced

SMU's Three Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition organized by the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies took place last week in Frances Anne Moody Hall. Sixteen SMU graduate students from a range of fields participated in the competition which tests students' ability to present their research clearly, concisely, and compellingly to a non-specialist audience.

The winners of this year's [3MT Competition](#) are as follows.

- *First Place*: Zahra Sadri, molecular and cellular biology Ph.D. program: "Exploring the Role of Trem2 Signaling in Epilepsy Neuropathology." As first-place winner, Sadri will now have the opportunity to compete in the [Conference of Southern Graduate Schools regional 3MT competition](#), which will be held on SMU campus during spring break 2025.
- *Runner-up*: Nicole Pinzon Hoyos, molecular and cellular biology Ph.D. program: "Linking Immunity to Seizures: The Potential Impact of Immune Complement Proteins on Epilepsy."
- *People's Choice (tie)*: Wen Fan, biostatistics Ph.D. program: "Deep Learning for Antibiotics Resistance Prediction."
- *People's Choice (tie)*: Hyung Seo "Caroline" Lee, psychology Ph.D. program: "Examining the Hierarchical Taxonomy of Psychopathology in a Nationally Representative Epidemiological Sample with a Quantitative Intersectional Approach."

Congratulations to this year's award winners and to all the students who participated in this year's competition.

Inclusive Excellence

SMU Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers chapter wins award at 2024 National Convention

The SMU chapter of the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) won a Silver Chapter Award at this year's [National Convention](#). Additionally, president of the SMU SHPE chapter, Katelyne

Aguilar, achieved a historic milestone by bringing 24 students to the convention – the largest delegation in the chapter's history.

Chapters receiving awards at the national convention have reached a high degree of excellence in showing all four of SHPE's core values: Familia, Service, Education and Resilience. They have continuously led and executed life-changing services and programs for the people in their community and serve as a model for the rest of the SHPE Familia.

More early scholarships available to recruit high-achieving transfer students

Students transferring to SMU with a 3.3 GPA earned in as few as 24 transferable hours are now automatically eligible for [scholarships](#), putting an SMU education within reach earlier for a broader range of outstanding scholars.

Know a transfer student interested in SMU? [Students may take a campus tour](#) Monday through Friday and special transfer student tours are offered on Fridays. SMU welcomes more than 500 new transfer students each year and hosts an active transfer student association and orientation programming. Find out more about the [new transfer scholarships here](#).

News and Noteworthy

Associate Dean of Graduate Programs and Executive Education at Cox School of Business writes featured article for Poets&Quants

Shane Goodwin, Associate Dean of Graduate Programs and Executive Education at Cox School of Business, has written an [article featured in Poets&Quants](#), "Disrupt or Disappear: Why Business Schools Must Evolve or Become Obsolete." In this piece Dr. Goodwin dives into the critical challenges facing business education in today's rapidly changing landscape. With emerging technologies shifting student expectations and the relentless pace of innovation, the traditional MBA model is under increasing scrutiny. He argues that institutions unwilling to adapt to these changes risk losing relevance in an increasingly competitive market. Dr. Goodwin's perspective is both a wake-up call and a guidepost for academic leaders, urging them to rethink the status quo and innovate proactively.

SMU Department of English to host A Conversation with Dennis Washburn

The Department of English at Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences announces Dennis Washburn's upcoming talk *A Conversation with Dennis Washburn*. His presentation will focus on translation studies and will take place in the Texana Room of Fondren Library next Monday, November 25, at 4 p.m. A reception will follow. The event is free to all but space is limited; so, arrive early.

Dennis Washburn is a professor of comparative literature, Asian societies cultures and languages, and film studies at Dartmouth College. He completed the most recent translation of *The Tale of Genji* in 2015.

Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences Professor discussed deindustrialization and industry polarization on Faculti Streaming Platform

Professor Michael Sposi, associate professor and director of doctoral studies in the Department of Economics at Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, gave an interview with Faculti Streaming Platform. In the interview, Professor Sposi discussed deindustrialization and industry polarization.

[Faculti Streaming Platform](#) disseminates academic and professional research insights via curated interviews. These interviews cover the most cited research in numerous research subjects. See Dr. Sposi's full interview [here](#).

Annual Cox Dallas 100™ Awards Gala honors DFW entrepreneurship

The Cox School of Business presented the top award at the 34th Annual [Dallas 100™ Entrepreneur Awards Gala](#) last week at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Dallas.

The Cox School's Caruth Institute for Entrepreneurship, founding sponsor of the Dallas 100™, ranks the area's top 100 entrepreneurial companies based on percentage growth and absolute dollar growth over the previous three years, emphasizing their contributions to the Dallas area economy. This year's winners represent a broad spectrum of businesses from Dallas-Fort Worth and surrounding cities. To qualify for the Dallas 100™ competition, companies must have revenue earnings of \$1 million to \$250 million. Collectively, the 2024 Dallas 100-ranked companies generated more than \$8.5 billion from 2021 to 2023, the last year for which complete financial records are available. All 100 companies grew average sales from 2021 to 2023 by 80%, and in 2023 alone, all 100 companies generated sales of over \$3.5 billion. The top 10 fastest-growing DFW companies in 2024 received special recognition at this year's event.

The Cox Caruth Institute worked with accounting firm Forvis Mazars to conduct this year's analysis and rankings. A complete list of all 100 companies is [available here](#).

Sincerely,



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

