

Dear SMU Faculty:

As you may have heard or read, there is a lot of negative commentary on social media by students who have received preliminary schedules showing that they have many courses scheduled as remote delivery this fall. You may see an increase in student outreach to you and your support staff as a result. Please keep the following things in mind when communicating with students and their parents about changes to the fall academic schedule of classes. In particular, we need your help in making sure all our students know that this initial release of their schedule information is only the first step, and we will continue working with them to adjust their schedules.

- This is phase one. The Provost's Office will work with deans and department chairs to make adjustments as "new" student open enrollment progresses and as continuing students adjust their schedules.
- We know that an overwhelming majority of our students have indicated that they desire in-person / SMUFlex instruction. Our goal is to work with students to maximize the proportion of in-person / SMUFlex courses that they need to be academically successful.
- Students will receive even more information about the SMUFlex format, which will be the primary mode of instruction in the fall, next week.
- We will be working with departments and students to maximize their in-person / SMUFlex opportunities through the strategic use of classrooms, event spaces, and rotating schedules. These adjustments are still being determined, but we are targeting being able to provide in-person opportunities for at least 75% of course offerings. Faculty teaching in the SMUFlex format can already access information and training through the collaborations between CTE/OIT/Library. Additional information about rotating schedules will be shared with faculty in the coming week(s).
- For those students who have requested 100% remote/online courses, we will work with individual students to help them find the ones that meet their degree requirements (note: this is a very small portion of our students, so we do not anticipate that you will receive many questions along these lines but, if you do, please help reassure them that plans are in place to work with them.)

To address our students' concerns about the lack of courses currently available for in-person / SMUFlex instruction and in working to accommodate the faculty who requested and received exemptions to teach solely online, we anticipate that deans and department chairs may need to request some instructors to shift some of the courses they teach in the fall. As noted above, the vast majority of our students desire in-person / SMUFlex instruction. With the current number of faculty exemptions to in-person / SMUFlex instruction, many of our students only have online options for their courses. We request your assistance in helping address this situation before fall schedules are finalized for our students. More information about this will be forthcoming from your deans and department chairs.

Thank you for all that you do to make SMU a fantastic place to live and learn,

Elizabeth

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