

## Weekly Update | November 8, 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 four categories: 1) Fall 2024, 2) Academic Excellence, 3) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 4) News and Noteworthy.

## Fall 2024

### Update: Dedman College dean search

The search for the next Elisabeth Martin Armstrong Dean is nearing its conclusion. Campus stakeholders had opportunities to meet in person with three of our four finalists this week, with the fourth coming to campus on Monday, November 11. Thank you to all who have participated in these on-campus visits. With this timeline we remain hopeful to name the new dean by 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.

## Presidential election

The presidential election took place this week on Tuesday, November 5.

While members of our community are feeling a range of emotions, I encourage you to remember the [message sent by President Turner on Thursday, October 17](#).

It is important during this time that we hold true to SMU's core values of excellence, integrity, intellectual freedom, open dialogue and inclusion. SMU has always been a place where differing opinions are presented and debated respectfully. Articulating and defending one's views, while honoring others' perspectives, is key to developing world changers. We urge you to remember our shared values as we work together in unity to move forward.

Thank you for your commitment to our core values and your commitment to leading by example with respect and civility. You are what makes SMU the special place it is to learn, live and work.

## Simmons School Executive Board meeting

Yesterday, I had the opportunity to provide Academic Affairs updates to the Simmons School of Education and Human Development Executive Board. My presentation opened with a high-level overview of the near-term academic benefits SMU is gaining from joining the ACC, most specifically through membership in the ACC – AC (Atlantic Coast Conference Academic Consortium). Then I shared highlights on the fall 2024 class at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. From there, I provided brief status updates on each of SMU's three open dean searches: Cox School of Business, Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, and Perkins School of Theology. Lastly, I announced SMU's search for the Scurlock Chair of Ethics in AI.

## Academic Excellence

### Join the Addressing Equity: Transfer Student Success and Retention Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute (DCII) Research Cluster in reading *Discredited*

The [Addressing Equity: Transfer Student Success and Retention](#) Research Cluster in the Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute (DCII) invites faculty and staff to join them as they read the book *Discredited* (Schudde and Jabbar, 2024).

This research cluster addresses equity issues to support SMU transfer students' success and retention. Its focused research and collaborative approach make these efforts significant and impactful for transfers to the Hilltop.

This book club will meet to discuss *Discredited* over three sessions that precede the SMU Transfer Summit scheduled for February 14, 2025.

To sign up, email Kate Bell-Miller at [kebell@smu.edu](mailto:kebell@smu.edu) and Dustin Grabsch at [dgrabsch@smu.edu](mailto:dgrabsch@smu.edu), and pick up your book from the Transfer & Veteran's Center located in Laura Lee Blanton Student Services Building, Suite 100, on or before November 22.

To learn more about *Discredited* and meeting dates for the book club, [read the full blog post here](#).

## **Reminder: SMU in Four calls for new or redesigned Civic and Individual Ethics (CIE) tagged course proposals**

The SMU in Four call for new or redesigned Civic and Individual Ethics (CIE) tagged course proposals will end on November 15, at 5 p.m. All proposals should be submitted via the [online submission platform](#) prior to the deadline.

SMU in Four will provide compensation for a limited number of selected courses. For more information on compensation, the course proposals being sought, expectations of selected courses, and the Cary M. Maguire Center for Ethics' support for this initiative, [read the full blog post here](#).

## **Moody School for Graduate and Advanced Studies to host Three Minute Thesis Competition on November 12 and 15**

SMU graduate students will present their research and compete for prizes at the annual [Three Minute Thesis \(3MT\) competition](#) occurring next week in the Frances Anne Moody Hall Auditorium. 3MT celebrates the exciting research being conducted by SMU graduate students and allows them to hone their communication and presentation skills.

First-round heats will occur on Tuesday, November 12, from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m., and finals will take place on Friday, November 15, from 12–1 p.m. A light breakfast and coffee will be available for attendees before the first-round heats, and lunch will be available before the finals. The program for first-round heats is available on the [3MT website](#).

The rules of the competition are simple: participants present their dissertation or thesis research in non-specialist language in less than three minutes with the assistance of one static PowerPoint slide. They are judged on the effectiveness of their presentation and their ability to convince the judges of the impact of their research.

All members of the SMU community are invited to attend the presentations.

