



Search for the Dean, Lyle School of Engineering

Southern Methodist University

Dallas, Texas

Southern Methodist University (SMU), the premier private university in North Texas, seeks an inspirational and entrepreneurial leader to serve as the next Dean for the Lyle School of Engineering. This is an exciting opportunity to build a world-class engineering school that is integral to the success of a dynamic university with the size and alacrity to seize new opportunities. SMU is entering the second year of a \$1.5 billion campaign to attract and support outstanding students and faculty, to explore new fields with cutting-edge research empowered by future-facing technologies, and to positively impact Dallas and the world beyond. With appointment beginning as early as the spring 2023 semester, the new Dean will have the opportunity to refine and implement Lyle's strategic vision for future excellence.

With the support of the Provost and a resourceful and deeply invested Board of Trustees, Executive Board, and alumni, the new Dean will oversee the region's pre-eminent private engineering school. Lyle faculty feature numerous recipients of national and international awards and distinctions. Lyle alumni constitute a strong and well-connected leadership network within a broad range of engineering careers. The Lyle School is committed to the success of a diverse student body: currently 39% of its undergraduate students, 35% of its master's students, and 14% of its doctoral students are students of color and approximately 45% are female.

The Lyle School is one of the university's largest beneficiaries of the multi-million dollar investment in high performance computing technology and research support. SMU's NVIDIA DGX superpod, with 100 petaflops of supercomputing power, is a stellar tool for research and positions SMU as world class in terms of next generation AI, AR and VR capabilities. Lyle is working in collaboration with the Cox School of Business and the Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences to establish a new Statistics and Data Science Department that will support current emerging on-campus activities in data science. This includes a new Ph.D. in data science, which is scheduled to launch next year. Coupling these investments and developments with 12 faculty searches underway that will form a data science cluster hire in fall 2023 and an endowed data science director position to be filled next year, SMU is well positioned for a bright future in data science with Lyle faculty at the hub.

A landmark \$100M gift from the Moody foundation further established the importance of research and graduate education to SMU. Through this gift, SMU launched the Moody School for Graduate and

Advanced Studies in fall 2020 and the school is well positioned, both now and in the future, to support graduate studies throughout SMU's degree-granting schools.

The Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex ("DFW"), the fourth largest metropolitan area in the U. S., is an ideal location for an engineering school to provide research with impact. Dubbed the "Silicon Prairie," DFW has become a magnet for company headquarters over the past decade, with 140 headquarters relocations to the region from across the U.S. and abroad, including more than 45 companies moving from California. The Metroplex has surpassed Chicago as the top headquarters location for Fortune 500 companies: 22 now make DFW their home.

SMU's Lyle School of Engineering seeks in its new Dean a prominent and established scholar and academic leader who will be a visible, credible, and effective advocate and promoter for the school, while also overseeing new program development and providing expertise and service in realizing SMU's ambition to gain Carnegie Classification as a Research I (R1) university. Candidates must possess a Ph.D. or D. Eng., at least five years of experience in academic leadership, and a record of research and scholarship commensurate with the Lyle School's criteria for tenure at the full professor rank. Competitive candidates will evidence experience in or aptitude for building and growing collaborative and sustainable academic programs; energizing and motivating faculty, staff, and students; engaging and stewarding alumni; cultivating corporate and philanthropic supporters; and realizing institutional commitments to diversity and inclusion. Applications should demonstrate the candidate's readiness to pursue collaboration across SMU's other academic units and to lead an engineering school that nurtures high affinity among all its constituents. An aptitude and appetite for generating and sustaining online programs, developing innovative custom academic programs in coordination with corporate partners, capital and facilities fundraising, and raising endowments for named faculty chairs, scholarships, and public interest funding, will be essential to success in this deanship. A full list of the desired qualifications and characteristics can be found at the conclusion of this document, which was prepared by the search committee with the assistance of Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm. All confidential applications, inquiries, and nominations should be directed to the parties listed at the conclusion of this document.

About Southern Methodist University

A nonsectarian university with a focus on global impact, SMU serves more than 12,000 students in eight degree-granting schools and engages 25 PhD programs in science and engineering, social science, humanities, and education. Since its founding more than 100 years ago, SMU has been steadily gaining a reputation as a top academic institution, currently ranked No. 72 in National Universities by *U.S. News and World Report*. Since 2005, SMU has advanced past 55 institutions in the Carnegie Classification of Research Universities and is currently a doctoral university with high research activity (R2). Annual research expenditures at SMU have more than doubled since 2015 and now exceed \$40 million. SMU's FY 2022 operating budget is \$819 million, and the current endowment is valued at \$2.1 billion. With the establishment of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies in 2020, thanks to a landmark \$100 million commitment from the Moody Foundation, an ambitious strategic plan, and the recent launch of

the comprehensive campaign [SMU Ignited: Boldly Shaping Tomorrow](#) with a target of \$1.5 billion – the largest fundraising goal ever set by a private university in Texas – SMU is well-positioned to achieve Carnegie R1 status in the coming years.

Located near the heart of the dynamic Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area, a global center of commerce and culture with one of the highest concentrations of corporate headquarters in the United States, SMU is rich with opportunities for industry partnerships. As the Texas economy booms, companies and institutions look to future-focused universities like SMU for innovative ideas, data-driven research and technology that can accelerate knowledge and tackle grand challenges.

With a greater Dallas population exceeding 6.8 million (the fourth largest and fifth-most diverse metropolitan area), the region is home to the 10th most frequently traveled airport in the world and has been identified by *Forbes* as one of five cities “poised to be the next Silicon Valley tech hub.” The region is No. 9 in North America for tech talent and No. 5 for women in the tech workforce. Dallas boasts the nation’s largest urban arts district, which consists of world-class museums and a luminous cluster of performing arts spaces, highlighted by the Winspear Opera House, described by *Opera* magazine as America’s finest. It is home to four professional sports teams and offers easy access to a range of outdoor activities throughout the region. With the Trinity River, White Rock Lake, almost 400 parks, and over 125 miles of urban hiking and biking trails, the city provides abundant opportunities to enjoy the outdoors, and the city has been named one of the Greenest Cities in the world. SMU students and faculty benefit from proximity to the Dallas metropolitan area as an extension of the classroom, characterized by engaged learning projects and community partnerships.

SMU began as a bold vision shared by the Methodist Church and civic leaders in Dallas. With a rapidly growing population, Dallas community leaders had high aspirations for success and recognized the need for a great university in their dynamic city. At the same time, Methodist officials, seeking to expand the Church's mission of education, sought to establish a new university in the Southwest. On April 17, 1911, the charter was signed establishing SMU in Dallas. Four years later, in fall 1915, SMU opened as Dallas University, with 456 students and 37 faculty members. The curriculum focused on liberal arts, theology, and music, and the campus consisted of two permanent buildings, one of which was Dallas Hall, named in honor of the city.

Now in its second century, the University aims to create, expand, and impart knowledge through teaching, research, and service, shaping world changers who contribute to their communities and excel in their professions in a global society. An internationally recognized center for teaching, learning, and research, SMU serves as an intellectual resource for Dallas and the world. While it has deep roots in the Methodist tradition, the University is nonsectarian in its teaching and is committed to open inquiry and academic freedom.

Classified by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as a “high research activity” institution, SMU is a scholarly environment in which students work side-by-side with close to 770 faculty

to advance the arts, humanities, and sciences. The University offers 154 graduate and professional degrees in its eight schools: [Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences](#), [Algur H. Meadows School of the Arts](#), [Edwin L. Cox School of Business](#), [Bobby B. Lyle School of Engineering](#), [Dedman School of Law](#), [Perkins School of Theology](#), [Annette Caldwell Simmons School of Education and Human Development](#), and the [Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies](#).

The University is home to more than 7,000 undergraduate and nearly 5,000 graduate students. Thirty-three percent of all enrolled students identify as ethnic minorities. Fifty-one percent of undergraduates and 49% of graduate students are female. Among students reporting a religious preference, 28% are Catholic, and 12% are Methodist; 39% are from other Protestant denominations, and 10% represent other religions (including Judaism, Islam, and Hinduism).

SMU has a total of [44 centers and institutes](#), many of those focused on diverse and interdisciplinary subjects. They include the [Hunt Institute for Engineering and Humanity](#), the [Hart Center for Engineering Leadership](#), the [John Goodwin Tower Center for Public Policy and International Affairs](#), the [William P. Clements Center for Southwest Studies](#), the [Cary M. Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility](#), the [Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute](#), and the [Caruth Institute for Entrepreneurship](#). The University is also home to the [George W. Bush Presidential Center](#), which includes the presidential archives of the Bush Administration, a museum with permanent and traveling exhibits, and an independent public policy institute.

SMU is located on 234 acres in the beautiful residential University Park area, just five minutes north of downtown Dallas. The faculty, students, and staff enjoy all the cultural, athletic, and recreational opportunities that the ninth-largest city in the country provides. A 2021 economic study by SMU totaled its economic impact for North Texas at about \$7 billion. SMU is a "net importer" of talent, with about 60% of students from out-of-state and about two-thirds of graduates staying in the Dallas-Fort Worth area for their first job.

SMU also operates a campus in Taos, New Mexico. SMU Taos is a 423-acres-campus with 31 buildings, located within the Carson National Forest and surrounded by the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. [SMU-in-Taos](#) offers summer credit courses that emphasize experiential learning and hosts enriching programs for alumni, friends, and members of the Taos community.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity is an important part of SMU's values and future plans as evidenced by both the 2006-2015 and 2016-2025 Strategic Plans. The first goal for 2016-2025 includes strengthening the University's ability to recruit, appoint, promote, and retain a distinguished, gifted, and diverse faculty, and enhancing the University's ability to recruit, retain, and graduate academically and creatively gifted undergraduate and graduate students from diverse backgrounds. Over the course of the 2006-2015 Centennial Strategic Plan,

SMU increased and diversified its student applicant pool and increased underrepresented minority student enrollment. The University also significantly increased scholarships to compete for students.

In an effort to transcend traditional diversity training, the University launched the [Cultural Intelligence Initiative at SMU](#) in 2017, which is designed to prepare faculty, students, and staff with the knowledge and skills to communicate effectively and authentically with each other to solve complex issues facing the SMU community and the world today.

In the summer of 2020, the Black Unity Forum, a consortium of student, faculty, staff, and alumni groups came together to develop an [action plan](#) aimed at helping SMU become a more welcoming and inclusive environment for Black students, faculty, and staff. The University's responses and progress updates can be accessed [here](#).

Leadership at SMU

[President R. Gerald Turner](#) has served as SMU's president since 1995. Before joining SMU, President Turner was the chancellor of the University of Mississippi. He also served in administrative positions at the University of Oklahoma and Pepperdine University. He earned an AA degree from Lubbock Christian University, a BS in psychology from Abilene Christian University, and an MA and a PhD in psychology from the University of Texas at Austin.

[Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Elizabeth G. Lobo](#) joined SMU on July 6, 2020. A biomedical engineer, she came to SMU from the University of Missouri where she held the position of vice chancellor for strategic partnerships, dean of the College of Engineering, and Ketcham Professor of the College of Engineering. She earned her BS in mechanical engineering from the University of California, Davis, and received both her PhD in mechanical engineering and her MS in biomechanical engineering from Stanford University.

Research at SMU

Under President Turner's leadership, the University has made unprecedented progress academically and financially. Still, SMU remains ambitious; the University aspires to be one of the premier private higher learning institutions in the United States. To this end, the [Launching SMU's Second Century](#) strategic plan lays out six ambitious goals through 2025, including the need to strengthen scholarly research, creative achievement, and opportunities for innovation.

