



September 11, 2024

Dear SMU Faculty and Staff,

Every two years, SMU evaluates its benefits package by comparing our offerings with those of other leading institutions in higher education and top employers in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. This benchmarking process helps ensure that you and your family are well-supported as you contribute to our University's mission, while also attracting and retaining other talented individuals like yourself.

After completing the review this summer, we are pleased to share that SMU's benefits continue to be competitive. Many of them — notably, our retirement matching, health plans, life insurance and tuition benefits, are areas where SMU stands out. As we move into the upcoming calendar year and open enrollment period, we are excited to build on this strong foundation by introducing the following enhanced benefits designed to better support the well-being of our community. These new offerings are effective January 1, 2025.

- **Annual vacation days for eligible staff will increase from 10 to 12 days** for employees starting their third year of employment through the end of their fifth year. Employees in this category working 12 months will begin to accrue 7.5 vacation hours monthly, instead of 6.25, starting on January 1, 2025. Employees working fewer than 12 months will continue to accrue vacation on a prorated basis. Other vacation accruals are **outlined here** and will remain unchanged.
- **Paid parental leave will increase from two to three weeks.** Staff who give birth can now receive a total of nine weeks (45 consecutive

working days) of combined Childbirth (6 weeks) and Parental Leave (3 weeks) per calendar year.

- **SMU is adding a fertility and family planning benefit to our existing medical plan** administered by BlueCross BlueShield of Texas (BCBSTX). This added benefit will provide access to a specialist network, care programs, treatment, advocacy and benefit coordination for those planning a family.
- **The University is also introducing a voluntary short term disability plan benefit.** This employee-elected benefit helps protect your income and can be used to supplement or offset sick leave if you're unable to work due to illness, injury, or a medical event.
- **Premiums for health plans offered by SMU through Blue Cross Blue Shield will see a slight increase of 3%**, well below the national inflation average of 7%. SMU has had minimal health plan increases for the last many years, passing on increases to employees at rates well below the national average.

Human Resources will share more details on these added benefits during October's open enrollment period. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please reach out to HR at SMUHR@smu.edu.

I hope these benefit enhancements express how strongly SMU values all employees. When taken in totality, SMU's benefit package is incredibly competitive and we commit to continue our biannual review to ensure that remains the case. Thank you for everything you do to make SMU the incredible place we all value.

Sincerely,

Chris Regis
Sr. Vice President for Business and Finance
and Chief Financial Officer