



Student Affairs

July 30, 2020

Dear Mustangs,

SMU is excited to welcome our new and continuing students back to campus this fall! Thank you to those who were able to join the town hall on Wednesday. For those who were not able to participate, the [recording is here](#). The Hilltop simply hasn't been the same without you. Our faculty, staff and University leadership have gone to extraordinary measures to create a safe and healthy environment for students and employees. SMU is committed to providing the high-quality academic and co-curricular experience for which SMU is known. That said, the SMU student experience will be a bit different this fall to promote the safety and health of our community.

I know student life is a vital component of your collegiate experience – student learning and development occur both in and outside the classroom. Each of you will play an important role in limiting the spread of COVID-19 on campus. Face coverings will be required throughout the fall in all public indoor spaces, as well as outdoors when you are unable to practice social distancing. Science tells us that wearing a face covering, along with social distancing, is the most effective tool to prevent the spread of the virus.

All offices on campus – Financial Aid, University Advising Center, and so forth – will be hosting Zoom meetings in order to maintain student privacy while reducing the need to meet in a small space for an extended time. Drop-in services for most campus offices will be

limited, as students will be encouraged to schedule appointments when possible.

In an effort to promote personal responsibility and community well-being, the SMU Community Action Network (SMU CAN) has developed a community “pledge to protect.” **The Pledge to Protect SMU** is an important commitment that we all are making to help keep our community safe. The pledge affirms that students, faculty and staff will follow important safety measures, including contact tracing, social distancing and wearing face coverings. You will receive additional information regarding the pledge in the coming weeks.

Student Health, Wellness and Support Campus Recreation

In the Dedman Center for Lifetime Sports, students may still enjoy and benefit from a wide array of fitness activities and equipment by following specific rules, including wearing face coverings at all times, reserving times to work out, and limiting use of locker rooms and showers. These additional safety measures, along with enhanced cleaning regimens, have been implemented to keep students and patrons of the Dedman Center as healthy as possible.

The activities of sport clubs and intramural programs are being closely evaluated. At this time, we are not certain that these activities will be able to take place in the fall – at least, not in the ways to which we are accustomed. However, rest assured that opportunities for eSports and other competitions that can be conducted in a fun and safe way will be provided.

Dr. Bob Smith Health Center

The Dr. Bob Smith Health Center is one of the offices on campus that has never gone completely remote in 2020! Even when students moved off campus this past spring, staff in the Health Center

continued to provide services. And the Health Center staff's unwavering commitment to student well-being will not change this fall.

The Health Center will continue to offer COVID-19 testing; thus far, the staff has been able to provide testing results to students within 24–48 hours of sample collection. When a student receives a positive test result, staff from the Health Center will notify the student along with a member of SMU's contact-tracing team, who will reach out to the student to offer support and conduct contact tracing. It is important for all SMU community members to cooperate with these efforts to help keep our campus as safe as possible. Students who test positive for COVID-19 will also be asked to isolate, and those who have been exposed to COVID-19 will be asked to go into quarantine. Members of the contact-tracing team can also help students work with their instructors in regard to their academic commitments while in isolation or quarantine.

We recognize that the past several months have been especially stressful. Given many of the unknowns ahead, support for mental health services remains a priority. Students who are on campus or taking their classes remotely from anywhere in Texas can continue utilizing the resources provided by Counseling Services at SMU, since appointments are virtual. For those students who have a fully remote class schedule and are not in Texas, Counseling Services staff members can help find appropriate resources in your community, if requested.

Office of the Dean of Students

Staff in the Office of the Dean of Students have also been hard at work this summer preparing for students' return. **[The Pledge to Protect SMU](#)** will play an important role in keeping our community safe, and the Office of Student Conduct is prepared to hold students accountable to the ***Code of Conduct*** when their behavior endangers

the health and safety of others in our community. Students should familiarize themselves with the Pledge and the *Code* so that everyone is prepared to be a responsible member of the SMU community.

Student Life

Students will be able to participate with SMU student organizations, activities and engagement opportunities, a vital part of the Mustang experience. I encourage you to explore our 200+ student groups for involvement opportunities in fraternities and sororities, culturally based groups, academic clubs, service organizations, and more, on [Connect](#). You will find information on membership, events and activities conducted both in person and virtually. This year, the SMU-famous A Night at the Club involvement fair will be held online, so be on the lookout for details on how you can connect with other students who share your co-curricular interests. Additionally, the Hughes-Trigg Student Center will be open, including the newly renovated Level 2 with reservable meeting rooms and lots of new space to study and take a break between classes in accordance with social distancing.

