



Michael T. Stephenson

Dear Bearkat faculty and staff,

As we wrap up grades and prepare for fall commencement amid a semester of challenges and opportunities, once again I'd like to thank you for continued commitment to our students' success. This is a resilient institution, and I am continually grateful to be a part of it.

I'd like to take a moment before we part ways for the long break to share some of the latest updates in Academic Affairs.

Office of the Provost Announcement & Restructure

First off, it is my sincere pleasure to announce that Dr. Anne Gaillard is the new vice provost for Academic Affairs. She has served as the interim vice provost for the greater part of the past year and has continued to prove herself in the role. I am so thankful for her continued support and leadership within the division. Please join me in wishing her well in her new role.

In addition, I am pleased that DeLynn Say will join the Office of the Provost as academic budget officer on Dec. 13, replacing Karen Whitney who retired in August. I have made minor changes to roles, titles, and reporting lines in the office. Most of the changes made were to titles in an effort to better reflect the positions held and keep them in line with higher education nomenclature. Please see the new organizational chart [here](#).

Ombudsperson Named

Dr. Falguni Mukherjee, associate professor in the Department of Environmental and Geosciences, has been selected to serve as the faculty/staff campus ombudsperson for the 2022 calendar year. Dr. Mukherjee joined SHSU in 2010 and has served as the graduate coordinator for the MS in Geographic Information Systems program since 2014 and is currently a participant in the Texas Academic Leadership Academy (TALA).

She will devote the spring 2022 semester to building the ombudsperson office, including establishing an office charter and participating in professional ombudsperson training. The ombudsperson office will open to employees this summer. Thank you, Dr. Mukherjee, for taking on this important new role. We'll share more information about the office and its services to campus in the spring semester.

Academic Policies Under Review

In the past few weeks, I've sent two emails to faculty regarding the revision of four academic policies. (See the emails [here](#) and [here](#).)

A work group of representative faculty and administrators has been appointed to review the policies and provide recommendations. The policy review process will conclude by May 4, 2022. To ensure your input is received, please share your opinions on the current policies by filling out [this survey](#). The survey will close at 5 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 7. Following the work group's creation of a draft, the policy recommendations will be circulated and then discussed at open faculty forums in March.

Dean Searches

SHSU is currently conducting three dean searches: in the College of Business Administration, College of Health Sciences, and the College of Osteopathic Medicine. All three nationwide searches are being conducted with the assistance of search firms with the intent to have the positions filled by this summer. I appreciate all of those who participated in providing feedback and those who are serving on search committees. Thank you for taking the time to participate in the dean search process and invest in the future of SHSU.

Next Semester

We've had three sessions of the informal gathering dubbed "Coffee with the Provost" this semester. This was an opportunity for us to gather and foster fellowship among our colleagues. I plan to continue these meetups regularly moving forward, and I hope I'll see you in attendance at one soon. To continue conversations with faculty and staff across campus, President White and I will be making visits to each of the colleges beginning in late January, so please keep an eye out for dates and locations soon.

Until then, may your winter break be filled with joy, time with your loved ones, and hopefully, some hard-earned relaxation.

Thank you again for your dedication and work this semester,

Michael T. Stephenson
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

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