

Weekly Update | October 4, 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

Recap: Executive Board Meetings

Meadows School of the Arts

On Tuesday, October 1, I had the opportunity to provide Academic Affairs updates to members of the Meadows School of the Arts Executive Board. My presentation began by highlighting the fall 2024 class of undergraduate and graduate students, including Meadows impressive 33 percent enrollment growth in graduate students. Next, I gave 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. (See below for updates on each). I concluded by announcing SMU's new 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.

Perkins School of Theology

On Wednesday, October 2, I was able to provide Academic Affairs updates to members of the Perkins School of Theology Executive Board as well. For this meeting, I focused on the fall 2024 class highlights shared at previous executive board meetings and concluded with an update on the Perkins School of Theology dean search.

Update: Dean searches

Dedman College

The search committee for the next Elisabeth Martin Armstrong Dean of Dedman College plans to conduct first round (airport) interviews with 8–10 semi-finalists on October 23–24, 2024. This keeps the search on track to conduct finalist interviews in early/mid-November and to identify a new dean by early December. We will provide information on how to engage in the finalist interview process in subsequent newsletters.

Thank you to the entire search committee for their service in this important search, and thank you to Robin Poston, dean of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies and Associate Provost for Graduate Education, for serving as the search committee chair.

Cox

The Cox School of Business dean position description is [available online here](#), along with the search committee members list and contact information for our executive search consultant, [Korn Ferry](#). Search committee members will meet regularly over the next two months to support the development of a strong pool and to review applications.

If all goes according to plan, we project to conduct first-round (airport) interviews in mid- to late-January, finalist interviews in mid- to late-February, and select a dean in the spring 2025 term.

Thank you to the search committee members for agreeing to participate in this important search, and thank you to Jason P. Nance, Judge James Noel Dean of Dedman School of Law, for serving as the search committee chair. We will continue to share updates regarding this search in upcoming newsletters.

Perkins

The Perkins School of Theology Dean Search Committee and our external consultant [Storbeck Search](#) have reevaluated the Leighton K. Farrell Endowed Dean position description after a series of listening and learning sessions with key stakeholders. The new position description is [available here](#). The committee will hold a series of meetings this month and in November to review applications. We project to conduct first-round (airport) interviews in early-December, finalist interviews in mid-January, and select a new dean by early in the spring 2025 term.

Thank you to all the search committee members for agreeing to participate in this important search, and thank you to Peter Moore, chair of the Department of Mathematics at Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, for serving as the search committee chair.

We will continue to share updates on this search in upcoming newsletters.

Call for applications: Faculty-in Residence positions

The Office of the Provost and the Vice President for Student Affairs are seeking faculty candidates for two Faculty-in-Residence (FiR) positions. Successful candidates will begin a three-year appointment in the fall 2025 semester.

The Faculty-in-Residence (FiR) Program is a collaboration between the Provost and the Vice President of Student Affairs that strengthens the connection between students' academic and residential learning experiences. Faculty members who are selected to serve as FIRs come from an array of disciplines, live on campus, and work closely with Residence Life and Student Housing staff members to provide opportunities where residents can interact with professors outside the classroom environment, further supporting student learning, engagement, and success.

Qualifications include:

- Full-time Instructional Faculty Status or equivalent as determined by the Office of the Provost. For staff, a 2-2 teaching load (12 credit hours total) as part of normal duties (no extra compensation) is the minimal teaching load.
- Approval from Department Chair.
- Approval from Dean or Equivalent.
- Prior experience engaging students outside of the classroom.
- Demonstrated interest in the undergraduate residential educational experience.
- Familiarity with general academic requirements, procedures, and campus resources.

The initial application for FiR consists of 1) a thoughtful letter of interest, 2) approval from your dean and chair in a signed statement of support, 3) acknowledgment of residential policies, and 4) a curriculum vitae or resume. Additional information about the FiR position is available on the [Residential Commons recruitment and selection website](#). The deadline to apply is October 14, 2024.

Please submit your completed application via the webform on the [recruitment and selection website](#). Questions about the application process should be directed to Dr. Brittany Billar at 214-768-6389 or bbillar@smu.edu.

