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Office of the Provost

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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 manage a safe, healthy and productive spring 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) Spring 2022, 2) Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 3) News and Noteworthy.

Spring 2022

- **COVID-19 health and safety reminders**
 - **N-95 masks delivery begins today** – Masks are being delivered today and early next week to the college, schools and Vice President's offices. Faculty and staff who need masks should [consult their Dean's Office point person \(found here\)](#) or VP's office staff for additional instructions.
 - **Reminders:** Last week, SMU announced two additional testing resources for employees, their spouses, and dependents who are seeking COVID-19 testing:
 - New on-campus option: MyLabsDirect is providing on-site PCR testing for COVID-19 at no cost for SMU employees, spouses, and their dependents from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Monday through Friday at a drive-up parking site at Expressway Tower, 6116 North Central Expressway. They also offer drive-up testing at several sites in

the DFW area with no appointment required. More details are available by visiting smu.edu/employeecovidtest under the “MyLabsDirect” tab.

- At-home tests – SMU’s health benefits provider, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX), is providing coverage for at-home COVID-19 tests. Visit smu.edu/employeecovidtest under the “Testing kit purchased at a pharmacy – BCBSTX reimbursements” tab for more information and the shipping/reimbursement form.

These testing options are in addition to the Urgent Care for Children and Families services already available to SMU employees and their families.

Remember, if you test positive (including using an at-home kit), please report the results to your supervisor and complete the [SMU Health Reporting Form](#).

- Consult Mustang Strong for the most up-to-date campus COVID-19 guidance – Please continue consulting the [Mustang Strong website](#) regularly for the latest information, as our pandemic response is dynamic. As we have since fall 2020, we will use our COVID-19 operations plan to adjust our response as needed.
- **Taos Executive Board meeting recap** – On Thursday, President Turner and I joined the SMU-in-Taos team to provide our annual update to the Taos Executive Board. President Turner gave the University update. My report focused on our four academic priority areas through 2025 and the role Taos will play in achieving these goals. Associate Provost Peter Moore provided a Taos campus update. Director Rumanda Young and Mike Adler, Associate Professor of Anthropology, discussed SMU-in-Taos programs. And David Lee, Assistant Vice President for Curricular Operations and Strategy, facilitated a discussion on SMU-in-Taos current and future operations.
- **Link to spring 2022 General Faculty Meeting** – Thanks to all who attended last week’s spring 2022 General Faculty Meeting. As I shared, 2021 was another record-breaking year at SMU. Working together we have not only maintained but strengthened SMU’s academic quality during the historically challenging past two years, often defying national trends.

SMU experienced record enrollment this fall with 12,391 students (6,914 undergraduate; 5,477 graduate). This topped our previous record enrollment of 12,385 students (6,835 undergraduate; 5,550 graduate), set in fall 2020. With enrollment growth, we have seen

an increase in talent and diversity as well. For fall 2021, 33% of our first-year students and 44% of our transfers come from traditionally underrepresented populations. 11% of our first-year students and nearly 26% of our transfers are Pell grant eligible.

After a faculty and staff hiring pause last year in response to the pandemic, we entered this academic year with 82 faculty positions authorized for search, with most to be filled by fall 2022. Many of these positions will address critical teaching needs, and representing over 10% of our full-time faculty, will provide us strategic opportunities to align incoming faculty with SMU's areas of academic strength and distinction.

SMU faculty are also on a historic pace this year in terms of grant activity – as measured by awards received as well as by research expenditures (a key metric used by Carnegie). We closed 2021 above \$38M in research awards for the first time in any calendar year. Overall, there was a nearly 84% increase in research award dollars received by December 2021 (\$38.05M) when compared with December 2020 (\$20.7M). In terms of research expenditures, we had an 11% increase by December 2021 (\$18.3M) when compared with December 2020 (\$16.5M).

For those who were unable to attend the General Faculty Meeting, a recording is available [here](#) (SMU ID and password).

