



# SMU

*Elizabeth G. Loba*  
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
*Office of the Provost*

January 7, 2021

Dear Colleagues:

Welcome back to Spring 2021 on the Hilltop! Faculty syllabi are an effective way to demonstrate our support for new and returning students. As you finalize your syllabi for this academic term, please communicate the required information below to your students. Sharing this information in writing will create a record that you have outlined the accommodations provided for by University policy. This also provides students with a reminder not only of the policies themselves, but also of how to access the services and accommodations available.

Also, please make sure your syllabi are uploaded to <https://sites.smu.edu/des/syllabus/>. (The Syllabus Library is a resource for SMU faculty, staff, and students, and can only be accessed with an SMU ID and password.) These policies provide expectations for both faculty and students. Faculty who do not follow University policy need to provide their Department/Division Chair with a written explanation.

**(Note: Please do not copy the old Disability Accommodations statement from a previous syllabus but copy/paste the paragraph below as is. Exception: Law school faculty members should consult with Stephen Yeager, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, for the specific statement appropriate for law syllabi.)**

- **Disability Accommodations:** Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first register with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS). Students can call 214-768-1470 or visit <http://www.smu.edu/Provost/SASP/DASS> to begin the process. Once approved and registered, students will submit a DASS Accommodation letter to faculty through the electronic portal *DASS Link* and then communicate directly with each instructor to make appropriate arrangements. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and require advance notice to implement.
- **Religious Observance:** Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence.

<https://www.smu.edu/StudentAffairs/ChaplainandReligiousLife/ReligiousHolidays>).

- **Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities:** Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work. (See [2020-2021 SMU Undergraduate Catalog](#) under “Enrollment and Academic Records/Enrollment Policies/Excused Absences.”)
- **Student Learning Outcomes:** Please include in your syllabi all student learning outcomes, both those specific to your course, as well as those that satisfy major and general education requirements.
- **Student Academic Success Programs:** Students needing assistance with writing assignments for SMU courses may schedule an appointment with the Writing Center through Canvas. Students wanting support with subject-specific tutoring or success strategies should contact SASP, Loyd All Sports Center, Suite 202; 214-768-3648; <https://www.smu.edu/sasp>.
- **Final Exams:** Final course examinations shall be given in all courses where they are appropriate, and some form of final assessment is essential. Final exams or final assessments must be administered as specified in the official examination schedule, and shall not be administered during the last week of classes or during the Reading Period. Faculty must state clearly in the syllabus the date/time and form of the final exam or assessment. All exams, tests, and quizzes will be delivered online this spring so that all students, regardless of mode of instruction, have equitable access to testing.
- **Caring Community Connections (CCC) program:** This is a resource for anyone in the SMU community to refer students of concern to the Office of the Dean of Students. Faculty play a critical role in identifying students who are experiencing challenges, as you may be the first to notice a change in behavior such as class attendance or performance. The online referral form can be found at [smu.edu/deanofstudentsccc](http://smu.edu/deanofstudentsccc). After a referral is submitted, students will be contacted to discuss the concern, strategize options, and be connected to appropriate resources. Additionally, should you have concerns about students and are unclear about what to do, please see the [CCC Reference Guide](#), or contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 214-768-4564.
- **Recommended Syllabus Statement for Pregnant and Parenting Students:** Accommodations for pregnant and parenting students: Under Title IX students who are pregnant or parenting may request academic adjustments by contacting Elsie Johnson ([elsiej@smu.edu](mailto:elsiej@smu.edu)) in the Office of the Dean of Students, or by calling 214-768-4564. Students seeking assistance must schedule an appointment with their professors as

early as possible, present a letter from the Office of the Dean of Students, and make appropriate arrangements. Please note that academic adjustments are not retroactive and, when feasible, require advance notice to implement.

- **Covid-19 Attendance Statement:** Students who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or who have been notified through contact tracing of potential exposure and need to self-quarantine or isolate must follow the protocols laid out in [SMU's Contact Tracing Protocol](#). To ensure academic continuity, students in these situations will not be penalized and will be provided appropriate modifications to assignments, deadlines, and testing. Please also note that SMUFlex classes might, in rare circumstances, go remote for two week periods to accommodate COVID-related issues. To ensure these necessary accommodations, affected students must:
  - Provide as much advance notification as possible to the instructor about a change in circumstances. Students must notify their instructor about a potential absence as well as plans for a return to class. For cases in which students test positive for COVID-19, they should fill out a [CCC form at this link](#)
  - Communicate promptly with the instructor to establish, as necessary, alternative assignments and/or changes to deadlines and exams. Students are then responsible for meeting the expectations laid out in these alternative arrangements.
  - Continue participation in class via Zoom, as health circumstances permit. Attend class regularly, when not in a situation outlined above, in accordance with safety measures laid out by SMU CAN in the [Pledge to Protect](#) (including wearing masks, maintaining social distancing, and cleaning personal space after class). In-person participation in SMUFlex classes is required on students' assigned red/blue rotation days except in cases when students are experiencing illness, are in self-quarantine or in isolation.
  - Students facing multiple or extended COVID-19-related absences or illness can work with the Office of the Dean of Students to consider options such as fully remote learning or medical withdrawal.

This policy, aligned with the [SMU Honor Code](#) and the SMU [Pledge to Protect](#) relies on mutual trust and respect between students and faculty to ensure safety, academic integrity, and instructional continuity.

- **Sexual Harassment:** All forms of sexual harassment including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking are violations of SMU's Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy and may also violate Texas law. Students who wish to file a complaint or receive more information about the grievance process may contact Samantha Thomas, SMU's Title IX Coordinator, at [accessequity@smu.edu](mailto:accessequity@smu.edu) or 214-768-3601. Please note that faculty are mandatory reporters. If students notify faculty of sexual harassment, they must report it to the Title IX Coordinator. For more information about sexual harassment

including resources available to assist students, please visit [www.smu.edu/sexualmisconduct](http://www.smu.edu/sexualmisconduct).

In the attached, I have also provided additional recommendations and resources that should improve the classroom experience for you and your students if helpful to you, such as the different attendance options that the academic leadership team developed at the end of the fall term. Additionally, you may wish to share the attached “2021 Know What to Do” and the “DASS informational sheet” with your students.

You may also choose to include the following statement regarding the “campus carry” law: “In accordance with Texas Senate Bill 11, also known as the “campus carry” law, following consultation with entire University community SMU determined to remain a weapons-free campus. Specifically, SMU prohibits possession of weapons (either openly or in a concealed manner) on campus. For more information, please see: [http://www.smu.edu/BusinessFinance/Police/Weapons\\_Policy](http://www.smu.edu/BusinessFinance/Police/Weapons_Policy).”

Thank you for your help in promoting a great start to the spring 2021 semester. A copy of this letter and the attachments will be posted on the Office of the Provost website under “[Provost’s Communications](#).”

Sincerely,



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