



SMU

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

March 5, 2021

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 three categories: 1) Spring 2021, 2) Road to R-1 and 3) News and Noteworthy.

Spring 2021

- **Scheduling missed classes for spring 2021** – Please see my [message](#) from March 2 to faculty, staff and students for information on SMU's approach to recovering the almost five days of instruction lost due to last month's extreme winter weather. Thank you to the representatives of the Faculty Senate Executive and Calendar Committees, Student Senate, Council of Deans, Accreditation Representatives, Provost's Leadership Forum, Offices of Financial Aid and Enrollment Services, Student Affairs, Emergency Operations Center and the President's Executive Council for your time and efforts developing this strategy on such an expedited timeline.
- **SMU to continue current campus safety protocols for COVID-19** – SMU will [continue to follow](#) our 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, we 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. We are carefully listening to and considering concerns expressed by our campus community – our students, faculty, and staff – as well as parents who have entrusted us with their children's wellbeing and education.
- **SMU's new COVID-19 vaccine self-reporting survey** – Each week, SMU requests to receive an allotment of vaccines for COVID-19 from the State of Texas. To tailor that request and assess the quantity and 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. Please take a minute to fill out the self-reporting tool survey [on this page](#) – and keep it up to date – to report your vaccination progress.

Providing information for this survey is voluntary. It is critically important to SMU's efforts to manage the health and safety of the SMU community and prepare for a smooth vaccination plan once we start to receive allocations. Your willingness to assist SMU by sharing your vaccine status is appreciated. Therefore, even if you receive the vaccine in the future at an off-campus location, please update your vaccination status by retaking the survey. If you have not received the vaccine and are still unsure about which eligibility phase you fall into, the guided survey on the same page may also be helpful for you.

- **A new my.SMU experience for students** – On Monday, March 1, SMU launched a new dashboard within my.SMU focused on improving the student experience. Now, students can access their suite of tools from across my.SMU in one centralized location – from viewing academic progress, to an all-new scheduling tool, to managing their financial accounts. For more detailed information, visit the [Student Essentials page](#). Thanks to the staff across the university, most notably in the Office of Information Technology (OIT) and the Office of Student Academic Engagement and Success (SAES), for their leadership on this important project.
- **Resource for understanding students' academic anxiety** – This week, the Office of SAES released the following [video](#) and sent supporting [materials](#) to all SMU faculty with information to assist faculty in identifying and mitigating students' academic anxiety. Thank you to Cori Hill, LPC, for sharing her expertise through this important resource.
- **Student Senate resolution calling for standardization of Canvas pages** – In response to the last month's extreme winter weather event, SMU's Student Senate penned the following [resolution](#), calling on faculty to make updates in Canvas and to follow the updated dates and deadlines.
- **Reminders from previous Friday updates:**
 - **Using Canvas on your phone** – The Canvas Teacher mobile app is available for both Android and iOS devices as a way to help you stay connected with your students even when normal devices are not usable. Click [HERE](#) for Canvas Teacher Android guide, [HERE](#) for Canvas Teacher iPhone/iPad guide. If you need assistance, please contact the main OIT Help Desk at help@smu.edu or by calling 214.768.HELP.
 - **Automatic live transcription services now available in Zoom** – SMU's Zoom platform now allows faculty to enable AI-powered live transcription services in Zoom events. This setting (to be set up by you as the host) creates computer-generated captions at the bottom of the screen as well as a transcript. Click [here](#) for more specific information about this feature. Please contact your

school's [Academic Technology Service Director](#) (ATSD) for instructions on activating this advanced setting.

