



Elizabeth G. Lobo, Ph. D.
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Office of the Provost

December 3, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your interest in, and commitment to, advancing SMU's academic mission. These weekly updates will serve as a tool to keep you informed and engaged with SMU's Academic Affairs division as, together, we continue with a safe, healthy and productive fall semester. 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 three categories: 1) Fall 2021, 2) Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 3) News and Noteworthy.

Fall 2021:

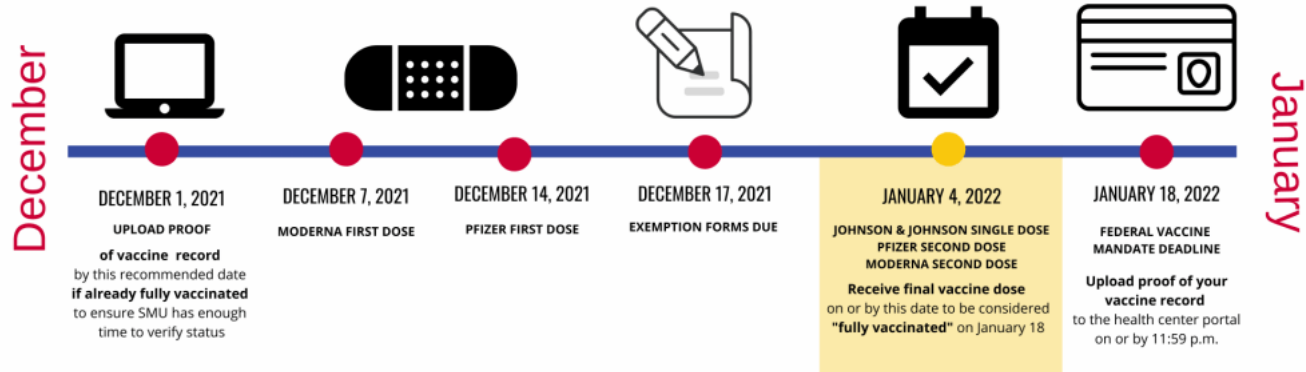
- **SMU's response to President Biden's Executive Order (EO) 14042** – As President Turner [announced just before Thanksgiving](#) break, SMU must comply with President Biden's EO 14042 requiring those organizations that receive federal contracts and their employees to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by January 18, 2022. SMU is closely following the challenges to the federal vaccine mandate and will comply with subsequent court rulings that apply to our University. However, because of the narrow timeline to meet these federal requirements, SMU is moving forward with steps necessary to comply with the Executive Order by the January 18, 2022 deadline.

The order is broad-ranging and applies to all SMU employees – faculty, staff, adjunct faculty, temporary employees, student workers, graduate research/teaching assistants and postdoctoral scholars. As such, all SMU employees need to receive and upload documentation of all required vaccine doses by January 4, 2022, to be fully vaccinated by January 18, 2022, unless they have been granted a reasonable accommodation for religious or medical reasons. To seek an accommodation, please apply [through the Office of Institutional Access and Equity](#) by December 17, to ensure that it can be evaluated before the deadline.

Over 91% of full-time faculty and 87% of staff have already provided confirmation that they have received the vaccine. For those who have not yet confirmed your vaccination, it is important that you [upload your vaccination information](#) now to assist in our compliance efforts. If you have already uploaded your card and/or received your vaccination at the Dr. Bob Smith Health Center, no further action is needed. SMU is accepting various vaccination information as proof, so check the [Mustang Strong website](#) for a list of acceptable documentation as well as how to upload your card or what to do if you lost your card. If you would like to confirm your vaccination status, [click here for step-by-step instructions](#).

For those who have not yet received the vaccine, [appointments are available](#) through the Dr. Bob Smith Health Center and there is still time to comply before the January 18, 2022 deadline. Depending upon the vaccine you choose, you may need to obtain a first dose by December 7. See the image below for key dates regarding the federal vaccine mandate:

Federal Vaccine Mandate Key Dates



For questions on how this mandate impacts you, we have updated the [FAQ section](#) of the Mustang Strong site. SMU has also developed more detailed guidance which will be shared as we go forward. Vice Presidents have already conducted meetings with their direct reports, and the college/schools are scheduling similar meetings this week and next with their faculty and staff.

- **Fiscal year (FY) 2023 budget process underway** – Throughout the month of November, I, along with representatives from Business and Finance, met with deans individually to review and prioritize their remaining (non-faculty) college/school FY 2023 budget requests. During the week before Thanksgiving, the Deans, Associate Provosts and I met collectively for an initial review of one another's budget requests.

Echoing last year's approach, the Deans and my office will collaborate on which budget requests to put forward for final consideration during the final budget review and approval meetings that occur in January and February. We will continue to provide updates throughout this year's process. My thanks to the Deans, Associate Provosts and colleagues in

Business and Finance for their hard work reviewing and strategically refining requests for the FY 2023 budget process.

