

Weekly Update | February 24, 2023

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 informed and engaged with SMU's Academic Affairs 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 us your [email address](#).

Today's update falls into three categories: 1) Spring 2023 Board to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 3) News and Noteworthy.

Spring 2023

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During Thursday's committee meeting, I reviewed our ~~three~~ year strategy for undergraduate academic excellence/US News and World Report Top 50 including how this strategy aligns with our inclusive excellence and strategic plan goals. The Opportunity SMU fund supports our strategy for academic excellence by providing opportunities to expand scholarship, financial aid and student support programs that help us retain and graduate meritorious undergraduate students. Current undergraduates were featured in a video, which shared during our committee meeting, to illustrate the powerful impact Opportunity SMU has had on their university experience.

I also review

Earth Sciences and Associate Professor in Dedman College's Roy M. Huffington Department of Earth Sciences of his doctoral students, one of his undergraduate students and a postdoctoral researcher, to provide a real example of how research teams are better able to pursue research with impact.

I concluded the meeting by introducing SMU's newest deans: Mike McKee, Dean interim of the Perkins School of Theology and Nader Jalili, Dean of the Bobby B. Lyle School of Engineering.

Full Board

In this morning's meeting, I shared a consolidated version of my presentation to the Committee on Academic Affairs.

[\\$20M gift to Lyle School of Engineering expands research excellence and educational impact](#)

To conclude this week's Board meeting, SMU announced a landmark gift that creates the Mary and Richard Templeton Engineering Excellence Program that includes research support for faculty and fellowships for postdoctoral scholars and doctoral students, undergraduate scholars especially for women and students from

underrepresented populations—and an endowed chair in electrical and computer engineering. The gift will also endow the Mary and Richard Templeton deanship in the Lyle School, with Nader Jalili to serve as the inaugural dean.

Taos Executive Board meeting recap

This week, President Turner, Vice President for Development and External Affairs Brad Cheves, and I met with the Taos Executive Board. I made three leadership announcements, emphasizing their impacts to Taos, during remarks: 1) SMU's search for the Peter O'Dell, Jr. Data Science Institute Director, 2) Nader Jalili's appointment as the next Dean of the Lyle School of Engineering, and 3) Suku Nair's appointment as SMU's inaugural Vice President for Research and Chief Innovation Officer.

I also shared that I've charged a Taos Strategic Planning Task Force to flesh out a strategy and business plan for Taos that will integrate our Taos campus even more fully into the life of the university. This task force, with representatives from across our offices of research, student recruiting and retention, facilities, and business and finance, will bring forward recommendations that will shape Taos' holistic strategy for instruction, research, conference services, and infrastructure. David Lee, Assistant Vice President for Curriculum Strategy and Operations and William P. Clements Jr. Endowed Executive Director of SVAs, will be leading this group and we will provide additional updates in subsequent newsletters.

Provost to participate in informal conversations with college/school faculty this spring

Over the course of the spring semester, I will be visiting the college/schools for informal conversations open to their faculty. The purpose of these meetings is to listen and to engage in a conversation with new faculty. My first visit is planned in the Lyle School of Engineering on Friday, March 3, and my second visit is planned in

Research in North Texas” featuring faculty at SMU and other North Texas universities, and the Master of F
Qualifying Exhibition.

Please encourage

Annual Austin Symposium of Molecular and Structural Dynamics (ASMD) ~~held~~ this week

As mentioned last week, SMU's Computational and Theoretical Chemistry Group (CATCO) hosted the 28

<https://www.smu.edu/provost>