



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

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Dear Colleagues:

Thanks to each of you for the ways you advance our educational mission in support of our students. These weekly updates will serve as a tool to keep you informed and engaged with SMU's Academic Affairs division as, together, we work toward a safe and healthy 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](#).

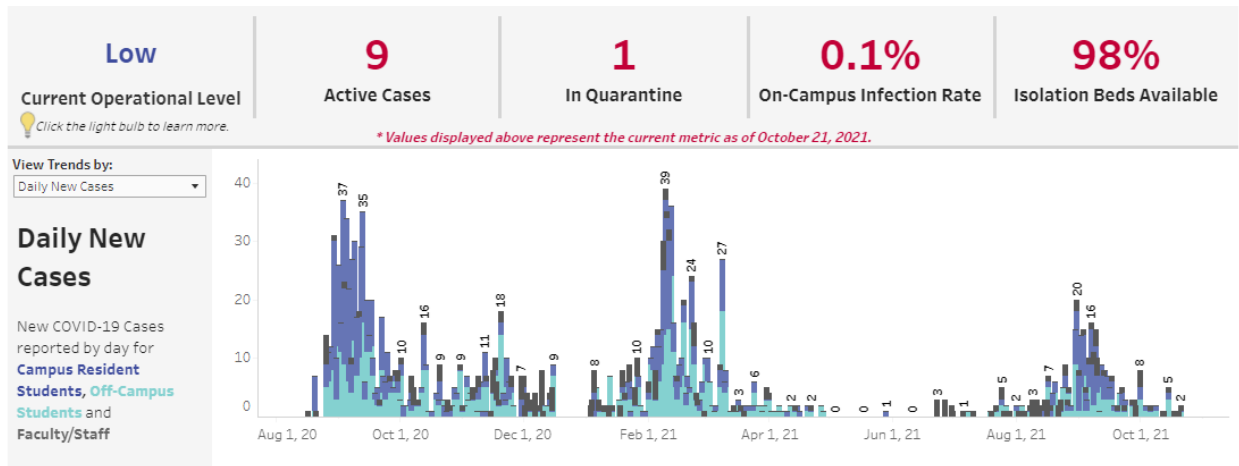
Today's update falls into three categories: 1) Fall 2021, 2) Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 3) News and Noteworthy.

Fall 2021:

- **Change in newsletter's focus for the next two weeks** – We are planning for a content shift in upcoming newsletters. Next week's newsletter will focus exclusively on students, and the following week's plan is to focus on SMU's faculty. If you have individuals, programs, or initiatives that you would like to see featured, I encourage you to reach out to us through facultysuccess@smu.edu.
- **Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAPI) and Allies Action Plan** – In the wake of an increase in anti-Asian violence across the Nation this past spring, a representative group of AAPI students, staff, faculty and their allies formed a working group that met regularly over the summer. This group examined SMU's current institutional structure, as well as the breadth of SMU's academic programs when compared to peer institutions. Based on their study and deliberations, the working group submitted the AAPI Action Plan on Friday, October 1. Following a timeline similar to SMU's response to the Black Unity Forum Action Plan last fall, we plan to respond to the

AAPI Action Plan within 30 days of receipt and will provide additional information in future newsletters.

- **COVID-19 case trends** – The most recent update of the [Mustang Strong dashboard](#) shows that we have a total of nine active cases on campus (two students, seven employees) with one student in quarantine and two students in on-campus isolation. Daily new cases remain in the single digits.



- **Reminder: Supplemental masks available through Deans' offices** – Faculty in need of additional masks to provide when students forget them should consult their respective Dean's office. Deans' offices have the ability to arrange for delivery of additional masks by submitting a [service request](#).
- **Vaccinations available through the Dr. Bob Smith Health Center** - To receive COVID and/or flu vaccinations on campus, appointments (required) can be booked through the [health portal](#) or by calling 214-768-2141.
 - Third COVID vaccination doses (not booster) are currently available for moderately to severely immunocompromised individuals (as defined by CDC and FDA guidelines) who are fully vaccinated with either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines.
 - Third COVID vaccination doses (Booster shots; Pfizer only) are also now available for individuals who meet the [CDC criteria](#).
 - [Flu vaccines](#) are also available and strongly recommended. Starting last week and continuing into this week, we have seen an uptick in flu cases on campus and would encourage all faculty and staff to make time to vaccinate.
- **Voluntarily report your COVID vaccine to SMU** – We were able to move to a mask-optional status, in part, because of the confidence gained from the number of confirmed vaccinations, which surpassed 10,000 last week (faculty, staff, students).

While actual numbers are likely higher, we can confidently report that more than 70% of faculty, 63% of staff, and more than 75% of total students have reported receiving the vaccine.

Please take a few minutes to [report your COVID-19 vaccination status](#) today. The process to report your vaccination is quick and easy.

