

February 27, 2023

TO: Eric Bing, Professor, Department of Applied Physiology & Sport Management, Simmons School of Education and Human Development
Cullum Clark, Director, Bush Institute-SMU Economic Growth Initiative and Adjunct Professor of Economics, Dedman College
Klaus Desmet, Ruth and Kenneth Altshuler Centennial Interdisciplinary Professor, Department of Economics, Dedman College
Jer'Lisa Devezin, Visiting Lecturer, Interdisciplinary Art, Division of Art, Meadows School of the Arts
David Doyle, Director, University Honors Program; Director, Dedman College Scholars Program, and Adjunct Assistant Professor of History
Blake Hackler, Chair and Associate Professor, Division of Theatre, Head of Acting, Meadows School of the Arts
Johnitha Johnson, Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Teaching and Learning, Simmons School of Education and Human Development
Matt Keller, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Dedman College
Jill Kelly, Associate Professor and Altshuler Distinguished Teaching Professor, Department of History, Dedman College
Owen Lynch, Associate Professor and Director of Honors Program and SMU-in-London, Division of Corporate Communication and Public Affairs, Meadows School of the Arts
Pam Metzger, Director of the Deason Criminal Justice Reform Center and Professor of Law, Dedman School of Law
Barbara Minsker, Bobby B. Lyle Professor of Leadership and Global Entrepreneurship, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Lyle School of Engineering
Neely Myers, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, Dedman College
Kate Smits, Department Chair, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Solomon Professor for Global Development, Lyle School of Engineering
Herve Tchumkam, Professor of French, Department of World Languages and Literatures, Dedman College
Jakki Thomas, Professor, Frank and Susan Dunlevy Faculty Fellow, Department of Marketing, Cox School of Business

FROM: Elizabeth G. Loba, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

I am writing to request your participation on a committee to inform the creation of SMU's fourth faculty cluster hire. An Urban Research Cluster has been proposed as an important direction for our next faculty recruitment approach. We believe that a focus in this area will build on current strengths at SMU, respond constructively to ideas brought forward at Faculty Town Hall conversations, and support greater diversity of faculty on campus. Your name was brought forward at the recommendations of Maria Dixon Hall as Chief Diversity Officer; Tom DiPiero, Dean, Dedman College; and Associate Provosts Sheri Kunovich, Dayna Oscherwitz, and Paige Ware.

In order to launch a search for this cluster beginning fall 2023, recommendations and input from your committee would be needed by May 15th. The estimated time commitment is three 1.5-hour committee meetings prior to May 15th, as well as 5-6

World Changers Shaped Here

additional hours across the remainder of this term in other aspects of this call (e.g., consulting with other faculty and faculty administrators, exploring peer/aspirant university approaches to Urban Research clusters). Thank you to Dr. Dixon Hall who has offered to serve as facilitator for your meetings.

As you consider whether you can accept this invitation, please review the following outline of the areas in which your collective input will be requested:

Complementary engagement with current strengths at SMU

- Explore how this cluster will complement and extend current research and curricular strengths at SMU;
- Determine which disciplines and departments are willing and enthusiastic partners in this cluster;
- Identify current faculty who will form the research and teaching community for incoming faculty as collaborators;
- Consult a broad range of deans, chairs, and faculty to ensure multiple perspectives are included;
- Work with SAES to outline the curricular areas in the undergraduate curriculum that faculty in the cluster hires will positively impact and augment current needs of our changing student body (e.g., Common Curriculum courses, first-year and gateway courses, honors courses).

Situating foci within the large umbrella of Urban Research

- Examine how other universities which are successful in urban research clusters have promoted their collaborations;
- Determine, within the many areas of scholarly impact that the topic of “urban research” encompasses, which themes or “through-lines” would be most impactful at SMU;
- Examine whether there are alternative frames that might emerge;
- Invite external input from relevant constituents (e.g., consultation with the City of Dallas);
- Given the diversity of the faculty in similar programs at other universities, identify strategies for SMU to continue to diversify our faculty with cluster hires in this area.

Preparing for the search: Proposing next steps

- Develop a proposed announcement that describes the cluster;
- Identify, in consultation with the deans, how positions in their areas might lend themselves to this cluster;
- Make recommendations for membership within each of the initial search committees;
- Collaborate with faculty in current research clusters at SMU to generate ideas and expectations about ensuring the creation of a strong, collaborative cluster with an interdisciplinary ethos.

Please reply to Leon Jackson (leonjackson@smu.edu) by March 6th to confirm whether you will be able to serve on this important committee. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth G. Lobo", written over a light blue circular stamp.

Elizabeth G. Lobo
Provost and Vice President
for Academic Affairs

cc: Tom DiPiero, Dean, Dedman College
Maria Dixon Hall, Chief Diversity Officer
Sheri Kunovich, Associate Provost for Student Engagement and Success
Peter Moore, Senior Advisor to the Provost and Interim Director of DSI
Dayna Oscherwitz, Associate Provost for Institutional Planning and Effectiveness
Paige Ware, Associate Provost for Faculty Success