



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

October 8, 2021

Dear Colleagues:

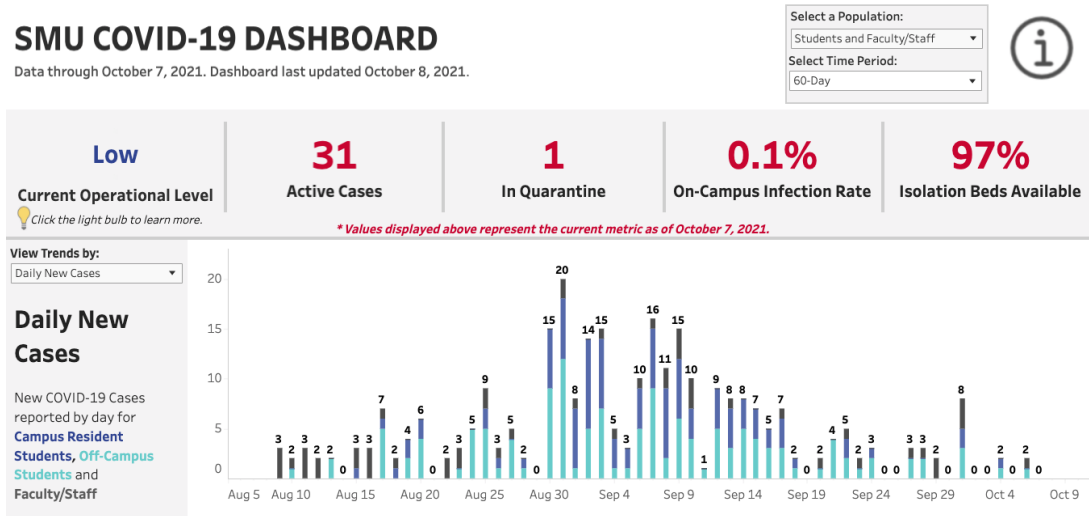
Thanks to each of you for the ways you advance our educational mission in support of our students. These weekly updates will serve as a tool to keep you informed and engaged with SMU's Academic Affairs division as, together, we work toward a safe and healthy fall semester. If you have suggestions for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

- **COVID-19 case trends** – Last week, Leigh Ann Moffett, Associate Vice President and Chief Risk Officer and leader of SMU's Emergency Operations Center (EOC), sent a [message](#) providing an update on case trends as we concluded the month of September.

During Wednesday’s Faculty Senate Meeting, Brandon Chance, Executive Director, Environmental Health and Safety, joined Leigh Ann to review our latest data and to answer faculty questions.



Key Highlights:

- The most recent posting of the [Mustang Strong dashboard](#) shows that we have a total of 32 active cases on campus (19 students, 12 employees) with one person in quarantine and four students in on-campus isolation. Daily new cases remain in the single digits.
- The Dr. Bob Smith Health Center is actively consolidating and verifying vaccine records for our community. While actual numbers are likely higher, we can confidently report that 70% of faculty, 62% of staff, over 70% of on-campus residents and nearly 60% of total students have reported receiving the vaccine.
- The Health Center continues to provide Covid-19 testing for students. As of yesterday, we have gone five consecutive days without a positive test.

Please continue reviewing the [Mustang Strong dashboard](#) to stay informed on our current situation and thank you for your resilience and commitment to our COVID-19 safety protocols.

- **Vaccinations available through the Dr. Bob Smith Health Center** – To receive COVID vaccinations on campus, appointments (required) can be booked through the [health portal](#) or by calling 214-768-2141.
 - Third 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.
- **Voluntarily report your COVID vaccine to SMU** – Having accurate vaccination information helps to inform SMU’s COVID-19 response. The process is quick and easy. Please take a few minutes to [report your COVID-19 vaccination status](#) today through the Dr. Bob Smith Health Center.
- **COVID-19 testing resources for faculty and staff** – SMU is still providing 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.
- **New Canvas Feature: Feedback Box** – Please remember that, as referenced in previous newsletters, the new anonymous student Feedback Box is active in Canvas. Please click on the Feedback Box link in your Canvas course to access the tool to see if your students have left you any messages. By default, the system will also send faculty an email when any student feedback is posted.

If you have any questions about this tool, please contact your school’s [Academic Technology Service Director \(ATSD\)](#), submit a ticket to the

Office of Information Technology (OIT) help desk or contact the Associate Provost for Faculty Success, Paige Ware at facultysuccess@smu.edu.

