



Urban Faculty Research Cluster  
Faculty Taskforce Report  
June 3, 2023

# Taskforce Committee Members

Eric Bing, Professor, Simmons School of Education and Human Development

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Owen Lynch, Associate Professor, Meadows School of the Arts

Pamela Metzger, Professor of Law, Dedman School of Law

Neely Myers, Associate Professor, Dedman College

Herve Tchumkam, Professor, Dedman College

**Maria Dixon Hall, Chief Diversity Officer**  
**Associate Professor, Meadows School of the Arts**  
**Convener**



"The question is how we can shape these now only loosely inter-related parts into a more closely-knit network with greater engagement across the components? The result of such an endeavor would be, we hope, more interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary research; an increased sharing, or, at a minimum, understanding, of methods across subfields; greater recognition and consumption of work beyond one's disciplinary home; and greater emphasis on comparative research and non-Western and global cities. The result, in short, would be a better understa

- x University of Michigan Flint Urban Sustainability and Environmental Health Research Cluster
- x University of Canterbury (NZ) Cluster for Community and Urban Resilience
- x University of Chicago Urban Labs, which focuses on crime, education, health, economic opportunity, and energy & environment

### **The University of Texas at Dallas: The Institute for Urban Policy Research**

Founded in 2005 as the J. McDonald Williams Institute, the mission of The Institute for Urban Policy Research is to provide research and evaluation, education and outreach, and guidance and consulting to inform, motivate, and inspire community-focused organizations that improve the quality of life in the communities they serve. Initial Funding for the Institute was given by Trammell Crow Chairman Emeritus Don Williams. A non-degree granting institute, it does offer a non-credit certificate. Its two existing staff members are members of the School of Economic, Political, and Public Policy Sciences.

### **The University of Texas at Arlington: Institute of Urban Studies**

The Institute of Urban Studies (IUS) is the principal research center for the College of Architecture, Planning, and Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Arlington. Originally HVWDEOLVKHG LQ E \ DQ DFW RI WKH 7H[DV tHJLVODWXU conduct research and provide technical assistance to city and county governments, governmental agencies, and non-profit organizations, and to offer education and teaching opportunities to individuals either already in or contemplating public service careers. Focusing predominantly on housing, urban mobility, and water settlement, IUS has a coordinating faculty director and four Graduate Fellows, but grants no degrees or certificates.

### **Texas Southern University: The Urban Research and Resource Center**

Housed within the Thurgood Marshall School of Law, The Urban Research and Resource Center (URRC) is a research institute that combines scholarly endeavors with community outreach in order to assume and expand its leadership role as the academic and policy resource for urban issues and solutions. Its major emphasis is on the production of journals in one of its five areas of focus: criminal justice, history of African Americans in Houston, housing and community development, public education, and urban resources. It is a non-degree granting center, offering no area of specialization within the Law School. Overseen by a board comprised of law professors, the URRC is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation funded in part by Texas Southern University, but relies on program funding from donations from individuals.

### **Rice University: The Kinder Institute for Urban Research**

The Kinder Institute for Urban Research is an interdisciplinary research organization at Rice University in Houston. Endowed by Richard and Nancy Kinder for \$50 million, the Institute is a partner-oriented research cluster, obtaining additional funding from sponsor clients and large corporate partners. Although its director is a member of the faculty, it is not a degree granting or certificate granting institute. Primarily known as a data visualization and aggregator for various interests in the Greater Houston Area, it produces an annual survey regarding the state of Houston-area residents. One of the larger centers, it is staffed by over 20 full-time researchers and analysts and 15 administrators.

### **University of Texas-Austin: Institute for Urban Policy Research and Analysis**

The Institute for Urban Policy Research & Analysis (IUPRA) is an interdisciplinary policy research institute that provides intersectional policy solutions. Housed in the School of Liberal Arts, it is the only Texas institute dedicated to social justice, anti-racism, and articulated focus on social equity. Founded through efforts of the Texas Legislative Black Caucus, it is not degree granting and is organized in topical labs. Despite its origination in 2011 and boasting over 33 faculty fellows, it has little notable research funding and has resigned itself to issuing issue briefs and holding events.

### **University of North Texas-Dallas: The SERCH Institute**





This opportunity to align the city's priorities and SMU's research agenda and expertise permits an occasion for the work of the University to benefit the people with whom we work and live. Just as Emory is aligned with Atlanta, Vanderbilt with Nashville, and Tulane with New Orleans, an urban research cluster, partnering with the City of Dallas for the benefit of its citizens, offers a chance for SMU to truly become Dallas's University.