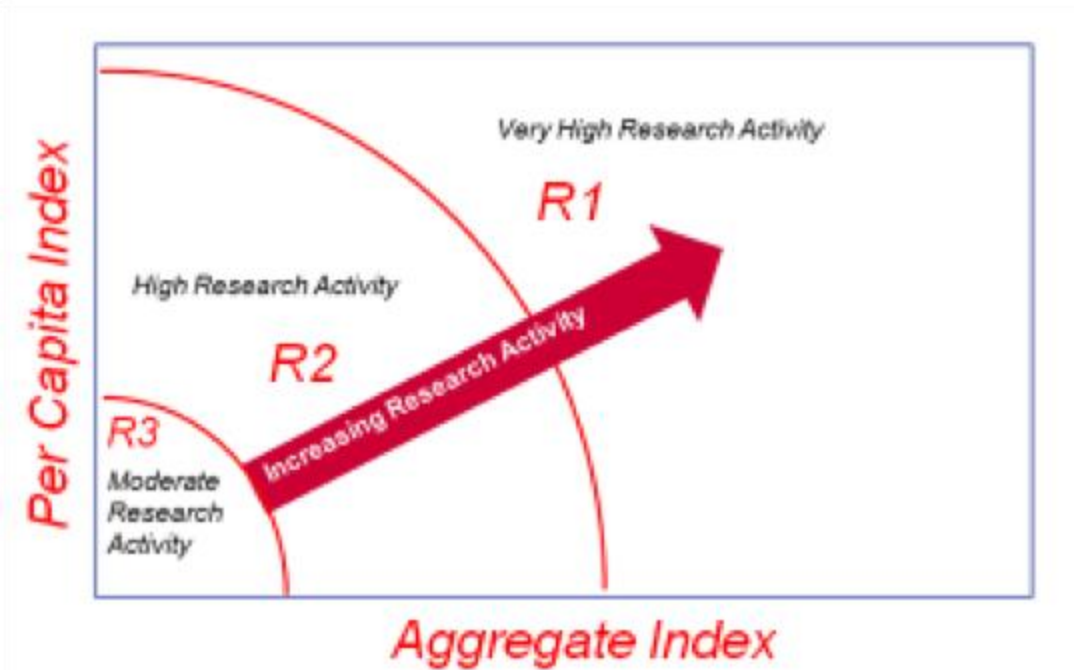
- **Dr. Bob Smith Health Center still offering flu shots** – You can help ease the burden on the healthcare system by minimizing your chance of getting the flu. We encourage all SMU students, faculty and staff to get their flu shot. Click [here](#) for more information on available options.
- **COVID-19 vaccine plan updates** – Once we begin receiving allocations, we will follow state distribution guidelines in making the vaccine available, beginning with the [1A phase designated for campus health care workers and police](#), followed by the [1B phase which prioritizes people 65+ and/or those with underlying medical conditions](#). Along with faculty and staff, students who fit in this category are also eligible for the vaccine.

Check out the [vaccination page](#) on the [Mustang Strong website](#) for more information on how the process will work. We encourage you to take advantage of the first opportunity to get the vaccine regardless of whether it is through SMU or another provider. Visit the [Texas COVID-19 Vaccine Provider Locations map](#) for additional vaccination sites and availability. Whether you have received the vaccine or are still waiting to get it, it is important to continue with the healthy behaviors outlined in our community's [Pledge to Protect](#).

- **COVID-19 test sites on campus** – The Urgent Care for Kids and Families' no-cost, rapid drive-through testing site remains available for employees and their dependents. It is located on the East Campus at Expressway Tower, [6116 North Central Expressway](#). You will need to [complete a telemedicine screening to schedule a test](#).
- **Date extensions for spring 2021 pass/fail declaration and course withdrawal** – As mentioned in previous newsletters, and in response to student requests to provide our students with additional support, we are extending the pass/fail declaration deadline to March 5 and the course withdrawal deadline with a W to April 23.

SMU'S Road to R-1 and Research/Creative Excellence

- **How do we reach R-1? A Carnegie Classification overview** – The Carnegie Classification is the “gold standard” by which research activity at universities is compared and ranked. A university’s research activity is determined by where it plots on the diagram below. Research activity increases toward the upper right, with the very highest research activity reserved for those universities that plot in the “R1 field.”