- **Board of Trustees December meeting recap –**
 - Committee on Academic Affairs – On Thursday, the Committee on Academic Affairs met to discuss informational and action items such as: new/modified programs, honorary degree nominations, and our academic priorities for the next three to five years.

As was the case last year, my reports this year to the Committee on Academic Affairs will focus on our four academic priority areas through 2025. These include:

- Academic excellence/US News & World Report Top 50
- Research and creative excellence/SMU's Road to R1
- SMU's 2016 – 2025 Strategic Plan; and
- Inclusive Excellence Initiatives

This meeting's topic was academic excellence, with a specific focus on our aspirations for SMU's undergraduates. Dr. Wes Waggoner, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management, and Dr. Sheri Kunovich, Associate Provost for Student Academic Engagement and Success, joined me in presenting as their offices are most directly responsible for SMU's strategies and programs to recruit, retain, and support student graduation.

- Full Board Meeting – This morning, I presented a consolidated version of Thursday's presentation to the full Board of Trustees, focusing on the importance of maintaining and supporting academic excellence across the complete student lifecycle: student recruiting, academic engagement and success, and finally, graduation. My presentation concluded with a brief fall 2022 enrollment update. As of November 30, 2021, applications for fall 2022 total 11,568 – an 8% increase over fall

2021. We are projecting a class size of 1,550, a 32 average ACT score, 33% - 35% underrepresented students and 13% Pell-eligible.

Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

- **Update on key leadership position searches underway**
 - **Link to the position profile for SMU's Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer** – Click [here](#) to review the position profile that is guiding our search for SMU's new Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer. Please share this profile with members of your network who might be interested in applying. My thanks to Dean Stephanie Knight as chair and the entire search committee for their work advancing this strategic hire.
 - **Link to the position profile for SMU's Dean of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies and Associate Provost for Graduate Education** – Click [here](#) to review the position profile that is guiding our search for SMU's new Dean of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies and Associate Provost for Graduate Education. Please share this profile with members of your network who might be interested in applying. My thanks to Dean Tom DiPiero as chair and the entire search committee for their work advancing this strategic hire.

News and Noteworthy:

- **Volunteers needed for Hunt Scholars and President's Scholars selection process** – The Office of Student Academic Engagement and Success is seeking faculty application readers and/or interviewers to support the selection process for the Class of 2026's President's Scholars and Nancy Ann and Ray L Hunt Leadership Scholars programs.

If you are interested in serving either as an application reader or as part of an interview panel for the President's Scholars Program or the Hunt Leadership Scholars Program this upcoming cycle, please respond on the

form linked [here](#). Additional details about the time and date requirements associated with each role can be found on the form.

Should you have questions about any of the responsibilities or either program more broadly, please contact Dr. Lindsay Davis, Assistant Dean for Scholars Programs, at lrdavis@smu.edu. Thank you for considering this important, and certainly very rewarding, role!

- **SMU Law professor receives 2021 Best Law Book Award for *Rethinking Securities Law*** – Congratulations to Dedman Law School’s Professor Marc I. Steinberg, Rupert and Lillian Radford Chair in Law, for receiving the Best Law Book award from the 18th annual Book Fest Awards. His groundbreaking book, *Rethinking Securities Law*, focuses on “rethinking” the securities laws with particular emphasis on the Securities Act and the Securities Exchange Act.
- **SMU’s Director of Debate and Speech receives national book award** – Ben Voth, Professor of Rhetoric and Director of Debate and Speech in Dedman College, won the Daniel Rohrer Award from the American Forensics Association for his book *Debate as Global Pedagogy: Rwanda Rising*. This award is given once a year for the top research monograph in argumentation and debate studies.
- **SMU Lyle professor listed among most highly cited researchers for 2021** – Jianhui Wang, Professor in the Lyle School of Engineering’s Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, was named to Clarivate’s 2021 list of [highly cited researchers](#).

The annual list identifies researchers who have demonstrated significant influence in their chosen field or fields through the publication of multiple highly cited papers during the last decade. Their names are drawn from the publications that rank in the top 1% by citations for field and publication year in Clarivate’s Web of Science citation index. This is the fourth time Professor Wang has won the award.

- **Announcing our new Associate Provost for Institutional Planning and Effectiveness** – Earlier today, I was [pleased to introduce](#) Dayna Oscherwitz, Professor of World Languages and Literatures and Assistant Provost for General Education, as our new Associate Provost for Institutional Planning and Effectiveness. Dayna will assume her new responsibilities on January 3, 2022, and we will announce plans for backfilling her duties as Assistant Provost for General Education early in the spring 2022 semester.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth G. Lobo', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Southern Methodist University
<https://www.smu.edu/provost>
World Changers Shaped Here