

Department Chairs, Associate Deans, Deans, and Academic Affairs Staff,

With a goal of staying connected on internal governance issues, the Provost Office sends a monthly Roundup on the final Friday of each month to the internal university leadership.

Important Upcoming Dates in May:

- 15th: Confirm and close failed searches
- 30th: Ensure all renewal contracts and merit/salary letters have been distributed

New Course Scheduling Protocols for Spring 2027. SMU will implement new course scheduling protocols beginning with the Spring 2027 Schedule of Classes. These protocols, developed by the SMU Academic Space Committee and endorsed by the Provost, are designed to improve scheduling efficiency, maximize the use of instructional space, and support student progress toward timely degree completion. At the core of the new approach is a stronger emphasis on consistent, “on-grid” scheduling during standard meeting times. By aligning undergraduate courses to common time blocks, the University aims to reduce scheduling conflicts that can prevent students from enrolling in required courses. The protocols also promote a more balanced distribution of classes across the instructional day, encourage use of shoulder hours, and require closer alignment between enrollment caps and room capacity. Together, these changes will allow the institution to serve more students effectively while making better use of available classroom space. The protocols introduce clear expectations for departments, including targets for on-grid scheduling, limits on prime-time course starts, and guidelines for assigning high-capacity classrooms. They also establish a structured process for requesting and approving exceptions, as well as accountability measures that link scheduling performance to priority access for high-demand spaces. Departments will be expected to make steady progress toward full compliance over time. To support a smooth transition to this scheduling approach, additional details and implementation guidance will be shared with department schedulers and leadership. Chairs are encouraged to work closely with their scheduling teams to begin planning for these changes. A Zoom information session will be held on **May 20 at 1:00 p.m.** to review the protocols and answer questions. A calendar invitation with the Zoom link will be distributed in the coming days. Information about the scheduling protocols is available

here: <https://www.smu.edu/provost/assessment/policies-and-guidance/coursescheduling>

New Credit Hour Policy and Syllabus Expectations this Fall. Beginning in fall 2026, we will be meeting compliance with SACSCOC Standard 10.7, federal Title IV regulations, and institutional expectations for academic rigor and consistency in the assignment of credit hours. To that end, we have a new policy that provides guidance to faculty, departments, schools, and curriculum committees in establishing appropriate credit hour expectations for all SMU academic courses and programs. Academic credit serves as the common currency by which learning is measured across instructional formats, supports the transfer

of students between institutions, and forms the basis for federal financial aid eligibility. You can find related documents in this folder, including the policy, a credit hour calculator, and credit hour guidance: [SMU Credit Hour Policy and Procedures](#). What does this mean for faculty? **First**, effective this fall, the following statement will be automatically added as one of the required institutional statements in all syllabi: *In accordance with federal policy and SACSCOC standards, SMU defines a credit hour as the amount of work represented in the achievement of student learning outcomes that reasonably approximates one hour (50 minutes) of instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work per week for each credit hour. Students should expect to spend at least three hours per week engaged in course-related work for each credit hour. Important Note: Shortened time frames (e.g., mod classes, intersessions classes, etc.) do not reduce total contact hour and expectations of time in student work outside of class. The same total hours must be delivered in a shorter timeframe through longer meetings or more intensive assignments. The following calculations hold true as a reflection of credit, regardless of the format of course delivery and include, but are not exhaustive of, the following: regular-term in-person; online/hybrid; laboratory; studio; internship/practicum /field experience; intersession/compressed term/course modules (A/B).* **Second**, all faculty will be required to provide in their syllabi calculated estimations of their in-class instructional time and out-of-class work time. We will soon send out a faculty-wide memo with resources to more information and tutorials. Please note that—in several pilots—we have effectively used Generative AI to create these credit hour estimations. We encourage you to try loading the policy and the calculator into an AI tool, then load a syllabus and prompt it to create a table built off of the syllabus. For more questions, reach out to facultysuccess@smu.edu.

Visiting Scholars at SMU: Rolling Out New Process. SMU will be implementing a new, centralized Visiting Scholar process to ensure compliance with immigration, research, HR, and institutional requirements before a visiting scholar arrives on campus. All visits must be sponsored by an academic unit and approved by the dean and the Office of the Provost; visits involving foreign nationals must also be coordinated with the International Office to review visa needs and eligibility. The process includes advance documentation, background checks, required trainings, and formal agreements, and clearly outlines responsibilities for onboarding, oversight, and departure. Visiting Scholars are unpaid, non-employees, appointed for a limited term, and provided access only as necessary for their approved activities. For any questions, reach out to the International Office at internationalscholars@smu.edu.

Foreign National Travel Notifications. Please remind international faculty to notify the International Office before traveling outside the U.S. This allows for coordinated campus review, visa advising, and risk assessment based on the individual's immigration status. For more information, please check the [International Office](#) website.

Proposed End of Duration of Status (D/S). The Department of Homeland Security has not yet issued a final rule regarding the proposal to end duration of status. In anticipation of the final rule, faculty advisors working with international students who need additional

time to complete their degrees should refer students to the International Office for accurate guidance on the extension process.

If you have any questions, please contact Claudia Hart at claudiahart@smu.edu

Summer Payment Plans. SMU no longer offers an official summer payment plan. This change is the result of a new vendor for SMUpay and changes to the fall/spring payment plans to make them more accessible for all students. Students who are looking for a summer payment plan can reach out to The Mane Desk at manedesk@smu.edu to talk about some options available to them.

SMU Technology Showcase on May 6 in Moody Hall. Please join a day-long showcase full of interactivity with live demos. Faculty and staff across campus will be presenting their new ideas about integration. You will have opportunities to connect with IT experts, faculty and staff colleagues as you explore tools and innovations that shape teaching and research. Registration is not required. Spread the word! For more information, visit <https://www.smu.edu/oit/events/tech-showcase>.

Keep the community informed about faculty awards: Please let us know if you have received or have been nominated for an award – or if you have nominated an SMU colleague [at this link](#).

We welcome your suggestions for future areas to feature in the monthly roundup; email facultysuccess@smu.edu. You can [find past issues at this link](#).