

Subject: A Message from Dean Quick: Information and Resources for Graduate Students



March 29, 2021

Dear Graduate Students,

This has been a year unlike any other, and I know you have faced many challenges. I hope you share my optimism, however, for a return to normal over the course of the coming months. As President Turner announced in January, SMU is planning to return to regular on-campus courses and activities by fall 2021. With the growing role of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, led by Dr. Maria Dixon Hall, the University is also making important strides in providing an inclusive environment in which all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or religion, can thrive. For those of you graduating this spring, there is reason to hope that the next steps in your journey will be more like those you anticipated before the pandemic, and I am looking forward to wishing you well on that journey at Commencement. As we look towards a brighter future, I want you to know that we still have the needs and concerns of our graduate students in mind. To that end, allow me to draw your attention to some information about resources and support available to graduate students that may be helpful to you.

Vaccine Scheduling at SMU: On Friday, SMU announced the campus is receiving an allotment of the COVID-19 vaccine for distribution to our University community. All SMU faculty, staff and students are eligible. Vaccinations will be administered by appointment only at the SMU COVID-19 vaccination site on the northwest side of the Dr. Bob Smith Health Center.

Please use [this registration link](#) to schedule a vaccination appointment which is available on a first-come, first-serve basis. The registration button is also on the [Mustang Strong vaccine page](#) along with information about what to expect on the day of your appointment. If you have trouble registering, reach out to the Help Desk at 8-HELP (4357).

SMU's initial allotment is 1,170 "first doses" of the Pfizer vaccine and an equal number of "second doses" designated for the required follow-up appointments. SMU does not currently have second-dose vaccines available for individuals who have already received their first shot of Pfizer or Moderna elsewhere, so please reach out to your initial vaccine provider to complete your treatment.

Methodist Health System (MHS) COVID-19 Vaccine Registration: In addition to the on-campus vaccinations, all SMU students, staff and faculty may also [register for the vaccine through the Methodist Health System](#). If the MHS system is full, please check that site frequently as more appointments will become available as supplies increase. Vaccine appointments at MHS

are available Monday-Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m.– 4:30 p.m. at Methodist Dallas Medical Center on 1441 N Beckley Ave.

Reporting Your COVID-19 Vaccination: To tailor the University’s requested vaccine allotments each week and assess the quantity of doses that best meet the needs of our campus, it is important to know how many people have already been vaccinated or are scheduled to get either a single dose of the Johnson and Johnson or the first and/or second doses of either the Moderna or Pfizer vaccines.

If you have already received your vaccine, please remember to fill out the self-reporting tool – *and keep it up to date if a second dose is required* – on the [Mustang Strong vaccine page](#). Your voluntary submission will not be used to communicate to you directly about your own vaccine status. Unsure of what activities are safe after you are vaccinated? [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offer guidelines for what vaccinated individuals may do.](#)

Campus Safety Protocols for COVID-19: As announced earlier this month, SMU will continue to follow current guidelines requiring masks and social distancing on campus through the remainder of the Spring semester. In light of the Governor’s executive order to lift the state mandate on masks as well as other restrictions, the University will continue to monitor and review industry-specific guidance and recommendations from the federal Centers for Disease Control and state public health authorities before implementing any changes to our safety guidelines.

Diversity Officers: In the fall, Dr. Maria Dixon Hall, SMU’s Chief Diversity Officer, announced the appointment of [15 diversity officers](#) across campus, including in every academic school. The Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies’ diversity officer is Associate Director Kerri Bennett. In addition to serving on the University Diversity Council and advising my office on matters of diversity and inclusion, Ms. Bennett is available to listen to suggestions or insights that might help the Moody School and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion in our efforts towards diversity, equity, and inclusion. She is also able to direct any of you who experience or witness acts of bias against an SMU community member to appropriate resources. I also want to highlight the [Bias Incident Reporting Form](#), which you can use to report an incident of bias against an SMU community member to SMU’s Bias Education and Response Team (BERT).

Student Emergency Fund and Curbside Grocery Pickup: Students experiencing financial hardship or food insecurity may request support from the Student Emergency Fund. To initiate the application process, please complete a [Caring Community Connections form](#) for yourself and select “economic hardship” at the very bottom. An application for support from the Student Emergency Fund will then be sent to you. Your application will be reviewed and a decision made on support that can be provided in 3-5 business days. Please note that these funds are limited. The Shop, SMU’s (temporarily closed) on-campus food pantry is also offering curbside pickup events to provide students in need with bagged groceries and other essentials. Please be on the lookout for announcements about curbside pickup events. For more information, please email theshop@smu.edu.

Teaching Make-Up Days: A reminder for those graduate students serving in teaching roles: As Provost Loba announced earlier this month, the University has scheduled two make-up days for classes cancelled due to the weather even in February:

- Good Friday, April 2: Make-up day for classes cancelled Tuesday, Feb. 16
- Reading Day, Tuesday, May 4: Make-up day for classes cancelled Wednesday, Feb. 17

All classes on make-up days will take place virtually during the regularly scheduled synchronous times. If you have questions about make-up assignments and adjustments to syllabi due to the February weather event, please contact your program director, department chair, or the faculty lead instructor for the course in which you are serving as a teaching assistant.

External Fellowships and Awards: I am pleased to announce that Dr. Rachel-Ball Phillips has been hired as the Moody School's Director of Graduate Fellowships and Awards. In this newly created role, Dr. Ball-Phillips will help graduate students learn about, select, and successfully apply for external fellowships and awards. You can contact her with questions at rmball@smu.edu and schedule an appointment on [her booking site](#).

Domestic and International Travel: SMU is continuing to restrict domestic and international travel, based on guidance from the U.S. Department of State, Centers for Disease Control, and Department of Homeland Security. Information about current domestic travel restrictions and procedures for requesting an exception can be found on SMU's [Domestic Travel Guidelines website](#). Information about international travel restrictions can be found on the [Global Preparedness and Response page](#). Graduate students may contact Allison Russell, Director of Global Preparedness and Response (awitucki@smu.edu), for more information about the travel approval process.

I hope the information above will be helpful to you, and I wish you all a productive and safe second half of the spring semester.

Sincerely,



James E. Quick

Dean

Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies