



SMU[®]

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Office of the Provost

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Dear Faculty and Staff:

These weekly updates will serve as a tool to keep you informed and engaged with SMU's Academic Affairs division as, together, we work to advance the goals of SMU's strategic plan and continue to move SMU forward and upward. If you have suggestions for what we should include in future communications, please send your ideas to this [email address](#). Previous newsletters are available [here](#). Today's update falls into four categories: 1) SMU's Road to R-1, 2) Fall 2020, 3) Spring 2021, and 4) News and Noteworthy.

SMU'S Road to R-1

- **Fiscal Year (FY) 2021–2022 Budget Process** – Meetings with Deans and Associate Provosts to review and finalize their proposed budgets for next year conclude later this month. One of my goals for this year's budget has been greater transparency and collaboration across all of the schools/college. The focus throughout our deliberations, including faculty/staff hiring requests, has been on how budget requests will help us attain SMU's goals within the 2016–2025 Strategic Plan, Black Unity Forum (BUF) Action Plan responses, *U.S. News & World Report* rankings, and Road to R1. Final budget proposals will be reviewed by members of SMU's senior leadership team in January and February with final budget decisions announced in March 2021.
- **Academic Analytics implementation reminder** – [Academic Analytics](#) is a tool used by many R-1 institutions to identify additional opportunities for faculty funding, honorific awards, and/or collaborations. The Deans, Associate Deans for Research, Associate Provosts and I will have University-wide access to the data so that we can look for interdisciplinary opportunities for faculty research support. Department Chairs will have access to data first at the department level followed by their college/school level to look for similar areas of interdisciplinary alignment. Orientations as well as login access for the academic leadership team will begin in early December and continue through January. In the spring semester, individual faculty members will also have access to their own information through the faculty insights portal to identify opportunities for

awards and collaborations and to ensure that their scholarly record in the Academic Analytics database reflects their portfolio of impact.

Starting early in the spring 2021 semester, we will begin hosting faculty webinars to promote awareness and to generate ideas about using the tool to support faculty in their pursuit of funding, collaborations, and honorific awards. In the meantime, if you are interested in learning more about Academic Analytics, please reach out to Associate Provost for Faculty Success Paige Ware at pware@smu.edu.

- **Career development resources for graduate students** – The Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies is ramping up career development resources for graduate students. Dr. Ruth Schemmer, a career-development specialist with extensive graduate career advising experience, is now available for one-on-one appointments with Ph.D. students. The Aurora career development platform by Beyond the Professoriate is also now available for all graduate students. Information about these and other career development resources can be found on [the Moody School career-development website](#). And, as always, the [Hegi Family Career Development Center](#) continues to provide excellent resources and career advice for all SMU students.

Fall 2020

- **New guidance regarding quarantine** – Earlier this week, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention updated their quarantine guidance for individuals exposed to COVID-19](#). While the agency still recommends a quarantine period of 14 days, a shortened quarantine of 7 or 10 days could be possible if certain criteria are met.


SMU is currently reviewing the new guidelines with local health professionals and awaiting further guidance from Dallas County to determine how a shortened quarantine will affect University policy and case management processes. In the interim, individuals in quarantine should continue to follow the full 14-day schedule if they've been exposed to the virus.


- **Campus health and safety** – You can follow our COVID-19 case trends and specifics with SMU's [dashboard](#). Our current operational level remains in the “moderate” category. Remember that our operational level is reviewed each week, and any necessary updates are posted each Monday afternoon on the Mustang Strong website.
- **December faculty survey** – As a reminder, the Provost's Office will provide a final survey this month so that faculty can keep providing feedback as we continue to monitor unfolding circumstances and address issues that the surveys reveal. Be on the lookout for a final fall 2020 survey invitation before the end of the fall semester.


- **COVID-19 prevalence study** – Last week, SMU [announced](#) its partnership with UT Southwestern and Texas Health Resources on a COVID-19 prevalence study in an effort to develop ways to reduce COVID-19 infections in DFW. There is no cost to you or to SMU for this study, and participation is voluntary. As a first step for those interested in joining the study, complete a brief [survey](#) by the end of day December 7. After finishing the survey, you will receive an email or text message shortly after the survey closes on December 7, with instructions for making your testing appointment. Use the unique link provided in the message to make your appointment. Testing will be available on campus December 16, 17, and 18, 2020, at Prothro Hall, Room 104, at 5901 Bishop Blvd, Dallas, TX 75205.
- **Campus access to students for the remainder of fall semester** – Students remaining in Dallas this month can find library hours, between now and December 18, posted [here](#). [Zoom spaces](#) will also continue to be available through December 18, for students needing a quiet space on campus to participate in online classes. Offices will also continue to provide in-person services during normal business hours (M-F; 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.) through final exams.


My thanks to Associate Provost for Student Academic Engagement and Success Sheri Kunovich and SMU's Academic Services for developing the infographic below to inform students of the support resources available to them throughout the month of December.


DECEMBER 2020
SMU ACADEMIC SERVICES
 WE ARE STILL AVAILABLE TO YOU!


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1 ACADEMIC CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE (ACE)
 OPEN FOR STUDY SPACE AND BUSINESS
 MONDAY TO FRIDAY 9:00 AM TO 5:30 PM
- 

2 ALTSHULER LEARNING ENHANCEMENT CENTER (A-LEC)
 OPEN FOR STUDY SPACE AND BUSINESS
 SUNDAY 3 PM TO 8 PM
 MONDAY TO THURSDAY 8:30 AM TO 8 PM
 FRIDAY 8:30 AM TO 5 PM
- 

3 A-LEC TUTORING VIRTUAL ONLY (VIA ZOOM)
 SUNDAY TO THURSDAY 3 PM TO 8 PM
 LEARN MORE AT SMU.EDU/TUTORING
- 

4 A-LEC WRITING CENTER
 THROUGH DECEMBER 11TH
 APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE 10 AM TO 5 PM
 FROM DECEMBER 14TH TO 16TH
 DROP-IN CONSULTATIONS
 THROUGH DECEMBER 15TH
 RESEARCH AND WRITING LAB DROP-INS
 TUESDAYS 4 PM TO 5:30 PM
 WEDNESDAYS 11:30 AM TO 1 PM
 LEARN MORE AT SMU.EDU/WRITINGCENTER
- 

5 A-LEC ACADEMIC WORKSHOP
 PREPARE FOR FINALS: THE LAST WEEK
 WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2 AT 2:00 PM (VIRTUAL)
 LEARN MORE AT SMU.EDU/WORKSHOPSCHEDULE
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6 A-LEC ACADEMIC COUNSELING
 MONDAY TO FRIDAY 9 AM TO 5 PM
 LEARN MORE OR SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT AT
SMU.EDU/ACADEMICCOUNSELING

LEARN MORE ABOUT STUDENT ACADEMIC SUCCESS PROGRAMS AT
SMU.EDU/SASP

- **Flu shot reminder** – SMU employees may get a flu shot, which now includes the 65+ version of the vaccine for seniors, from the same drive-thru urgent care tent where COVID-19 testing is available at Expressway Tower on SMU’s East Campus. Please schedule an appointment in advance [here](#) and remember to bring your SMU ID.
- **December Commencement** – SMU will celebrate [December Commencement](#) with graduating students and their families on Saturday, December 19, 2020. We are planning for an outdoor ceremony in Ford Stadium at 1:00 p.m. for students and their guests. The stadium’s large, outdoor location will allow graduates to bring several guests. Pending inclement weather, our backup option will be two ceremonies in Moody Coliseum: one for undergraduate students at 9:00 a.m. and

one for graduate students at 2:00 p.m. Should commencement occur in Moody, graduates would be limited to two guests. Regardless of location, face coverings are required and social distancing guidelines must be followed.

Based on RSVPs received to date, we anticipate about 400 graduates and 30 faculty to participate in December's Commencement. As with this year's August Commencement, in-person participation is voluntary. You may also watch live via <https://www.smu.edu/live>.