### Existing Faculty Excellence and Curricular Synergies

7KHUH LV QRW RQH VLQJXODU DFDGHPLF XQLW RU VFKRRO and engagement with the issues facing urban communities. A cursory examination of attachment one illustrates that a number of faculty in every SMU School is actively participating in urban VWXGLHV UHVHDFK DQG HQJDJHPHQW \$GGLWLRQDOO\ RX impacts on policy, practice, and the practical lived experiences of urban citizens across our nation and around the world. Several colleagues noted in the national media for their contributions include:

- ‡ Dr. Dominique Baker (Education)
- ‡ Professor Willie Baronet (Advertising)
- ‡ Dr. Owen Lynch (Corporate Communication and Public Affairs)
- ‡ Professor Pam Metzger (Law)
- ‡ Dr. Barbara Minsker (Engineering)
- ‡ Dr. Neely Myers (Anthropology)

We have collectives of professors in Anthropology (focusing on health and social equity), History (new public health project on global PEPFAR), Economics (focusing on urban growth and sustainability), World Languages and History (immigrant communities), Earth Sciences and Civil and Environmental Engineering (infrastructure, earth Hazards and security), Education and Human Development (equity), Corporate Communication and Public Affairs (social entrepreneurship and non-profit organizing), Advertising (homelessness), Psychology (mental health), and Journalism (civic engagement), amongst many others. Some of these groups already collaborate across schools, such as the Data Science for Social Good research cluster and the GIS@SMU research cluster. SMU also offers a number of undergraduate and graduate course that address urban issues. Additionally, these faculty have established strong external partners for collaboration (See Attachment\_).

)URP RXU FRPSUHKHQVLYH DQDO\VLV RI 608¶V VFKRODUO\ between Schools and Departments, we see four main areas of potential:

1. Growth (Education, Human Capital, and Innovation)
2. Opportunity (Migration, Integration, Poverty, and Inclusion)
3. Well-being (Sustainability, Climate Resilience, Infrastructure, and Health)
4. Civic Engagement and Urban Life (Information/Misinformation, The Arts, Civil Society and Social Entrepreneurship)

As depicted in figure 1, Theme 1 (Growth) allows for synergies between Economics, Education and Sociology. Theme 2 (Opportunity) allows for synergies between Anthropology, Economics,

Education, History, Law, Political Science, Sociology, and World Languages. Theme 3 (Well-being) allows for synergies between Anthropology, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Counseling, Economics, Earth Sciences, Law and Political Science, and Sociology. Theme 4 (Civic Engagement) allows for synergies between Art, Art History, the Bush Presidential Center, CCPA, Data Arts, Journalism, Perkins School of Theology, Political Science).



The above themes provide opportunities for strengthening existing curricular alignments across the university such as:

- ‡ **The SMU Human Rights Program** This interdisciplinary major and program educates the next generation of changemakers deeply engaged in community research and activism on campus, in Dallas, and across the globe. It also attracts diverse students: 80% of their students identify as female, and many of the students are queer, BIPOC, and/or working-class. New course offerings in Urban Studies would better position these students to advance change.
- ‡ **University Honors Program (UHP)** The Greater Dallas Experience course The Office of Student Academic Engagement and Success sees this co-taught, interdisciplinary course as an opportunity to augment the cohort experience of the new Mustang Scholars Program, as well as the UHP that it currently serves. An adequate number of faculty with urban studies expertise (not necessarily limited to Dallas, as previous instructors have brought expertise from other cities into the course) would enable its expansion beyond the 45 students currently taught. It has previously been taught by professors of history, literature, anthropology, and

sociology and is currently limited to history and literature on an irregular basis due to administrative responsibilities and gaps.

‡ Community-based and introductory courses that reflect student identities, values, and interests. Many SMU students double and triple major, carefully planning to achieve curriculum requirements and graduate on time. Student representatives spoke with us about their desire to see more diversity within their required coursework in fields such as Pre-Med. For instance, a required Chemistry course offered by a new faculty member specializing in inorganic chemistry might offer a course that engages students in a community research project, sampling and testing waters across the diverse communities of Dallas to consider how environmental hazards disproportionately impact certain communities.

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city. We also think that a student-led lecture series enabling them to invite relevant speakers for them, perhaps at least once per year, could be a programmatic strength.

Another exc



5. **New York University** has an ambitious cluster initiative with 15 areas of focus and faculty across campus <sup>2</sup> from literary studies to STEM. This is designed to impact not only New York, but cities worldwide. They are also clearly using these hires to expand diversity in the faculty. They write that their cluster initiatives, several of which seem relevant to our interests, represent both an opportunity and a responsibility for NYU to be a leader and a force for positive change in recruitment in higher education. By hiring, supporting, and elevating the most innovative faculty with diverse research, life experience, and a commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration, NYU enhances learning for both faculty and students. The expertise of cluster faculty aims to benefit generations of global researchers, professionals, citizens, and leaders.
  