- **COVID-19 testing resources for faculty and staff** – SMU provides access to convenient and free-of-cost COVID-19 testing for employees and their families [through Virtual Care for Families locations around the DFW area](#). Testing is also available free of cost to you and your benefits-eligible dependents through your SMU benefits at pharmacies, health care providers and testing sites off campus.
- **Reminder: consult Mustang Strong for the most up-to-date source of information regarding SMU's COVID-19 response (case counts, FAQs)** – Please continue reviewing the [Mustang Strong website](#) for information on SMU's COVID-19 response. This unique [FAQ](#) for faculty also maintains the most recent information concerning academic and classroom issues.

Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

- **Recap: Town Hall for Faculty in the Arts and Humanities** – My thanks to all faculty participants and to Tom DiPiero, Dean of Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences, Jim Quick, Associate Provost for Research and Dean of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies, Sam Holland, Dean of Meadows School of the Arts, and Holly Jeffcoat, Dean of SMU Libraries, for facilitating last week's Town Hall to focus on incorporating the arts, humanities, social sciences and professional schools into our ongoing and future conversations around academic excellence and resource allocation for later rounds of cluster hires. A recording of last week's session is available [here](#).

Discussion summary:

After Dean Quick opened the meeting by reviewing the key measures of the Carnegie Classification system, the Deans and I entertained questions from participants.

- Several departments see opportunities, and demand, for an ethnic/American studies cluster, with a potential focus on migration.
- We will need to define and communicate the process by which SMU's faculty can engage in our initial two cluster hires, 21st Century Technology and Education and Earth Hazards and National Security.

- For disciplines that do not align directly with our research/R1 aspirations, it is important to remember that the road to R1 is only one of our four academic priority areas. While we have focused heavily on research this initial year, as it is our area of greatest immediate need and potential impact, we will continue to invest strategically (through resource allocation and reallocation) in our other priority areas of academic excellence where our goal remains to achieve and sustain top 50 status in USN&WR, achieve the remaining goals of our 2016-2025 Strategic Plan and inclusive excellence initiatives most immediately in terms of meeting all commitments to BUF.
- Faculty conducting research, particularly in non-STEM areas, who are unsure of whether the research is being captured should contact the Office of Grant and Contract Accounting for additional guidance.
- To help us meet our research goals, cluster hires will ideally improve our ability to graduate Ph.D.'s. The ability to recruit post-docs as a part of a cluster, though not required and less applicable in the arts, humanities and social sciences, multiplies the benefits to our research profile.
- When faculty retire or vacate positions, we must be very strategic in terms of replacements, particularly where and how we deploy tenure-track lines. Starting this year, the Deans and I began deliberations about faculty lines, using a comprehensive dataset (graduate/undergraduate student credit hours, faculty/student FTEs, budget), prior to the official beginning of the budget cycle.
- **Workload procedures finalized and uploaded** – Click [here](#) to access all approved documents. While there are no status changes from last week, we are very close to our goal of having all workload procedure documents approved this fall. My thanks to the Deans, Associate Deans, Department Chairs and faculty for their hard work and commitment throughout this past year to this important project.

News and Noteworthy:

- **Save the date: Frances Anne Moody Hall Groundbreaking** – Community members are encouraged to mark their calendars for the Groundbreaking Ceremony of Frances Anne Moody Hall, the new home for the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies, on Friday, December 3, 2021, at 11:45 am. All are welcome, and lunch will be served to all attendees following the ceremony. Help us show our appreciation to the Moody Foundation for their historic \$100 million gift to SMU and celebrate the home of our newest school. Invitations will be distributed closer to the date.

- **Upcoming *Chronicle* ad for new faculty searches** – We are preparing a full-page ad for SMU faculty positions in both the hard copy and online versions of the *Chronicle for Higher Education*. After a yearlong hiring freeze, we are pleased to report that there are nearly 70 approved faculty positions in the pipeline with the goal of welcoming new faculty to the SMU community in the fall of 2022, and we have 11 new faculty members who either joined SMU during 2020-2021 or started this fall.
- **SMU mourns the loss of Meadows Museum Director and Professor Mark Roglán** – SMU mourns the loss of Mark A. Roglán, renowned Director of the University's Meadows Museum and professor in the Meadows School of the Arts, to cancer on October 5. His death at the age of 50 comes on the heels of his recent 20th anniversary leading the museum, the foremost center in the United States for exhibition, research and education in the arts and culture of Spain.

Under Roglán's guidance the museum tripled attendance, developed a major program of international exhibitions; and made major acquisitions that nearly doubled the permanent collection of Spanish art. His tenure was marked by major institutional milestones: the construction of a new sculpture garden and outdoor spaces, the prolific publication of insightful research, the creation of meaningful fellowships and accessible educational programs. His leadership was characterized by the formation of strategic alliances with many of the world's most prestigious arts organizations – including national museums in the US, UK, a number of European countries, and especially Spain.

We extend our deepest condolences to all of Mark's family and friends. And we will miss him terribly.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth G. Lobo, PhD
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Southern Methodist University

<https://www.smu.edu/provost>

World Changers Shaped Here