SMU believes it can reach R1 status within the next decade. A key driver of this improvement is the \$100 million gift from the Moody Foundation to fund the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies. President Turner also points to SMU's work with the U.S. Department of Defense that awarded a supercomputer system to the University in 2013.

The push to reach R1 status is part of the broader \$1.5 billion fundraising campaign with about \$900 million committed so far. It specifies:

- Over \$600 million to enrich teaching and research
- Over \$450 million to empower outstanding students
- Over \$450 million to enhance campus and community support

In support of the strategic priority of achieving R1 status, SMU has increased investments in supporting Ph.D. education and assembled significant resources. The [Darwin Deason Institute for Cyber Security](#), the [Center for Research Computing](#), the [Data Science Institute](#), the [AT&T Center for Virtualization](#), the [Center for VR Learning Innovation](#), and the [Hart eCenter](#) engage emergent 21st-century technologies and issues including AI, VR, and augmented reality, visualization, and the human-computer interface simulation, cyber security, the internet of things, and distributed computing. The NVIDIA DGX superpod collaboration last year enhanced what was already a strength at SMU, increasing the university's supercomputer memory tenfold and setting the stage for AI and machine learning 25 times faster than current levels. Additional hardware, software, and training investments from the University makes SMU a world leader in this space and has game-changing implications for a range of academic units as well as employers in a growing technology hub.

SMU is a member of [LEARN \(Lonestar Education and Research Network\)](#), which operates a state-of-the-art fiber-based optical and IP network throughout the state of Texas, and is the connector to the Internet2 advanced networking network, comprising more than 200 U.S. universities in cooperation with 70 leading corporations, 45 government agencies, laboratories and other institutions of higher learning, as well as more than 50 international partner organizations.

SMU researchers are helping to re-invent the way students are educated in STEM fields on the national and local level with [projects testing the effectiveness of innovative math curriculum](#) and the development of the [West Dallas STEM School](#) – a joint project between the University, the Toyota USA Foundation, and Dallas Independent School District. Faculty are also conducting research with far-reaching consequences for global nuclear security through work with the [Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology](#). These are just a few examples of SMU faculty applying their research to help solve some of the most pressing problems facing the nation and the world today.

The University is in the process of completing cluster hires of faculty that will enhance areas of established research strength at SMU, particularly in the areas of data science and high-performance computing. Based on faculty town halls in spring 2021 and the recommendations of faculty-led task forces, SMU is focusing on two interdisciplinary cluster hires across two areas of strategic research excellence: earth hazards and national security, and 21st-century technology and education.

Lyle School of Engineering

The SMU Lyle School of Engineering is committed to developing the new American engineer, one prepared to excel and lead in creating new economic opportunities while meeting the most difficult challenges facing society. This focus on impact and educating well-rounded engineers committed to advancing society has set Lyle apart throughout its history and remains a guiding principle of the School as it charts its future of educating well-rounded leaders, producing research to address some of the world's most pressing problems, and enabling a thriving economy through partnering with industry and educating a 21st century workforce. Lyle and its programs are accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology Inc. (ABET) with the next comprehensive review scheduled for 2026-27. The School's 70 faculty educate more than 900 undergraduates and nearly 850 graduate students across five departments: [Civil and Environmental Engineering](#), [Computer Science](#), [Electrical and Computer Engineering](#), [Mechanical Engineering](#), and [Operations Research and Engineering Management](#).

Role of the Lyle School Dean

Reporting to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Dean of the Lyle School of Engineering serves as the chief academic and executive officer of the school. The Dean will provide leadership and vision; promote the external visibility of Lyle; foster a world-class student experience; develop and support faculty and staff; sustain and help establish research groups of singular excellence that will generate future thought leaders; and manage Lyle's fiscal and physical resources. In addition, the Dean will effectively work with alumni, employers, and other benefactors to enhance the reputation and reach of the school and garner financial support.

