

Department Chairs, Associate Deans, and Deans,

With a goal of staying connected, the Provost Office is sending a monthly Roundup on the final Friday of each month to the internal university leadership. We know that your time is limited, so no action will be required on your part in response to these messages. Sometimes topics arise about which you would like an opportunity to provide input, and we hope this mechanism will serve the goal of keeping you informed around internal communications and governance issues.

Springboard—Monthly Cohort Brunches for New Faculty: Encourage your faculty who are new to SMU within the last 1-3 years to look into this opportunity at SMU, open to all faculty who joined SMU in 2019 or later, inclusive of all career tracks (pre-tenure, tenured, non-tenure line). We are offering a supportive New Faculty Success Program as a year-long, cohort-based program that meets for monthly brunch with topics and webinars drawn from [the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity \(NCFDD\) Core Curriculum series](#): establishing work/life balance, maintaining time for research and scholarly/creative excellence, enhancing teaching quality, improving self-efficacy around the promotion process, and building a network of people and resources across campus. Faculty will be matched into cohorts of 6-8 and will join for a monthly brunch to discuss these topic areas. Please encourage your new colleagues to [join this opportunity using this link: Springboard](#).

Faculty Search and Recruitment: Improving Business Processes. With over 52 new faculty searches to launch in the coming weeks (in addition to failed searches rolling over to this academic year), a group of faculty administrators from each School/College has been designated to work with the Provost Office, IAE, and Diversity Office to strengthen our business processes. This effort began in June and will extend across the year. Look for workshops and resources in the coming weeks that will be required of all chairs of faculty searches and the administrative support staff associated with each search. These workshops will focus exclusively on the business processes associated with searches and are designed to eliminate redundancy and to make use of time-saving tools.

Expanded Options for Offering Mental Health Services for Students. All SMU students now have access to on-demand “teletherapy” counseling and video appointments with a medical professional at AcademicLiveCare on their smartphone, tablet, or computer at no cost. These sessions can be accessed from students’ dorms, homes, or on-the-go at all hours. Please help all faculty, staff, and students know about this new resource to ensure that the students in our community have access to preventative care and crisis support at all times. Visit [SMU Teletherapy](#). In addition, if someone is in crisis at any time and needs to speak to an on-call counselor 24/7, they can call [214-768-2277](tel:214-768-2277) and select option 2.

Important Reminder about Absences for Medical and Mental Health Reasons. As a reminder, the Dr. Bob Smith Health Center does not provide medical health excuses for student absences ([see policy here](#)). We urge faculty who would like to have documentation of a medical excuse to use this approved [Absence from Class Form](#) instead of requiring a medical note signed by a physician. If a student requests a second Absence from Class Form for medical reasons, faculty are highly encouraged to [submit a CCC form](#) so that the Office of the Dean of Students can reach out to the student. Note that the decision to excuse the absence remains at faculty discretion. However, we urge faculty to consider the equity implications of requiring a signed medical note in lieu of using

this approved SMU form. For example, students with financial means can afford to obtain a formal excuse through more expensive after-care centers, which might not be an option for all students.

Guidelines for the Use of Technology. As a reminder, the approved [guidelines](#) can be found at this link. An announcement about the updated guidelines was made on August 9 from the Provost Office. For more information about the process by which these guidelines were developed, contact Faculty Senate President Rob Frank at robfrank@smu.edu. Faculty who would like to offer Zoom-based options for office hours can certainly do so at their students' request, as Zoom can be a useful and efficient mode for one-on-one office hours. However, because SMU is an in-person university, faculty must also host the option for students to attend in-person office hours.

We welcome your suggestions for future areas to feature in the monthly roundup; email facultysuccess@smu.edu.