

Weekly Update | October 18, 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

Cox School of Business Executive Board meeting

This morning, I had the opportunity to provide Academic Affairs updates to members of the Cox School of Business Executive Board. My presentation began by giving a brief update about SMU's move to the ACC and the positive impact that membership will have on academics.

I went on to share highlights on the fall 2024 class of undergraduate and graduate students, including Cox's 7.1% enrollment growth in graduate students for fall 2024. I concluded by inviting Jason Nance, Judge James Noel Dean for Dedman School of Law and search committee chair, to provide an update on the Cox School of Business dean search. We have published the full-length position description for the dean position [available online here](#) and marketing efforts are in full swing.

Scurlock Chair of Ethics in AI search committee kickoff meeting

SMU has commenced a search for the Scurlock Chair of Ethics in AI, a position that will allow SMU to bring a world-renowned scholar to campus with the power to elevate our reputation and impact in ethics within the emerging field of Artificial Intelligence.

Earlier today, the search committee held its first meeting and I delivered their formal charge. The committee will meet throughout the fall and spring semesters to create a position description and recruit an exceptional pool of candidates, with the goal of selecting a final candidate to join SMU's faculty as early as fall 2025.

My thanks to the [search committee members](#) and our co-chairs, Dr. Neena Imam, Peter O'Donnell Jr. Director of the O'Donnell Data Science and Research Computing Institute (ODSRCI), and Dr. Rita Kirk, William F. May Endowed Chair of the Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility and professor in the Meadows School of the Arts Division of Corporate Communication and Public Affairs.

Call for proposals: Intersessions Courses

On Wednesday, October 16, [I sent a message](#) about course proposals for 2025 May and summer academic sessions on the Dallas campus.

Course proposals for 2025 Dallas campus May and summer terms are now being accepted and are due by Monday, November 4, 2024. Proposed courses should appeal to a wide range of students, be pedagogically appropriate given the condensed format of the class schedule, and be consistent with your usual academic standards and expectations. Cross-listed courses and those that fulfill Common Curriculum requirements tend to be more successful in terms of enrollment. [You can complete a course proposal for Intersessions by clicking here](#). Please remember to complete a separate proposal for each course you intend to teach.

For more information about compensation, what to include in your course proposal, and May and summer term logistics, please [read through this original message](#).

For more information or assistance with a proposal, please contact Intersessions program staff, Dr. Maeve Skidmore or Dr. Andrew Hamilton at intersessions@smu.edu, extension 8-1009, or visit the [Intersessions website](#).

Call for applications: President's Partners Grants

The President's Partners Program was inaugurated by President Turner to support faculty and staff in pursuing innovative teaching initiatives and collaborative research opportunities for students. All full-time faculty and staff are invited to apply for grants in the range of \$500–\$5,000.

Priority areas for President's Partners grants include equipment, materials, or supplies that have the potential to impact a broad reach of students and to enhance student engagement opportunities both within and beyond a single course. Competitive applications will describe how the project aligns with the SMU Strategic Plan. Collaborative projects are encouraged.

Applications should be submitted using this [application link for a President's Partners Grant](#). Full applications should include a brief abstract (which is part of the cover page at the link above) and an attached narrative in pdf format of no more than 2 pages single-spaced with the following components: 1) itemized list of project costs of the equipment or materials requested (e.g., academic, research, administrative) including hyperlinks to the items if feasible); 2) summary of how the resources will enable the project and impact the student experience; and 3) how the project will impact one or more of the goals in [SMU's Strategic Plan](#).

The deadline for applications is Friday, November 15th. A committee comprised of faculty and staff will review all applications and make recommendations to President Turner for finalizing award decisions by Friday, December 6th. Questions about the application process can be sent to the Office of Faculty Success at facultysuccess@smu.edu.

Respect and civility during election season

Yesterday, Thursday, October 17, President Turner [sent a message](#) to SMU employees and students regarding the upcoming presidential election.

It is important during this time that we hold true to SMU's core values of excellence, integrity, intellectual freedom, open dialogue, diversity, 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 approach this election season.

Please note that SMU is once again hosting a polling place on campus for our community and neighbors on Election Day, Tuesday, November 5. Anyone registered to vote in Dallas County may cast a ballot in the Hughes-Trigg Student Center between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. The [Texas Secretary of State's website](#) includes information about how and where you can vote if you reside in any county in the state. Early voting in Texas begins on Monday, October 21, and runs through Friday, November 1.

Academic Excellence

SMU in Four Mid-Semester Check-In

All SMU undergraduates will receive an email from SMU in Four on October 20, asking them to complete a two-question check-in survey as part of the SMU in Four initiative. The mid-semester check-in is intended to capture students' self-reported academic performance and sense of belonging for the current term. It is intentionally distributed around midterms and has built-in interventions to connect struggling students with SMU campus support resources. I encourage faculty to allow students 30 seconds during class next week to complete this survey and/or to announce it to students via Canvas. The mid-semester check-in survey will run through November 4, 2024.

Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

SMU and partner institutions receive \$9 million grant from U.S. Department of Education for workforce development project

SMU and partner institution, the University of Texas at San Antonio, received a \$9,012,187 grant from the U.S. Department of Education for a workforce development project. The project entitled "[Workforce Development for Neuro-developmental Disability \(WD-NDD\): Employer-Focused Practices to Facilitate Neurodiversity in the Workforce](#)" is being led by The University of Texas at San Antonio. Lyle School of Engineering faculty member Adel Alaeddini, O'Donnell Foundation Professor of Mechanical Engineering and executive director of research innovation in the Lyle School of Engineering, is the SMU PI on this project.

Lyle School of Engineering sub-award recipient for grant from U.S. Air Force to explore autonomous military vehicles

Professor of Computer Science and Program Director for the Datacenter System Engineering Program at Lyle School of Engineering Klyne Smith and [STEER Tech](#), an autonomous vehicle technology developer, have been [awarded a Phase One grant](#) from the [U.S. Air Force Research Laboratory](#) to explore transforming existing military vehicles into an autonomous fleet for transporting cargo, equipment and supplies.

Currently, 52 percent of casualties in combat zones are attributed to military personnel delivering food, fuel, and other logistics. Working together on this grant, STEER Tech's and Professor Smith's investigations into a self-driving fleet would automate logistics within and between bases to improve

efficiency, reduce costs, increase capacity, enhance readiness, and most importantly, save lives. Congratulations to Professor Smith on garnering support for research with impact.

Research team from SMU and Dartmouth explore future applications for liquid crystals powered by natural light

In a new study in [Nature Chemistry](#), researchers at SMU and Dartmouth College take the first step toward identifying new potential applications for liquid crystals that can be powered exclusively by natural light. Possibilities include liquid crystal lasers, easily-printed and erasable display screens, and microscopic banknote tags to deter counterfeiters.

SMU researchers Joshua T. Plank, Drake Henry, and Alexander R. Lippert, along with a research team from Dartmouth, developed a process and toolkit that enable individuals to control the color reflected by liquid crystals. Doing this with light and color that is visible to the human eye was one of the most consequential breakthroughs of their work. Further, mapping their new process in detail down to the molecular level can help researchers further investigate future applications for liquid crystals.

Learn more [about liquid crystals here](#).

An international multi-institutional research team that includes an SMU hydrologist publishes latest study in the journal Science

An international research team with experts from the United States, Canada and Sweden that includes SMU faculty member Xiao Yang, professor in the Roy M. Huffington Department of Earth Sciences at Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, has published their latest study in the [journal Science](#).

This study examines the past 165 years of changing ice duration on lakes around the world and how these changes are affecting key physical, chemical and biological processes within freshwater ecosystems. Learn more [about the study here](#).

Inclusive Excellence

SMU Department of English hosting writer and producer team from hit television show Pachinko for exclusive screening and conversation

Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences' Department of English and the Narrative Now Initiative are presenting an exclusive screening of an episode from the highly anticipated second season of Apple TV+'s critically acclaimed series, [Pachinko](#), adapted from the bestselling novel by Min Jin Lee.

This event will take place at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, October 23, 2024, in the Hughes-Trigg Student Center (Oren Family Auditorium) and will be followed by an in-depth conversation with the creative team behind the show. Creative team panel participants will include the show's showrunner and executive producer Soo Hugh, executive producer Theresa Kang, writer and co-executive producer Chang-rae Lee, and writers Melissa Park and Haruna Lee. The post-screening conversation will be moderated by Professor Christopher González, Department of English chair.

This event is free and open to the public, although registration is required. [Please register here](#).

News and Noteworthy

Frances Anne Moody Hall wins Best Project from Engineering News-Record (ENR) Texas-Louisiana

Engineering News-Record (ENR) is a national media publication in the design/build sector and oversees regional-specific publications including [ENR Texas-Louisiana](#) in which Dallas is represented. ENR has

recently announced its [2024 Regional Best Projects awards](#) which includes winning projects and merit projects across 18 categories. ENR has a rigorous selection process for awardees. This year industry judges reviewed 115 entries from Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma and Texas and selected 39 projects for recognition.

I am pleased to share the news that Frances Anne Moody Hall was selected regionally as the Best Project for the Higher Education/Research category for 2024! Now, Moody Hall will continue to the ENR national competition with results being announced in December 2024.

We are very proud of one of our newest on-campus buildings and are pleased to see that others agree. Thank you to the Moody Foundation, the Beck Group, the SMU Facilities team, Moody building managers, and everyone who has helped make Moody Hall a reality, and without whom this well-earned recognition would not have been possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth G. Loba".

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

SMU