Reminder: Nominations open for Moody Outstanding Mentor Awards

Nominations are open for the Moody Outstanding Mentor Awards, sponsored by the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies and the Center for Teaching Excellence. Each department may nominate one faculty member; all full-time SMU faculty who work closely with graduate students and/or postdoctoral scholars are eligible for nomination. Awardees will receive \$10,000 to support graduate students and postdoctoral scholars' research and professional development and \$1,000 for the awardee's personal use.

Further nomination instructions and selection criteria can be found in the [Call for Nominations](#) packet and [the evaluation rubric](#). Nominations should be submitted via this [online form](#), no later than Friday, October 11, 2024.

Academic Excellence

Department of World Languages and Literatures recognized alongside Columbia University and Brown University for its innovative language curriculum

The [Joint National Committee for Languages \(JNCL\)](#) and [National Council for Languages and International Studies \(NCLIS\)](#), which together are comprised of over 130 national, regional, and state language teaching associations, and 300,000 professionals of nonprofits, companies, and research institutes, has recognized SMU in its [2024 report, "Higher Education Survey Findings & Recommendations for Language Education."](#) Dedman College's Department of World Languages and Literatures was recognized, along with other top universities, Brown University, Columbia University, Franklin and Marshall College, and Montclair State University, as one of five examples of Institutions of Higher Education that are "taking action and innovating."

The [Global Literacy and Languages for Specific Purposes: Curricular Design for Building Transferable Skills Research Cluster](#) helped make this innovation and accompanying recognition possible. The research cluster brings together faculty and alumni from diverse disciplines to develop programs that equip students with global perspectives and skills valued by employers. This initiative focuses on creating interdisciplinary, context-specific curricula within the World Languages and Literatures department to enhance cross-cultural communication and meet employer needs. The cluster addresses topics such as curricular innovation, academic and corporate partnerships, and the integration of world

languages into SMU's Common Curriculum to prepare students for professional roles in a globalized workplace.

The research cluster was created by Professors Paola Buckley and Aria Cabot, both in the Department of World Languages and Literatures at Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, and is sponsored by the Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute.

Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

Call for nominations: Provost Faculty Research Fellowships

Nominations are now open for \$15,000 Provost Faculty Research Fellowships, funded by the Office of the Provost, to support the research of tenured SMU faculty. Prospective candidates for FY 2025 Provost Faculty Research Fellowships may be nominated by Deans and Faculty Senate as follows.

- Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences: One nomination for each Dedman Division from Dean.
- Dedman School of Law: One nomination from Dean.
- Simmons School of Education and Human Development: One nomination from Dean.
- Lyle School of Engineering: One nomination from Dean.
- Cox School of Business: One nomination from Dean.
- Meadows School of the Arts: One nomination from Dean.
- Perkins School of Theology: One nomination from Dean.
- Faculty Senate: Three nominations, ideally representing different schools, but not necessary.

Letters of nomination are due by Friday, October 11, 2024, and should be [uploaded to this Box File](#) as a PDF document. Letters should include the reason for the nomination as well as a detailed evaluation of the nominee's contributions relative to others in the field. If the nominator is unable to provide such an evaluation, he/she may request support from a colleague. To assist with the preparation of letters of nomination and faculty supporting materials, read [this scoring guide](#) utilized by the University Research Council to facilitate the comparison of candidates across disciplines.

Subsequent to the nomination process, the vice provost for research and innovation and chief innovation officer will request that nominated faculty members submit the following supporting materials by Friday, October 25, 2024: 1) a two-page summary of immediate research goals; 2) a copy of the most recent, or updated, multi-year developmental plan (see [University Policy 2.12: Policy on Tenured Faculty Development](#)) not to exceed three pages; 3) an updated CV not to exceed three pages; and 4) a one- to two-page description of creative contributions in the nominee's field of specialty written in such a way that the narrative can be understood by persons outside the field.

These research proposals and supporting materials will be sent to the University Research Council, which will evaluate nominations and forward six names to the Office of the Provost for final selection. Those selected will be announced before the end of the fall 2024 semester.

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

This week my office [announced](#) the continued partnership between SMU and the Bush Institute through an [RFP](#) that will provide 1 year of funding for three new post-doctoral fellows. All SMU tenured and tenure-track faculty are eligible to submit proposals and to serve as PI. All SMU faculty, including non-tenured/tenure-track faculty, may serve as co-PI on proposals and awards. Proposals must be submitted by Friday, November 15, 2024, to provost@smu.edu in 11-point or greater font and not exceed two, 8.5 x 11 pages in length.