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

### **SMU and Colorado State University (CSU) partner on \$2.6 million in grants for pipeline leak detection research**

SMU and CSU's Methane Emissions Technology Evaluation Center, known as [METEC](#), will work together on grants totaling \$2.6 million from the [Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration](#), [to improve the detection of pipeline leaks](#).

Researchers, including SMU principal investigator Kathleen M. Smits, chair of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Solomon Professor for Global Development at Lyle School of Engineering, will work to drive advancements in pipeline leak detection methods, contributing significantly to the safety and efficiency of natural gas and hydrogen-natural gas infrastructure. Researchers will focus on developing protocols used for real-world settings.

Work will take place at the METEC facility at CSU in Fort Collins and will involve industry operators, regulators and other key stakeholders. The team will, among other things, develop protocols for advanced leak detection methods that maximize coverage, minimize cost and maintain effectiveness.

## **O'Donnell Data Science and Research Computing Institute hosting seminar on SmartCADD**

The O'Donnell Data Science and Research Computing Institute invites campus and community members to participate in the next installment of the [2024 - 2025 O'Donnell Institute Seminar Series](#). Professors Elfi Kraka, professor at Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences' Department of Chemistry, and Corey Clark, deputy director for Guildhall and professor at Lyle School of Engineering's Department of Computer Science, will present: "SmartCADD: Artificial Intelligence - Quantum Chemistry Empowered Drug Discovery Platform with Explainability."

The seminar will take place on Monday, November 11, in Frances Anne Moody Hall, Room 126 (Classroom 1) from 2–3 p.m. Light refreshments will be provided at 1:45 p.m.

## **News and Noteworthy**

### **Simmons School of Education and Human Development faculty member selected to deliver conference keynote**

Candace Walkington, professor at Simmons School of Education and Human Development's Department of Teaching and Learning, has been selected as a keynote speaker at the [North American chapter of the Psychology of Mathematics Education \(PME\) 2024 conference](#). Professor Walkington will speak on "The Implications of Generative AI for Mathematics Education."

The conference is scheduled for November 7-10, 2024, in Cleveland, OH. For more on keynote speakers [click here](#).

### **Department of English's Narrative Now Initiative presents Marcela Fuentes: The Power and the Passion of Malas**

The Department of English at Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences is announcing that its Narrative Now Initiative will host writer Marcela Fuentes. Fuentes is a Pushcart Prize-winning fiction writer, essayist, and author of *Malas*, one of the most talked-about novels of summer 2024 and a [Good Morning America Book Club Pick](#).

The author will present "The Power and the Passion of Malas," which will focus on themes of resilience, identity and transformation on Thursday, November 14, 2024, in the Frances Anne Moody Hall Auditorium. The event's reception will start at 5 p.m. with the author's talk commencing at 5:30 p.m. The Q&A portion will last until 6:30 p.m. with a book signing immediately following.

Narrative Now invites all members of the SMU community as well as the general public to join in this unique opportunity to hear from one of today's most riveting literary voices. The event is free but space is limited. [Please register here](#).

### **Human-Centered Interdisciplinary Studies chair elected to The Dallas Summit organization**

Professor Kate Montgomery, chair for Human-Centered Interdisciplinary Studies (HCIS) at Simmons School of Education and Human Development, has been elected to [The Dallas Summit](#), a prestigious organization recognizing women in leadership across education, non-profit, civic, corporate and philanthropic sectors. The Dallas Summit aligns with HCIS's mission of engaging in community collaborations leading to real-world impact.

Congratulations to Professor Montgomery on this achievement.

## **Global, Online and Continuing Education (GOCE) launches Master of Public Policy Industry Advisory Committee**

On October 25, 2024, Global, Online and Continuing Education (GOCE) launched the Master of Public Policy (MPP) Industry Advisory Committee, featuring leaders across healthcare, insurance, cybersecurity and government, including State Representative Rafael Anchia, McKinney Mayor George Fuller and Justin Coppedge from [Texas 2036](#). The committee includes experts like Greg Sindelar of [Texas Public Policy Foundation](#), Lisa Gable with World 2050, and Cullum Clark and Jason Galui from the [George W. Bush Presidential Center](#). Led by Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies faculty member Eva Chiang, lead faculty and academic coordinator for the MPP and managing director of leadership and programming at the George W. Bush Institute, this team brings mentorship, lectures and real-world policy insights to students.

Sincerely,



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