The position of a university is computed from the following seven metrics:

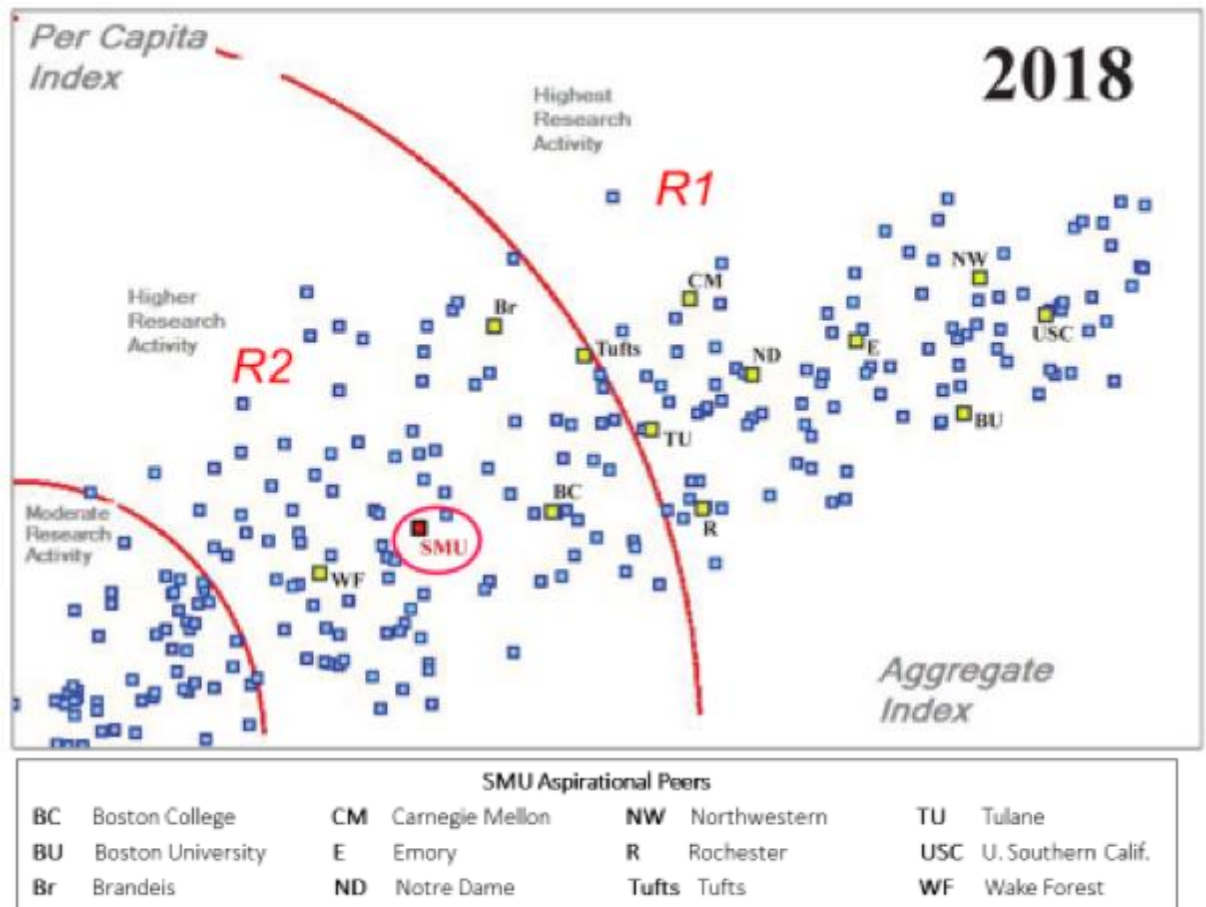
1. STEM Research Expenditures – The amount of money the university spends, as reported annually, conducting research in the STEM fields. Research expenditures might include things like lab equipment, travel expenses, graduate student salaries and stipends, and faculty release time, etc.
2. Non-STEM Research Expenditures – The amount of money the university spends annually on research in non-STEM fields like the social sciences and humanities across the same types of areas
3. STEM Postdoctoral Fellows – This is a count of the number of staff dedicated toward providing staff/research support to STEM post-doctoral researchers.
4. PhDs Awarded in STEM
5. PhDs Awarded in Social Sciences
6. PhDs Awarded in Humanities
7. Other Doctorates – Carnegie also counts the number of “other” doctorates granted each year. For SMU, examples would include the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in the Simmons School and the Doctor of Ministry (D. Min) in Perkins.

Click [here](#) for a listing of SMU’s doctoral degrees and their associated Carnegie classification.

The university’s rank relative to other research universities (Note: the higher numerically that a university is ranked, the better for Carnegie – i.e., being #100 is much better than being #1) is determined for each metric, and these are multiplied by

weighting factors and summed to calculate an aggregate index (the x-axis) and a per capita index (the y-axis).

Postdocs are a critical component of Carnegie’s research classification system because we get credit for the number (headcount) of postdocs (a key component of the calculation behind the Carnegie plot’s x axis), and we are also able to classify their salaries as research expenditures (item #1 on Carnegie’s list and a key component of the calculation behind the Carnegie plot’s y axis). Postdocs actually factor into four of the ten calculations Carnegie performs to determine their classifications, making them the single most influential factor.

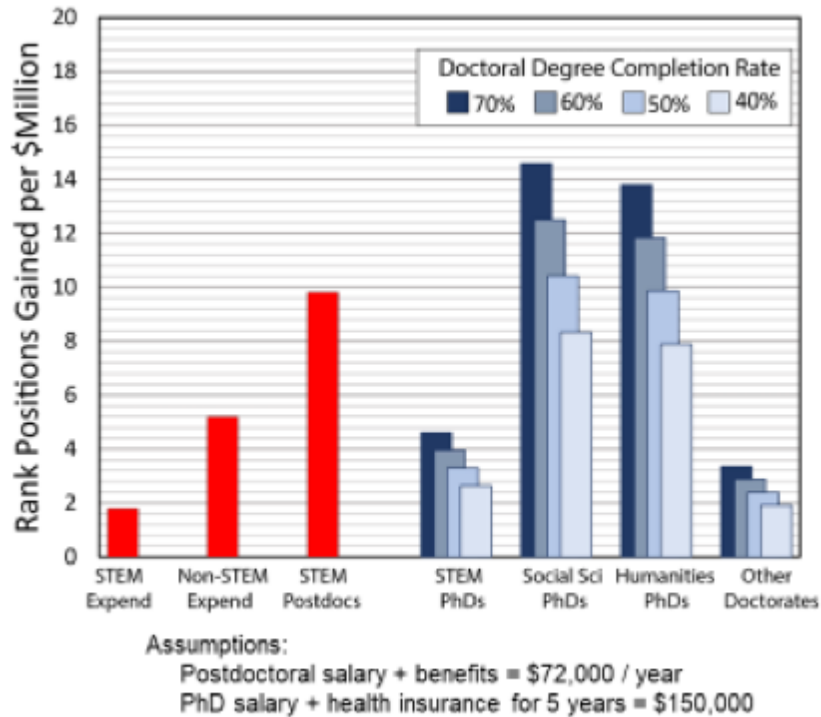


The most recent Carnegie Classification in 2018 ranked SMU as an R2 research university. In the figure above, SMU is highlighted in red, and SMU’s aspirational peers are highlighted in yellow.

In 2005, SMU was classified as an R3 institution. Since that time, SMU has advanced steadily in each subsequent classification, passing 55 other institutions to reach its current position in the middle of the R2 field.

To reach R1, SMU must pass another 50 institutions. Reaching R1 should be viewed as an achievable ten-year goal. Being successful, however, will require improvement in

all seven of the Carnegie measures and is more like an Olympic decathlon than a single sprint race.



