SMU

Elizabeth Scurlock University Chair: Scurlock Professor of Ethics in Artificial Intelligence

Southern Methodist University (SMU) seeks a visionary scholar to lead our groundbreaking initiative in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Ethics. Over the past several years, SMU has been actively developing a big-data ecosystem, supported by next-generation research computing technology, to engage the disciplines across campus from physics to art, engineering to history, and business to education, in the pursuit of leading-edge research with impact.

The Scurlock Chair, one of SMU's two endowed university-level professorships, reports directly to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and represents our commitment to bringing an ethical and humanistic analysis to bear on the future of AI. We see this chair as an opportunity to expand our impact across both the artificial intelligence and ethics domains, and to bring to campus a world-renowned scholar who will contribute to, and expand upon, the robust work that is already taking place on campus in ways that benefit faculty, staff, students and the broader community.

Position Overview
We are at a pivotal moment in human history, where artificial intelligence is reshaping the fabric of society. Our university seeks a thought leader who will bridge the technological frontier with human values, ethics, and societal needs. The successful candidate will help to shape vital conversations across academic, political, and policy discourses that guide societal understanding of how AI can augment and enhance human capability while preserving the essence of human creativity, decision-making, and social connection.

The role of the Scurlock chair is to be a leading advocate for ethics in the national and international community. Certainly, we recognize the need for human-centered influence in the development of AI to ensure that technology serves human needs and values. From a philosophical vantage, the concerns range from AI's social and cultural impact to the development of values literacy in AI programming or the protection of human rights. In governance, the issues may include maintaining transparency in decision making, data and privacy concerns, responsible innovation, and equity and access concerns. In applied ethics, the practical implementation of AI might include governance standards, policy oversight and ethical guidelines for AI deployment. We welcome applications from any recognized area of study.

Qualifications
SMU is seeking an active researcher in the area of ethics with a research emphasis in Artificial Intelligence (AI) with an earned Ph.D. in ethics or a closely related field, or an equivalent terminal degree. Candidates must be at the rank of full professor in their

discipline or be at an associate rank with the potential to earn full professor. We are open to any AI research specialization, as we recognize that expertise in AI may come from a wide scope of perspectives. Additionally, the candidates should have:

- Demonstrated excellence in bridging technological innovation with human-centered approaches.
- Track record of interdisciplinary collaboration spanning technical and humanistic domains.
- Understanding of AI applications to collaborate on fundable grant opportunities
- Proven ability to engage with questions of ethics, equity, and social impact in technological advancement.
- Strong commitment to mentoring the next generation of thoughtful technology leaders.
- An interest in and passion for partnering with the region's corporations, foundations, and municipal governments on matters affecting the DFW metroplex

The Ideal Candidate Will Possess
- Vision for preserving human agency in an increasingly automated world.
- Commitment to equity and inclusion in technological advancement.
- Capability and proven history of contributing to current discourse as a public intellectual who brings issues in ethics and AI into contact with concerns of everyday life.
- Passion for nurturing human creativity and critical thinking alongside AI literacy.
- Desire to teach AI-related ethics courses in the graduate/undergraduate. curriculum.
- Experience in curriculum development that integrates AI literacy with critical thinking and creativity.
- Ability to translate complex technological concepts to diverse audiences.

Our Commitment
- We offer a vibrant intellectual environment where innovation meets reflection, and where technological advancement is guided by human values. Our university is committed to creating a future where AI serves as a tool for human flourishing.
- SMU values cross-disciplinary collaboration. Whether working with our innovative Pegasus Park project, O'Donnell Data Science and Research Computing Institute, Cary M. Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility, the Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute, or the numerous initiatives of our eight degree-granting schools, opportunities for collaboration and impact are substantial.
- This position offers competitive salary and benefits, research support, and the opportunity to shape the future of human-centered AI development.

SMU has a long commitment to ethics. Two university professorships were established in the mid-1980s, the Scurlock Chair and the Maguire Chair in Ethics. In 1995, the

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Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility was founded as a university-wide initiative for the interdisciplinary exploration of contemporary ethical questions.

