

May 7, 2021

Associate Provosts is currently developing a preliminary list of strategic funding priorities ó aligned with our academic priorities to strengthen teaching, research and student quality ó which will be finalized in time for the 2020-21 academic year. Information in the weeks and months ahead.

- o **Committee on Academic Affairs (May 6)** ó As a reminder, my reports this year focus on four major focus areas for academic quality: faculty research, scholarship and creative contributions (September 2020), undergraduate student

development landscape. While there are other sources of funding (including corporate, foundation, state and philanthropic) that will need to be considered, we believe that the federal funding priorities, as presented by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), can serve as an effective guide for SMU as we seek opportunities for strategic growth within our research faculty. Our introductory presentation is available [here](#).

We then invited faculty feedback, recommendations, and questions. To highlight a few key discussion topics, several faculty members identified existing research clusters that would benefit from additional investment, such as the democratization of information, neurobiology, and the digital humanities. Other faculty identified research clusters with strong potential, such as psychology, neuroscience and public health, and international development, energy and banking. Many faculty expressed concerns about the focus on only STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) and encouraged us to expand the conversation beyond STEM to include STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Math).

While we have signaled that our initial focus for faculty cluster hires is likely to be in fields that are most directly linked to the Carnegie Classification System, I greatly appreciated hearing from many faculty about the need to incorporate the arts, humanities and social sciences into our ongoing and future conversations around academic excellence and resource allocation.

Additionally, and following the Town Hall, many faculty have emailed my office with thoughtful recommendations along similar lines. In response, I plan to offer a Town Hall early in the fall 2021 semester that is focused more heavily on social sciences and we will include opportunities to bring forward ideas around strategic planning and visioning, both across the short- and long-term goals at SMU. We will share more information as plans materialize.

As with our [April 5 session](#), we recorded the April 30 meeting, which you can log in to review [here](#).

All faculty are encouraged to attend our final session, scheduled for Wednesday, May 12 at 4:00 pm. Click [here](#) to register.

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