- **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. Here, you can find answers to frequently asked questions, access the latest [campus announcements](#), review information on receiving and reporting the [vaccine](#), and monitor the latest data on [confirmed COVID-19 cases on campus](#). This unique [FAQ](#) for faculty also maintains the most recent information concerning academic and classroom issues.
- **Reminder: Faculty workshops for student support and emergency preparedness –** Our faculty are positioned as supports for students and colleagues in the case of issues that can arise, from stress to medical emergencies in their classroom. The Associate Provost for Faculty Success, CTE and the Office of Dean of Students are planning workshops this fall to assist faculty in navigating this array of issues. More information will be forthcoming from the CTE in the coming weeks.

Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

- **Workload policies finalized and uploaded –** SMU is committed to developing and approving department-level and unit-level workload documents that make our SMU policies clear and transparent at the unit level, which will be a critical step in helping us reach our research and creative impact goals for R1 and our BUF goals around greater transparency and equity.

I am pleased to announce that we are very close to meeting our goal of approving and posting department-level and unit-level workload policies

for all of the schools/college. The outstanding documents, from the Cox School of Business are under final review and revision and will be posted in the near future.

Click [here](#) to access the approved documents. 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.

- **Moody School PhD Recruitment Grants** – The Simmons School of Education PhD program, and the departments of Chemistry, Physics, and Economics were selected to receive PhD Recruitment Grants from the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies. These new grants are intended to promote active involvement by faculty in recruitment activities. They fund proposals for recruitment activities to attract talented and diverse students to SMU’s PhD programs. This year’s grants will support recruitment of prospective PhD students from underrepresented populations, targeting HBCUs and other minority-serving institutions.
- **Year to date (YTD) research awards on record pace** – As of Wednesday, October 6, our cumulative research awards for the 2022 fiscal year exceed \$23M. We are only in month five of the current fiscal year, and our research awards already outpace total research awards for the entire fiscal year 2017. Over the past five years, SMU has not hit the \$23M mark until January or February, at the earliest. Congratulations and thank you to our faculty and staff for this exciting accomplishment!
- **Search Committees activated for two key academic leadership searches** – Last month, Stephanie Knight, Dean of the Simmons School of Education and Human Development, and I hosted a kickoff meeting with members of the Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer [search committee](#). Tom DiPiero, Dean of the Dedman College of Arts and Humanities, and I hosted a similar meeting with members of the Dean of

the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies and Associate Provost for Graduate Education [search committee](#).

Both committees are now working with our search partner, Isaacson, Miller, to develop the position descriptions that will inform advertisements and our candidate pool.

- **Reminder: Update on cluster hire search committees** – Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences and the Simmons School of Education and Human Development are using existing resources and funding lines within each of their schools to accomplish this first round of strategic cluster hiring to augment areas in which our SMU faculty are already engaged in two high-impact research areas: 1) 21st Century Technology and Education and 2) Earth Hazards and National Security.

Last month, we [announced](#) the search committee members who have agreed to serve on these two cluster hire searches.

- **Reminder: Invitation for this month's Town Hall for faculty in the Arts and Humanities** – We have scheduled a Town Hall for Arts and Humanities on October 14, 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. That meeting will take place at 3:00 p.m. in Crum Auditorium. 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, and Sam Holland, Dean of Meadows School of the Arts, will be facilitating the meeting. See last week's [email](#) for additional information or click [here](#) to register.

News and Noteworthy:

- **Search process for Associate Provost for Institutional Planning and Effectiveness** – I recently announced an [open call](#) to senior faculty

members to apply for the Associate Provost for Institutional Planning and Effectiveness position. Questions, nominations, and applications (due October 15) can be sent to the [Office of the Provost](#).

- **Update: 2021 – 2022 Provost Faculty Fellows** – Thanks to those who applied for the two additional Provost Faculty Fellows positions offered this academic year. We hope to announce our new fellows in next week's newsletter.
- **Cox receives \$6m to establish Shaddock Hall as a part of its renovation project** – A gift from Kim and William (Bill) Shaddock '74 will establish Shaddock Hall as part of the Cox School of Business's building renovation project. The \$6m contribution will foster educational excellence through dedicated spaces for learning, research and collaboration.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth G. Lobo, PhD
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Southern Methodist University
<https://www.smu.edu/provost>

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