Road to R1/Scholarly Creative Excellence:

- **Clark Hill Research Townhall and Workshops this week** – SMU has retained the services of Clark Hill, PLC to work closely with the Office of the Provost and with faculty to increase federal research funding. The faculty will play an essential role in this effort because faculty ideas for expanding research will inform the foundation on which objectives and strategies will be developed to engage the federal appropriation and legislative processes.

On Monday, Clark Hill representatives hosted a series of meetings with faculty to describe the current federal funding landscape and the appropriations process and to strategize around SMU's areas of strength and opportunity. This [LINK](#) will take you to a box folder where you may view and copy resources provided by the Clark-Hill Group during their on-campus visit. Included are (1) a recording of the Clark-Hill workshop on federal research funding, (2) PowerPoint and PDF copies of the presentation shown by Clark-Hill during the workshop, and (3) a template to be used to develop and submit

your ideas for increasing SMU's research funding through the annual federal appropriation process or by legislative requests.

The template is for faculty use to submit proposals for earmarks or changes in research focus of a federal R&D agency. To be included for consideration in the FY 2023 budget development cycle, your proposals must be submitted to Jim Quick at (jquick@smu.edu) no later than **February 14, 2022**. Please follow the template closely in developing your proposal. We look forward to reviewing your ideas in collaboration with our Clark-Hill representatives.

- **Key leadership searches underway**

- **Data Science Institute Director** – I have asked Jim Quick, Dean of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies and Associate Provost for Research, to chair our search for the newly-endowed Peter O'Donnell Director of SMU's Data Science Institute. Early next month we will announce our executive search consultant, and I will invite and charge search committee members.
- **Dean, Dedman School of Law** – Last week, search committee members met with our executive search consultant, Chuck O'Boyle, to launch the search for our next Dean of the Dedman School of Law. My thanks to Matt Myers, Dean of the Cox School of Business, for chairing this search.
- **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. The search committee has reviewed our pool of applicants and has recommended a slate of 5 – 8 candidates for airport interviews.
- **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. Next month, the search committee will review our pool of applicants to recommend a slate of 5 – 8 candidates for airport interviews.

News and Noteworthy:

- **Starship Food Delivery** – SMU Hospitality Group has partnered with Starship Technologies robots to deliver meals, drinks, and snacks from a range of locations directly to you. They currently deliver from Panera, Einstein Bros. Bagels, Starbucks, Lawyer’s Inn, The Market, Cinco Taco, Sushic, Rollin’ N Bowlin’ Acai Bowls, and Mac’s Place.

These robots provide a safe, fast, affordable (only \$1.99 delivery fee) and environmentally-friendly delivery option. They are sanitized before each delivery by Starship staff wearing protective equipment. You can try the service using your cellphone by clicking on www.starship-smu.com or typing ‘Starship Food Delivery’ into your app store.

- **New digital volume of the Undergraduate Research Journal available now** – *Undergraduate Research Journal (Digital Version) Volume 7, Issue 1* is officially live! You can check it out [here](#). Please share the link with friends, family, peers, or others in your network. Join me in congratulating the student-led, undergraduate editorial team: Hannah Webb, Jessie Henderson, Saifiyah Zaki, Thatcher Dunlap, Engie Hamza, and Tamal Pilla. Thanks to the Office of Engaged Learning and SMU Libraries for their support.

- **Garry Weber foundation gives \$50M to create the Garry Weber End Zone Complex in SMU’s Gerald J. Ford Stadium** – A \$50 million commitment from the Garry Weber Foundation, established by former Mustang football letterman Garry A. Weber ‘58, is the largest gift in the history of SMU Athletics and supports a \$100 million drive for a new 192,500-square-foot Garry Weber End Zone Complex at Gerald J. Ford Stadium. The Garry Weber Foundation’s gift continues an exciting new era for Mustang football and SMU as part of the University’s recently announced \$1.5 billion campaign, *SMU Ignited: Boldly Shaping Tomorrow*.

Sincerely,



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

World Changers Shaped Here