



## Elizabeth G. Loba, Ph.D. Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dear Faculty and Staff,

These weekly updates will serve as a tool to keep you in the loop on the latest news from the Academic Affairs division as, together, we work toward achieving the goals that fall within our four priority areas through 2025: 1) Academic Excellence/*US News and World Report* top 50, 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 send your ideas to this [email address](#). Previous newsletters are available [here](#).

Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 3) News and Noteworthy.

## Fall 2023

### Student enrollment for 2023–2024 academic year and Class of 2027

The University will not have an official final enrollment count until our September 6 census date. However, our preliminary headcount on the first day of classes totaled 11,687—including 7,104 undergraduates and 4,583 graduate students. Two-hundred and seventy-seven students transferred to SMU for fall 2023, and 1,599 new first-year students joined us on the Hilltop for the Class of 2027.. [preliminary 2023 data here](#).

We are thrilled to welcome our new class to the Hilltop, and to welcome back all our returning students.

### Fall 2023 General Faculty Meeting recap

Wednesday. We were grateful to Dr. Michael Harris, Faculty Senate President, for providing an update on the meeting.

tenured and promoted faculty with their new regalia. Our faculty members who were those recognized during the faculty meeting represent the best of SMU across all our schools and colleges. Congratulations, again, to our newly promoted faculty.

In his annual remarks, President Turner emphasized the importance of our research goals for research excellence. The Gerald J. Ford Building for Research and Innovation (dedicated in



2027. Having better projections across multiple years for revenue, expenses and strategic investments will inform our planning efforts as we strive to meet our goals for greater academic quality.

#### **Admissions and the recent SCOTUS decision**

Paul Ward, Vice President for Legal Affairs, and Wes Waggoner, Vice Provost for Enrollment

prac

-conscious admissions.

#### **Collaboration with the Faculty Senate during the 2023 2024 Academic Year**

current academic year and facilitated a conversation with the deans to promote collaboration.

#### **Critical Reasoning, Assessment and Improvement**

Dayna Oscherwitz, Associate Provost for Institutional Planning and Effectiveness, gave the deans an update on efforts underway by a faculty-led committee to review and revise the assessment rubric for Critical Reasoning.

help us attract a diverse pool of world-

### **Urban Research Faculty Cluster Task Force**

In February 2023, I [launched a faculty task force](#) to lead the fourth faculty cluster hire in urban research. The idea of an urban research faculty cluster was initially brought forward during Faculty Town Hall conversations in spring/summer 2021 and endorsed by the Social Justice and Equity Task Force.

The Urban Research Faculty Cluster Task Force has [submitted their final report](#). I am grateful for their fulsome response to my charge, particularly as it augments our learnings on best practices for cluster hires, an assessment of other urban research clusters in the state of Texas, and strategic opportunities that will help align the urban research cluster around the needs of our DFW community.

I am pleased to announce that Jill Kelly, Associate Professor and Altshuler Distinguished Teaching Professor, will be the lead for our urban research faculty cluster.

### **Request for participation in the Office of Institutional Planning and**

The Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness (IPE) is [currently collecting evidence](#) regarding courses tagged with Common Curriculum (CC) components. Faculty teaching these courses received an initial email via [assessment@smu.edu](mailto:assessment@smu.edu) on Friday, August 11, about the data collection. We ask faculty to continue to monitor their email for an important survey on or shortly after Friday, September 8, that will assist with these collection efforts. The email will include tailored submission instructions that vary depending on the term. Read more about these differences [here](#).

[Wiki site](#). IPE may be reached at [assessment@smu.edu](mailto:assessment@smu.edu) for any additional questions or concerns. [website](#) and newly created

### **Applications are Open for Provost Faculty Fellow for Equity and Inclusion.**

We have an opening in the Provost Faculty Fellows program for interested faculty to apply for the role with a focus on Equity and Inclusion and join us this fall term. We encourage all full-time faculty, including non-tenure line faculty and tenured faculty, to consider applying. Applications include a two-page statement of interest and a current CV. Faculty should obtain agreement from their chair or dean that their full university service contributions can be allocated to the position.

The Faculty-Staff Dining Room is available not only to SMU faculty and staff but also to post-doctoral scholars. Faculty are also encouraged to use the Faculty-Staff Dining Room to discuss projects with graduate students.

You can [purchase credits online for SMU dining facilities \(which includes access to the Faculty-Staff Dining Room\) here](#).

been scheduled starting Friday, September 1, from 3:00-4:00 p.m. in the Visualization Lab on the first floor of Ford Hall. These meetings are open to any faculty member interested in data science and will include discussions and updates on data science at SMU, short talks by our new hires as well as our current data science faculty, and the ability to cross-pollinate ideas.

During the first meeting, everyone will have a chance to meet one another and then hear from the Chair of the new Statistics and Data Science Department, Dan Heitjan, as well as HPC/OIT staff. Later in the semester, two guest speakers will attend select meetings and discuss the field of Data Science. These speakers are Dr. Soroush Saghafian from Harvard University visiting on October 26-27 and Dr. Pedram Hassanzadeh from Rice University visiting on November 2-3.

Thank you to Peter Moore, *ad interim* Institute, for putting together this meeting series and for overseeing the hiring process for our Data Science Cluster.

## **Key leadership searches underway**

### **[Data Science and Research Computing Institute](#)**

Last week, we completed our final round of on-campus interviews with each of the finalists. We are currently gathering feedback from campus stakeholders on all three candidates with hopes of naming our new director this fall.

As always, thank you to Suku Nair, Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer, for chairing the search committee, and to Peter Moore, who is serving as the *ad interim* Director for Data Science and Research Computing Institute, until the new Director arrives.

## **News and Noteworthy**

### **Constitution Day with the Cary M. Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility and SMU Libraries**

The [Cary M. Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility](#) and [SMU Libraries](#) have teamed up to celebrate Constitution Day this year on September 12-19 with a scavenger hunt at Fondren

## **SMU to host 2024 American Athletic Conference (AAC) Academic Consortium Symposium**

SMU will be hosting the American Athletic Conference (AAC) Academic Consortium Symposium in April 2024. The symposium brings together professionals working with student-athletes to discuss programming related to student well-being. These programs create structure, processes and programming that fosters partnerships among member institutions and develops initiatives that advance the academic mission of each school. Additional information about the Consortium can be found on the