News and Noteworthy

Meadows School of the Arts named Apple Distinguished School

Meadows School of the Arts has been named an Apple Distinguished School by Apple Education, a division of [Apple, Inc.](#) As one of only two schools in Texas to receive this designation, the Meadows School has been invited to participate in the 2024 Apple Distinguished Schools Leadership Academy. The three-day academy will be held on November 13–15, 2024 at Full Sail University in Florida.

Congratulations to Meadows School of the Arts on this recognition and to the dedicated work of the faculty and staff who support the Meadows School's contributions to our goals for academic excellence.



SMU Caren and Vin Prothro Organ Dedication and Concert

On Monday, September 30, SMU celebrated the dedication of the Caren and Vin Prothro Organ in Perkins Chapel. This exquisite 1927 Skinner organ was given in Caren and Vin Prothro's name by Gay and Bill Solomon '65 as part of the *SMU Ignited* Campaign. A team from Perkins School of Theology and Meadows School of the Arts conducted a national search that led to the acquisition of this organ from a church in Manhattan, NY.

Originally, E. M. Skinner constructed three organs for clients in Texas, but none remain. Now, with the restoration and installation of the organ in Perkins Chapel, SMU will be home to a venue highly sought after by organ enthusiasts.

The Prothro and Solomon families have been ardent champions of SMU. Caren Prothro is a current SMU trustee and former Board Chair; Bill Solomon is a former SMU trustee.

Perkins School of Theology announces Fall Convocation

Perkins School of Theology will host its [2024 Fall Convocation, "Faith in a Digital Age"](#) on November 14–15, 2024. In a world marked by rapid technological change, including the rise of AI, this year's event will explore the intersection of faith, technology, and ethics, offering attendees insights and resources to navigate the challenges of living spirituality in a digitally driven world.

Attendees will have the opportunity to participate in lectures and panel discussions, engage with speakers, join table conversations, and hear from two keynote speakers: Cole Arthur Riley, celebrated author of *This Here Flesh*, and *Black Liturgies: Prayers, Poems, and Meditations for Staying Human*; and Noreen Herzfeld, a pioneering scholar in theology and computer science.

Office of Engaged Learning organizes Lab Hopping event, October 10

The Office of Engaged Learning is hosting its [annual Lab Hopping event](#) on Thursday, October 10, from 4–6 p.m. This event offers students opportunities to explore open faculty labs and research groups across campus and to learn about how to get involved. Whether students are new to research or looking to gain more experience, Lab Hopping is a great way to connect with faculty and peers engaged in scholarly and creative inquiry.

Maps for self-guided tours will be available online, with printed copies posted outside Clements Hall, Fondren Science, and in the Scholars Den. Students can also enter to win a \$100 gift card by participating in the QR scavenger hunt.

If your group or lab would like to participate, please contact Adam Neal at asneal@smu.edu.

Big iDeas Pitch Competition winners announced by Office of Engaged Learning

On Friday, September 27, the Office of Engaged Learning hosted its annual Big iDeas Pitch Competition where 18 undergraduate entrepreneurs pitched their ideas in 90 seconds or less to a panel of expert judges from the SMU entrepreneurship ecosystem. Campus partners, including the SPEARS Institute for Entrepreneurial Leadership, Deason Innovation Gym, SMU Impact Lab, and the Hart Institute for Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship (HI-TIE) provided additional funding for ideas demonstrating strong tech innovations, social or creative impact, or investment potential.

Thirteen students were awarded \$1,000 or more to help launch their ideas: [Ryland Adzich](#) (The Creative Destination), [Yaw Boateng](#) (InfoSavvy), [Zain Dhatwani](#) (Apni Duniya), [Mason Dierkes](#) (Elusive), [Isabella Fleet](#) (TIMIO News LLC), [Bryce Harper](#) (Urban Crusader Technology), [Kennedy Honors](#) (Sallie's Halo), [Jude Lugo](#) (Lecture Logger), [Emiliano Hernandez Posada](#) (Terra Social Impact), [Anish Senthilkumar](#) (The Active Mind Initiative), [Speed Gregory](#) (Speed's Meats), [Nrithi Subramanian](#) (Mantra and Co.), [Ephraim Sun](#) (Fuselink.ai).

Congratulations to the winners and thank you to all the families and friends who came out to support our Mustangs.

Sincerely,



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