As detailed above, universities are ranked across seven metrics with the goal of achieving high rankings in as many of the seven metrics as possible. Shown in the figure above are the rank improvements, or the number of institutions SMU could surpass, in each of Carnegie’s seven metrics for every additional \$1 million of investment.

As you can see, an improvement of 1.9 ranks is achieved for every \$1 million in increased STEM research expenditures. In comparison, an improvement of 10 ranks is achieved in the STEM Postdoc metric for every additional \$1 million spent on postdoctoral salary and benefits. Similarly, high improvement in ranks is driven by investment in Social Science and Humanities PhDs. An investment to increase conferrals of STEM PhDs and other research doctorates produces equal to or greater return than research expenditures alone.

What is also clear is that increasing the number of postdocs is our greatest assured return on investment, as the average postdoc salary (with benefits) is \$72,000. Increasing PhD conferrals also offer significant return on investment that will increase if the University improves on the current six-year completion rate of only 40-50% of PhD students completing in six years. However, these returns increase to even higher levels as our six-year completion rate approaches 60% - 70% (the rate at many of our aspirational and cohort peers). Improving and expanding our recruitment ability will allow us to attract top-quality future students.

- **Announcing: National Science Foundation (NSF) CAREER Award recipient –** Congratulations to Dr. Minh-Binh Tran in Dedman College’s Department of

Mathematics on receiving an NSF CAREER award this academic year. The NSF's highly prestigious and competitive Faculty Early Career Development Program (CAREER) award supports to junior faculty who exemplify the role of teacher-scholars through research and education and the integration of these endeavors in the context of their organizations' missions. NSF Career awards, presented once each year, include a federal grant for research and education activities for five consecutive years.

- **Research Days 2021** – Research Days events will be virtual and will occur from March 15 through 19. In addition to a student research video competition, there will be live talks and panel discussions available online. Events will kick off on **Monday, March 15, at 6:00 pm**, with a keynote talk by Dr. Ian Bogost, an author, award-winning game designer, and Ivan Allen College Distinguished Chair in Media Studies and Professor of Interactive Computing at the Georgia Institute of Technology. Dr. Bogost's talk will be titled "The Enduring Victory of Lo-Fi Technology." You can register for Dr. Bogost's talk [here](#). Student video presentations and a schedule of live events are available on the [Research Days website](#).
- **Reminders from previous Friday updates:**
 - **Department-level workload policies revised and approved by May 2021** – This is a reminder that SMU is committed to developing and approving department-level workload policies by May 2021. To meet the late-May timeline, I am requesting a draft by Wednesday, March 31, so that feedback can be provided. Chairs and faculty will have an opportunity to make revisions until the May timeline.

In the spirit of continuous improvement, we will certainly invite chairs and faculty in the coming academic year to examine how these policies are translating into practice and to host discussions to make modifications as needed. Anyone who would like access to resources gathered from webinars and research focused on best practices on developing equitable workload policies can reach out to the Associate Provost for Faculty Success, Paige Ware, at pware@smu.edu.

News and Noteworthy

- **Next Steps: SMU's Task force on Social Justice and Equity** – Thank you to the 22 faculty and 8 staff who have expressed interest in serving on the recently-announced [Task Force on Social Justice and Equity](#). Over the next two weeks, I will be reviewing nominations and, working in consultation with Jessica Dixon Weaver, Associate Professor of Law in the Dedman School of Law and task force chair, to make determinations on the task force's composition. Look for more information in subsequent newsletters.
- **Reminders from previous Friday updates:**
 - **SMU to remain test-optional for upcoming undergraduate recruiting cycle** – After consultation with the Faculty Senate, the PEC affirmed the

recommendation that SMU will remain test-optional for undergraduate students applying in fall 2022 and spring 2023.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth G. Loba", written in a cursive style.

Elizabeth G. Loba
Provost and Vice President for
Academic Affairs
Southern Methodist University
P.O. Box 750221, Dallas, TX 75275-0221
egloboa@smu.edu
214-768-3219