6. **The University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa** has a program in Environment and Society that offers undergraduate and graduate certificates with 12 credits from specific courses. The program is housed in the Department of Geography. Their focus on urban, regional, and environmental planning includes exploring problems related to housing, conflicting land uses, ecotourism, environmental management, transportation planning, economic development in rural and urban areas, regional

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Cluster formations, more specifically, research cluster hiring, are exciting. Yet, the task force concedes that the very breadth of interest, faculty expertise, and ongoing research that makes the urban research cluster intriguing also makes it logistically complex. For example, negotiations about the final composition of the faculty cluster (scholars who are interested versus those who are actively researching), cross-departmental promotion and tenure guidelines (essential for the protection of junior faculty), and the administrative infrastructure to maintain such a vast faculty collaboration are daunting. Nevertheless, as the fourth such research cluster SMU has undertaken, such challenges may be easily overcome.

However, we would be remiss not to report that underlying the faculty's excitement about the emergence of an urban research cluster is a cynicism about the University's will to move forward with the enterprise. The task force and our colleagues questioned whether academic leadership would undertake the considerable financial investment required.

While there is a move to centralize the distribution of faculty lines, the prevailing belief and expectation of SMU's tenured faculty (particularly those here over a decade) are that a department's lines remain within the department suffering the loss of personnel. This clash of values (and organizational realities) have served to create tensions within two academic units most impacted by centralization: Dedman College and Meadows School of the Arts. Therefore, to support the vision of research clusters and respond to line centralization, Deans either converted empty tenured and tenure track lines for the research clusters being staffed or were given NTT positions to fill faculty vacancies.

The taskforce believes this history becomes germane to the urban research cluster because it is the fourth research cluster that Deans will be asked to staff with existing faculty lines. Already under pressure from chairs and faculties to meet longstanding needs within high enrollment majors and graduate programs, Deans face a dilemma: use a line to support another research cluster that offers their school the opportunity to diversify their curriculum and faculty or advocate for a line to relieve pressure on existing faculty members and curriculum?

Hence, the task force's major roadblock in prescribing the next steps. **We are convinced that for the urban research cluster to make a significant impact on SMU's academic brand with underrepresented scholars and communities, ensure the sustainability and retention of scholars hired, and keep the institutional commitment to the Moving Forward Agreement a minimum of five to seven tenure track faculty are required. A suggested allocation is 3-4 in Dedman (Anthropology, Economics, Sociology, English, Political Science) and 2 in Meadows (Journalism and CCPA <sup>2</sup> Social Entrepreneurship only).**

Based on estimates from conversations with the Deans, at most three existing lines can be offered for this cluster. **At an average cost of \$129K per line (including startup and fringe benefits), the annualized total recurring budget request would be \$516K for the remaining four lines.** Therefore, without additional funds from the Deans, these additional lines would

either need to be funded from a central budget request by the Provost to the University or



**ATTATCHMENT 1**  
**FACULTY AND DISCIPLINARY CENTERS**  
**INTERESTED IN URBAN ISSUES BY SCHOOL AND DEPARTMENT**

**Cox School of Business**

Folsom Institute for Real Estate program:

- research and debate of critical private and public land use; program currently clinical professors who do applied research on real estate, interests in the financial sustainability of affordable housing
- Joseph Cahoon teaches real estate practicum with 10 UG and 10 MBA students who manage real estate investment fund with \$4M invested in affordable housing project in Fort Worth

**Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences**

Anthropology

- x Eric Bing
- x Maryann Cairns
- x Kacey Hollenbach
- x Neely Myers

Chemistry

- x Elfi Kraka

Earth Sciences

- x Stephen Arrowsmith
- x Heather De Shon

Economics

- x Wookun Kim, Assistant Professor, Economics
- x Klaus Desmet, Professor, Economics
- x Daniel Millimet, Professor, Economics

English

- x Darryl Dickson-Carr, African American literature

History

- x Neil Foley, Professor, immigration
- x Kenneth Hamilton, Professor, African American and ethnic studies



## **Dedman College of Law**

- x Nathan Cortez, Co-Director of the Tsai Center for Law, Science and Innovation, Callejo Endowed Professor of Law in Leadership and Latino Studies, health law/international health
- x Eric Ruben, criminal law
- x Seema Mohapatra, health care equity
- x Anna Offit, prosecutorial ethics, the U.S. jury system
- x Mary Specter, rights of consumers and tenants, access to justice in the civil courts
- x Jessica Dixon Weaver, child welfare laws, multigenerational living and
- x Leo Yu, civil rights litigation and Asian American jurisprudence
- x Pamela Metzger- Deason Law Center