Major grant-funded research utilizing AI by SMU faculty and students include:
- SMU is part of a six-institution NSF AI Institute (AI-ENGAGE), which is focused on narrative centered learning environments and has emphasized ethics and AI.
- Researchers in SMU's Simmons School of Education and Human Development (SEHD) are collaborating with SMU's Guildhall to build AI into their XPRIZE-winning adult literacy app to create an adaptive learning experience.
- Researchers in SEHD are collaborating with Kings College, U. of North Carolina and University of Zambia to add AI to their virtual reality surgery simulation to provide a real-time feedback experience to trainees.
- Supported by an $18 million DoD contract and NASA grants totaling more than $2 million, Earth Science's faculty in Dedman College lead a consortium of universities working to integrate AI into the detection and interpretation of subtle seismic and acoustic signals relevant to national defense, and in the interpretation of satellite data.
- SMU physicists, who have played an important role in the discovery of the Higgs particle, are utilizing AI to reduce model dependence of discovery, and are working to put deep learning on a chip for hardware deployment at CERN.
- Researchers in SMU's Lyle School of Engineering are exploring a range of areas including the integrity of the nation's infrastructure, traffic management, on-line information credibility, discrimination of external threats from malfunctions in cyber anomalies, and collaborative machine/human problem solving.
- Scholars in communication and business are working with corporate and nonprofit boards to consider their expanding responsibilities as AI begins to impact organizational operations.
- Scholars in the arts are investigating a wide variety of applications including AI-assisted digital art creations, AI-assisted music production and mixing, and motion capture analysis for dance optimization.
- Legal scholars are analyzing areas such as risk management, regulatory compliance, outcome due diligence automation, and automatized contract reviewing and drafting.

About SMU
A nationally ranked private university located near the heart of Dallas, SMU is a distinguished center for global research and teaching. SMU's more than 12,000 diverse, high-achieving students come from all 50 states and over 80 countries to take advantage of the University's small classes, meaningful research opportunities, leadership development, community service, international study and innovative programs.

SMU is nonsectarian in its teaching and committed to academic freedom and open inquiry and serves approximately 7,000 undergraduates and 5,000 graduate students through eight degree-granting schools: Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, Cox School of Business, Lyle School of Engineering, Meadows School of the Arts, Simmons School of Education and Human Development, Dedman School of Law, Perkins School of Theology and Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies. Of the University's 12,000 enrolled students, 33% identify as ethnic minorities. 51% of undergraduates and 49% of graduate students are female.

Now in its second century of achievement, SMU is recognized for the ways it supports students, faculty and alumni as they become ethical, enterprising leaders in their professions and communities. SMU's relationship with Dallas – the dynamic center of one of the nation's fastest-growing regions – offers unique learning, research, social and career opportunities that provide a launch pad for global impact.

The FY 2024 operating budget for SMU is $922 million with its current endowment valued at $2.2 billion. In 2020 the Moody Foundation made a $100 million commitment to SMU to establish the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies. This landmark gift helped to shape an ambitious strategic plan and the launch of the comprehensive capital campaign SMU Ignited: Boldly Shaping Tomorrow. Currently, SMU is in the fourth year of this $1.5 billion capital campaign, with $1.34B in commitments to date, and with a goal to attract and support outstanding students and faculty, to explore new fields with innovative research empowered by future-facing technologies, and to positively impact Dallas and the world beyond.

SMU is located on 234 acres in the University Park area north of downtown Dallas. Faculty, students, and staff enjoy the cultural, athletic, and recreational opportunities offered by the fourth-largest city in the country. Dallas has the nation's largest urban arts district, including world-class museums and state of the art performing arts spaces. The Winspear Opera House is described by Opera magazine as America's finest. Dallas is home to four professional sports teams. Throughout the region there is easy access to a variety of outdoor activities. The Trinity River, White Rock Lake, almost 400 parks, and over 125 miles of urban hiking and biking trails provide rich and varied opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. The city has been named one of the Greenest Cities in the world. SMU students and faculty benefit from proximity to the Dallas metropolitan area as an extension of the classroom through engaged learning projects and community partnerships.

The Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex ("DFW") is the fourth largest, fifth-most diverse, and among the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the U.S. The region has been identified by Forbes as one of five cities poised to be "the next Silicon Valley" tech hub. With the

second largest airport in the U.S., DFW has attracted several major companies over the past decade, with 140 headquarter relocations to the region from across the U.S. and abroad, including more than 45 companies which have moved from California to the "Silicon Prairie." Twenty-four Fortune 500 companies now make their home in the DFW area.

Procedure for Inquiries and Applications

Applications should include a detailed curriculum vitae and a letter of interest highlighting the applicant's personal interest, relevant leadership experience, and alignment with the qualifications listed above. For priority consideration, applications can be submitted at this link: https://apply.interfolio.com/159481 by January 15th, 2025. Inquiries and/or nominations can be sent at any time to either committee co-chair: Rita Kirk (rkirk@smu.edu) or Neena Imam (nimam@smu.edu).

SMU will not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, education activity, or admissions on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. SMU's commitment to equal opportunity includes nondiscrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. The Executive Director for Access and Equity/Title IX1 Coordinator is designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies, including the prohibition of sex discrimination under Title IX. The Executive Director/Title IX Coordinator may be reached at the Perkins Administration Building, Room 204, 6425 Boaz Lane, Dallas, TX 75205, 214-768-3601, accessequity@smu.edu.