We are also excited to welcome our new students with our annual extended orientation program, Stampede, from August 20–23. It will consist of large outdoor group events where students can participate in time-honored SMU traditions, and small-group experiences where students will get to know each other safely. We will also host leadership programs after the start of fall classes through a mix of virtual and in-person formats.

Residence Life

Residence Life and Student Housing (RLSH) provides our students with the foundational SMU experience where students live, learn and connect. Both virtual and in-person opportunities in each Residential Commons (RC) and upper division housing (UDH) facility will support a robust campus experience. Staff in RLSH will capitalize on

outdoor spaces and identified maximum capacity in all indoor lounge and lobby spaces, where social distancing with face coverings will allow for smaller group events and opportunities to connect with each other and with the Faculty in Residence. Virtual opportunities will include the use of social media platforms and various technologies to be “together” and engage with each other.

Students will see enhanced cleaning protocols from our campus partners in Custodial Services in community restrooms, which will be cleaned three times per day, and in all common areas in the RCs and UDH. You are asked to complete a daily self-screening. Face coverings are required when you are outside of your individual room, and guests from outside of the building are not permitted. Social distancing is a must in all areas. This includes being certain to use every other fixture in the common restrooms and being mindful of floor stickers at elevators to make sure you are looking out for your fellow Mustangs. Our HVAC systems have been recalibrated to increase circulation, and we upgraded the air filters in all residential facilities. Additionally, our HVAC units in the RCs and UDH are equipped with ultraviolet (UV) lights, which reduce the circulation of airborne pathogens.

As far as isolation, if a student tests positive for COVID-19, they will isolate for 10 days after symptom onset and 24 hours without fever, or according to the most recent guidance from the CDC. We have wellness pods and two residential facilities dedicated to isolation purposes with a capacity of 75 bed spaces. If possible, students are encouraged to return to their permanent residence to isolate. We will monitor capacity of our isolation units closely. Once 50% of isolation spaces are occupied, any student with a permanent address within 120 miles of campus may be required to isolate at their permanent address. Once 70% of isolation spaces are occupied, any student with a permanent address within 300 miles of campus may be required to isolate at their permanent address. Students living off campus will be

responsible for isolating in their residence. Students who may have been exposed to COVID-19 will be expected to quarantine for 14 days within their assigned housing space.

As always, you will have access to RLSH staff and Faculty in Residence (FiR) in order to best support your success. An RA will be on call in each building from 8 p.m.–8 a.m. including weekends, as well as an RCD (Residential Community Director) on call 24/7. Your RA, RCD and FiR (in the RCs) will play a key role in helping to support you.

As you prepare to arrive on campus, be sure that you have signed up for your move-in time on the SMU housing portal in my.SMU. This is critical as we have worked hard to ensure that the move-in process supports the health of the campus. Its success is dependent upon your signing up for and adhering to your scheduled time slot.

Helpful things to bring to campus this fall include a thermometer, personal hand sanitizer (hand sanitizer stations are also located all over campus), three to five reuseable face coverings/masks, a few disposable masks, surface wipes that you can keep in your backpack or bag, and disinfectant cleaning supplies for your personal spaces. We also encourage you to communicate with your roommate and have one of you bring a microwave (800 watts or less) or rent a unit from our campus partner, Mustang Rentals, should you choose to take advantage of grab-and-go options within our dining halls.

Dining Services

SMU Dining has been working diligently to plan for a safe dining experience for all guests. Our fall plans will incorporate and comply with all current CDC, state and local guidelines for restaurants.

Mustangs should expect occupancy restrictions in dining venues. A door attendant will monitor occupancy counts in residential dining

halls, where seating has been set up to meet state guidelines and promote physical distancing. Our culinary team has developed menus to meet student preferences and health guidelines and ensure speed-of-service requirements are met. Stations and queuing lines will promote physical distancing, and contactless payment options will be offered in all locations. Forms of payment that will be accepted include Flex, credit/debit, Apple Pay and Google Wallet. Cash will not be accepted. Grubhub pickup will be available for those who desire a contactless transaction. Each dining location will have designated Grubhub pickup locations to promote distancing.

For the health and wellness of our associates and guests, all dining staff will complete a health screening and temperature check prior to starting work each day. Additionally, we will have designated staff for increased cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch areas. Wearing face masks and mandatory handwashing every 20 minutes (if not more frequently) are required for staff. We will also offer “sanitation stations” which include hand sanitizer and sanitizing disinfectant wipes in all dining locations for guests’ convenience.

It is likely you will have additional questions about the fall semester in the coming weeks. Please check your email and the [COVID-19 website](#) regularly for updates. I look forward to welcoming you back to campus for an amazing year.

Stay safe, be well, and Pony Up!

K.C. Mmeje, Ed.D.
Vice President for Student Affairs

World Changers Shaped Here