The Dean is also a university-wide leader who will contribute to the conversations and strategy that will shape the future of SMU. The Dean oversees an operating budget of \$30 million, including approximately \$6 million in sponsored research annually. In addition to the department chairs, the Dean's leadership team consists of a senior associate dean; associate dean for engineering entrepreneurship; associate dean of operations; assistant dean of assessment and graduate studies; assistant dean of diversity, equity, and inclusion; chief of staff, director of development, and financial business manager.

Key Opportunities and Challenges for the Lyle School Dean

The new Dean will join SMU at a critical and exciting juncture in its history. With a strategic plan that prioritizes research expansion, the largest fundraising campaign of any private university in Texas, and the new Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies along with many transformational research-focused developments, SMU is ready to leap forward and join the ranks of top research institutions. The Lyle School will be a critical contributor to this work. To support this momentum, the Dean will address the following opportunities and challenges:

Grow Research

Lyle faculty conduct high-impact research that makes them leaders in their fields, garnering recognition through awards and memberships in leading professional associations. The school's centers and institutes provide it with an important vehicle to bring faculty together with industry and government to address pressing questions and problems through research and education. Recognizing the institutional priority of growing research and its utility in furthering the school's impact-focused mission, the next Dean will work with faculty and department leaders to ensure the success of a renowned and impactful research enterprise by establishing a vision for research excellence, supporting and connecting faculty, and seeding big ideas. They will support these ambitious goals through strategic hires and by building the resources, infrastructure, and support to enable teams to pursue multidisciplinary projects and compete for multi-university center grants. As the external face of the school, the Dean will pursue efforts to connect with federal agencies and industry partners to continue to produce exceptional discoveries and interdisciplinary collaborations. The Dean must have the academic taste, judgment, and foresight to make opportunistic hires, develop resources, and advocate for additional research infrastructure and space renovations.

Enhance Lyle's profile and impact in the region and beyond

The next Dean will promote the reputation and impact of Lyle's faculty and students widely, across the region, in the state, and through presence and visibility in the national arena. With a world-class supercomputing infrastructure and engaged alumni and industry partners throughout the vibrant DFW region, Lyle is well positioned to build upon its strong reputation through partnerships with industry and other universities. One example is SMU's recent decision to invest in space at Pegasus Park, a 23-acre campus designed to drive healthcare innovation and social impact through 40,000 feet of flexible lab, training, and office space to promote the convergence of entrepreneurs, industry leaders, nonprofit groups and academic institutions. The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center has a significant presence at the park and SMU's computational strengths could make them a valued partner for a top academic medical center.

The new Dean must maintain existing ties with private-sector partners, such as Raytheon, Bell Helicopter, and Lockheed Martin, while developing new partnerships through programs and research with companies in the DFW metro area and beyond. The Dean will also work to seek out tech transfer opportunities and work with the University and industry to better enable faculty to take advantage of the many potential partners in the region.

Enhance Lyle's financial position through fundraising and resource management

The Lyle School enjoys excellent philanthropic support from alumni and friends and an engaged executive board. The next Dean will arrive in the middle of a major university-wide fundraising campaign and will be expected to continue this success, advocating for the support of people and programs that allow Lyle

to pursue big ideas and attract top students and faculty. The Dean will fundraise and friend-raise, making the case for Lyle's impact to external constituents. But while the School's size and the private university environment in which it operates allow Lyle to be more nimble and innovative than its competitors, it also makes it necessary to strategically pursue niche areas of excellence. Decisions made about where and how the School focuses its resources will have far-reaching consequences for the future of Lyle and SMU. The Dean must achieve this through convening and consulting faculty and University leadership while drawing on their own broad vision of engineering, understanding of societal needs, and Lyle's particular advantages, to act decisively.

Support the continued excellence of educational quality for undergraduate and graduate students

Lyle has a long-standing reputation for delivering a quality educational experience where students receive the individual attention and experiential learning opportunities not found at larger institutions. The Dean must be committed to maintaining this high standard of education. The next Dean must continue to support undergraduates through presence, visibility, and attention to their needs with an eye toward strong student success and graduation rate metrics across demographic groups. They will be supported in this work by [SMU in Four](#), a concerted university-wide effort to integrate policies that improve student retention and graduation rates.

The Lyle School enjoys strong undergraduate demand and a reputation for graduating students prepared to succeed in the workforce, but graduate student enrollment has dropped since the pandemic while decreased federal funding for graduate fellowships has constrained graduate research programs. The Dean will make strategic, data-driven decisions on program development while continuing to support student needs and building a diverse pipeline for students in master's and PhD programs to protect the School from sudden drops in enrollment, provide additional avenues for nontraditional students, and support the growth of the research enterprise.

Champion and advance Lyle's commitment to diversity

The Lyle School enrolls a diverse group of students. Undergraduate enrollment has exceeded 30 percent women every year for more than a decade and women represented approximately 40 percent of the most recent graduating class. Minority students also make up 35 percent of the undergraduate student body and 34 percent of master's students. The new Dean will continue to expand the School's efforts to recruit an increasingly diverse cadre of faculty, students, and staff and will be a leader in communicating the important role diversity and inclusivity play in driving overall excellence. The Dean must be attentive to retention efforts for women and underrepresented minorities and must continually reinforce a culture in which all faculty, students, and staff are welcomed, valued, and supported.

Partner with other schools on campus

Lyle's location on a campus with other schools with strong national reputations and excellent faculty and students is another key advantage that the Dean can leverage to achieve success. The development of a new Data Science Department that will cut across Dedman, Cox, and Lyle is an obvious opportunity to provide a unique and sought-after educational experience as well as opportunities for exciting research collaborations. The Dean will encounter a wide variety of opportunities to connect with all schools on campus as well as [SMU Guildhall](#) – one of the top graduate schools for game design in the nation. The stewardship of these important relationships, promotion of them across the university and externally, and the discovery and establishment of new collaborations, will be critical responsibilities of the next Dean. The Dean must have an ability to find mutually-beneficial partnerships while encouraging faculty to do the same.

Qualifications and Characteristics

The successful candidate will possess all or most of the following:

- Ability to develop, articulate, and champion a shared vision for Lyle;
- Demonstrated commitment to championing the University's values of equity, diversity, and inclusion, with a track record of implementing strategies and programs that attract, provide support for, and retain students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds;
- Capacity and commitment to be a successful fundraiser through building strong relationships with a broad range of constituencies and an ability to represent Lyle to a variety of stakeholders;
- Strong record of achievement in research and the ability to inspire and enable faculty to achieve research success;
- Demonstrated success in establishing and executing a strategic vision;
- Financial and budgetary acumen, including evidence of fiscally-responsible management practices and a record of fiduciary transparency and accountability;
- Clear ability to lead, empower, and delegate to a strong management team;
- Commitment to enriching the student experience;
- Propensity to think deeply and creatively to solve cross-cutting academic objectives;
- Distinguished scholarly reputation and strong record of academic accomplishment commensurate with appointment as a tenured full professor in the college;
- Excellent written and oral communication skills and the ability to be an effective spokesperson for Lyle;
- Highest personal integrity, courage to address complex issues involving a variety of stakeholders with conflicting needs, a sense of humor, and grace under pressure.

Applications, Inquiries, and Nominations

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/search-detail/8769>. Electronic submission of materials is required.

ISAACSON, MILLER

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SMU will not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, education activity, or admissions on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. SMU's commitment to equal opportunity includes nondiscrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. The Executive Director for Access and Equity/Title IX Coordinator is designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies, including the prohibition of sex discrimination under Title IX. The Executive Director/Title IX Coordinator may be reached at the Perkins Administration Building, Room 204, 6425 Boaz Lane, Dallas, TX 75205, 214-768-3601, accessequity@smu.edu.