



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 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 send your ideas to this [email address](#). Previous newsletters are available [here](#).

Today's update falls into four categories: 1) Fall 2023, 2) Academic Excellence (with a heavy focus on outcomes across the complete student lifecycle), 3) Road to R1: Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 4) News and Noteworthy.

Fall 2023

Message from the Office of the President on violence in Israel-Gaza

On Tuesday, October 10, President Turner [sent a letter](#) to the SMU community about the violence transpiring in Israel and Gaza. I want to reiterate SMU's deep concern for those affected, both abroad and here on campus, and extend my gratitude, in particular, to the Student Affairs team for the support they are providing to those who may have been most impacted.

Retired Faculty Reception recap

Each year, the Office of the Provost hosts a reception for SMU's retired faculty. During this event, I always appreciate the chance to make new connections, rekindle old ones and – above all else – to hear stories from our incredible and dedicated retired faculty. We typically host the event in late spring but transitioned to a fall gathering this year, and it took place yesterday in the Meadows Museum's Jones Hall.

My thanks to Professor *emeritus* of Music (and former Associate Provost and Provost *ad interim*) Tom Tunks for his support in arranging this event and for serving as a vital liaison between my office and SMU's retired faculty.

SMU in Four Year-Two Progress Presentation recap

News and Noteworthy

The Office of Engaged Learning held annual Big iDeas Pitch Contest during SMU Family Weekend and selected competition winners

The Office of Engaged Learning held the annual Big iDeas Pitch Contest during SMU's Family Weekend on Friday, September 29. Twenty-two SMU students pitched their best business ideas in 90 seconds to a panel of judges for evaluation, and 13 student teams received Pitch Contest funding for their start-ups. Winning pitch ideas ranged from a non-profit that helps foster teens and an app that tracks classroom attendance and learning to a community-uniting South Asian clothing and accessories brand. [Read more about the winners and the event here.](#)

Chair of the Department of Operations Research and Engineering Management (OREM) at Lyle School of Engineering serving as the 2023 Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS) Annual Meeting Program Co-Chair

Professor Sila Cetinkaya, Chair of the Department of Operations Research and Engineering Management (OREM) at Lyle School of Engineering will serve as the Program Co-Chair for the [2023 Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences \(INFORMS\) Annual Meeting](#) in Phoenix, AZ, October 14 –