## **Lyle School of Engineering**

### **Civil and Environmental Engineering**

- x Khaled Abdelghany, Professor, urban growth and transport
- x Nicos Makris, Professor, structures and natural hazards
- x Barbara Minsker, Professor, infrastructure
- x Janille Smith-Colin, Assistant Professor, sustainability and infrastructure resilience
- x Kathleen Smits, Chair, Civil and Environmental Engineering, water and energy
- x Jessie Zarazaga, Clinical Associate Professor, landscape mapping and public engagement

### **Electrical and Computer Engineering**

- x Jianhui Wang, Professor, smart grid and power
- x Mohammad Khodayar, Associate Professor, smart grid and power
- x Issues: grid resilience, energy resources

### **Hunt Institute for Engineering and Humanity**

- x Dr. Eva Szalkai Csaky, Executive Director and co-founder of the Inclusive Economy Consortium

## **Meadows School of Arts**

### **Advertising**

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- o Roberto Conduro
- o Tashima
- o Elyan Hill
- o Adam Herring

Corporate Communication & Public Affairs

- x Owen Hanley Lynch, Associate Professor, Participatory Action Research & Asset Based Community Development. Primary focus is on the local Agri-System: community food resilience, local food production and access, job training and food entrepreneurialism. Focus Research in South Dallas Fair Park (primarily 75210 & 75215) since 2010. Partnered with community members and organizations to both research and implement projects- for example Restorative Farm (USDA- recognized to be one of the most ambitious and impactful urban food projects in the country). Projects have been bases several research projects, NSF grant applications, student capstone and research projects, internships and engaged Dallas location.
- x Doric Earle- Professor of Practice. Dr. Earle has been active research and consulting in economic development projects in South Dallas. This led an expansion of applied research and new social impact hub at SMU that he is co-directing. Co-founder with Dr. Lynch on Restorative Farm project.
- x Maria Dixon Hall, Associate Professor and Chief Diversity Officer (Non-Profit and Religious Organizations focus and foundgv Irsity Officer (Non

### Teaching & Learning

- o Quentin Sedlacek, roles that racialized and gendered ideologies of language play in shaping teacher practices and student experiences
- o Magdalena Pando, research also focus on teacher preparation and professional development aimed at fostering culturally and linguistically inclusive teaching methods in early childhood and K-12 education
- o Johnitha Watkins Johnson, Urban Education
- o Karla del Rosal, teaches graduate and undergraduate courses on bilingual education, ESL instruction, student diversity, and classroom assessment

### Counseling

- o Greta Davis - Prioritizing increasing diversity in the Counseling program - increases in diversity among faculty and students under her leadership; utilizes Cultural Formation Interview and Culturally Informed Suicide Assessment to ensure proper assessment and no misdiagnoses due to cultural background
- o Terra Wagner - Simmons Diversity Officer; Counseling Program Diversity

## INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH CLUSTERS WITH A FOCUS ON URBAN ISSUES

- x Asian Studies and Asian American Experiences
  - o research space and opportunities for collaboration, to advance creative teaching in Asian Studies, and to foster a campus environment inclusive of diverse perspectives
  - o Piyawan Charoensap-Kelly, pckelly@mail.smu.edu
  - o Wookun Kim, wookunkim@mail.smu.edu
  - o LaiYee Leong, lleong@mail.smu.edu
  - o Rachel Ball-Phillips, rmball@mail.smu.edu
- x Data Science for Social Good Research Cluster
  - o DULVHV RXW RI 6081V 6XPPHU 5(8 HQWLWOHG 3'DWD 6F1 GHYHORSPhQW YRWLQJ IDLUQHVV WKH 'DOODV &RXQWV access to transportation services and the fairness of Dallas County eviction and their effect on families.
  - o Lauren Gilmore
  - o Nicos Makris, Civil Engineering, urban areas and natural hazards
  - o Mary Spector, mspector@smu.edu
  - o Lynne Stokes, slstokes@smu.edu
- x Earth Hazards and National Security
  - o Two critical and interconnected issues facing the United States and Texas today are Earth Hazards and National Security. With existing and emerging challenges associated with climate change and an increasingly multipolar world, addressing these challenges requires research on natural and human systems, technical innovation and advanced monitoring and data analyses approaches. T
  - o Heather DeShon, hdeshon@smu.edu
  - o Dinesh Rajan, rajand@lyle.smu.edu
  - o Alejandro Aceves, aaceves@smu.edu
  - o Stephen Arrowsmith, sarrowsmith@smu.edu
  - o Zhong Lu, zhonglu@smu.edu
- x GIS @ SMU
  - o mapping and spatial analysis
  - o Klaus D/F11 F11 F11 F11 F11 F1 0 0 1 275.88 322.6 Tm0 G( )JTJETQ EMC /Span 4MCID 22/Lang.6 Tm