Spring 2021

- **COVID 2021 Operations Plan** – On December 1, SMU released the [2021 COVID-19 Operations Plan](#). The information contained in this comprehensive plan is reflected in the newly-updated Mustang Strong [website](#) with easier navigation. The strategy for spring builds upon our [Fall 2020 Operations Plan](#) that guided our campus community through a successful return to classes and campus life while minimizing the spread of COVID-19.
- **Spring schedule** – The spring 2021 schedule was released on October 19, and can now be viewed in my.SMU. Students taking *undergraduate courses* will be assigned either a red or blue rotation schedule. Students will attend class in person on their assigned day and will engage virtually on the alternate days. [Click here](#) to see the red-blue rotation schedule for spring 2021.

Students who are assigned to the red-blue rotation schedule will see either a red or blue tile in my.SMU on their student homepage designating their rotation schedule. Undergraduate students who have requested to be fully REMOTE or are taking all VIRTUAL courses will not be assigned to the red-blue rotation schedule.

- **Expanded options for the spring attendance policy** – Many faculty, including Department Chairs, Associate Deans, and the Faculty Senate, have been developing ideas for options that faculty can choose to include in their syllabi to help operationalize attendance expectations. These expanded options will cover areas such as participation grades, Zoom camera policies, acceptable forms of documentation for absences, expectations for in-person attendance, and parameters around uncouneted unexcused absences. Final edits are underway, and the expanded options should be available next week.
- **Reminder: Submit your textbook adoption as soon as possible** – Please submit your book adoption for the spring term as soon as possible. For J-term, we are at 100% of our goal for adoptions, and for spring term, we are at 72% of our goal. Thank you to everyone who has submitted. Please connect with your department/unit support or visit www.facultyenlight.com 24/7 to submit adoptions, request desk copies, and research books.

Submitting your adoptions ensures that students get the right course materials for their courses at the most affordable price and that our University remains SB-810 compliant. We sincerely appreciate your effort in achieving this goal and meeting this deadline. Publishers are working with limited staff because of COVID, and the earlier we can get books ordered the more likely we are to be able to deal with any delays that might come up over the next couple of months. If you have any questions, please contact Rachel Russell at TM526@bncollege.com or 214-768-2435.

News and Noteworthy

- **Announcing SMU's Diversity Officers** – Last week, Dr. Maria Dixon Hall, Chief Diversity Officer and Senior Advisor to the President for Cultural Intelligence, announced the appointment of SMU's inaugural class of [diversity officers](#). Each officer will serve as counsel to the Deans and administrators leading their respective areas, and will serve as a resource during the search and hiring process of new staff and faculty. Additionally, each officer will serve as the lead trainer for the [CIQ@SMU](#) curriculum for their appointed school and unit.
- **Board of Trustees December meeting recap** – My presentation to Board of Trustee members this week focused on undergraduate student excellence. As a reminder, September's presentation to Board of Trustee members focused on faculty teaching, research and creative activity. See the September 18 [newsletter](#) for more information.

I began my remarks for this week's presentation by reviewing my top four priorities for the 2020-2021 academic year, which include:

1. SMU's 2016 – 2025 Strategic Plan
2. *US News and World Report* top 50 status
3. Research excellence/"Road to R-1"
4. Meeting the University's commitments as articulated in our response to the BUF action plan

These priority areas will factor heavily into our planning and investments of time and resources in the days and years ahead.

After reviewing my academic year 2020-2021 priorities, I presented two of our key areas of focus for advancing SMU's reputation among undergraduate institutions, as measured by *US News & World Report*. These include: student outcomes (retention/graduation rates) and peer assessments. See the [October 2](#) and [October 16](#) newsletters for examples of the types of analyses shared with Trustee members.

I concluded my remarks by focusing on two budget-related initiatives we are either implementing or modifying for FY 2022 to incentivize academic units to achieve the University's academic goals: 1) performance-based funding for Provost's discretionary dollars and 2) the annual, incremental budget process. My thanks to the Deans and Associate Provosts for their continued support, who are working in a spirit of transparency and collaboration to make informed, data-driven decisions on behalf of the University's goals.

Sincerely,



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