



*Elizabeth G. Lobo, Ph. D.*  
*Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs*  
*Office of the Provost*

December 10, 2021

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 continue with a safe, healthy and productive fall 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) Fall 2021, 2) Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 3) News and Noteworthy.

Fall 2021:

- **SMU's response to President Biden's Executive Order (EO) 14042** – As President Turner [announced this week](#), SMU is pausing the requirement that all employees be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by January 18, 2022, unless and until the courts instruct otherwise.

We continue to encourage everyone to get the COVID-19 vaccine and booster shots and to confirm their vaccination status with the University. Over 92% of full-time faculty and 89% of staff have already provided confirmation that they have received the vaccine. For those who haven't yet, please [upload your vaccination information](#) as it greatly assists our planning and response. If you would like to confirm your vaccination status, [this website](#) provides step-by-step instructions.

- **Support for adjunct faculty to confirm vaccination status** – We have now confirmed the process for new and current adjunct faculty to submit their vaccination status and have shared detailed instructions with deans and department chairs. Should you have any questions, please contact [facultysuccess@smu.edu](mailto:facultysuccess@smu.edu).

- **Last day of classes and preparation for final exams** – Fall 2021 classes conclude this week. Thank you, once again, for your commitment and flexibility in response to the challenges brought on by COVID. As we prepare for final exams, please remember that this can be a stressful time for faculty, staff and students.

The Caring Community Connections (CCC) Program provides support to students who are experiencing challenges by identifying them and linking them to appropriate resources. If you have student concerns, you can let the team know [here](#).

SMU has an Employee Assistance Program for all full-time and part-time benefits-eligible faculty/staff and their dependents that offers mental health support assistance and resources. Calls to 1-877-704-5696 are answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week. EAP information and services can be accessed online at the [Magellan Health Services Website](#), which includes online counseling. See this [website](#) for additional information.

- **December Commencement** – [December Commencement](#) will take place at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, December 18 in Moody Coliseum. We anticipate about 550 graduates to participate. SMU Trustee Kelly Hoglund Compton, '79 will be our commencement speaker.

Doors open at 8:00 a.m. and guests are encouraged to be seated by 8:45 a.m. [Security screening](#) is in place. Guest tickets are not required for this event. Seating is general admission. If the venue reaches capacity, guests will be directed to a simulcast location. The ceremony will also be live streamed at [smu.edu/live](#).

We invite all faculty who are attending the graduation ceremony to join us for a breakfast in the Miller Event Center on Saturday morning at 8:00 am. Please RSVP by sending your name to [facultysuccess@smu.edu](mailto:facultysuccess@smu.edu).

### Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

- **SMU breaks ground on Frances Anne Moody Hall** – Last Friday, our Board of Trustees' meetings concluded with a historic event, as SMU broke ground on Frances Anne Moody Hall, the new home of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies.



Moody Hall will serve as an intellectual hub for research and graduate education at SMU. It will also provide a home for two of our new strategic academic leadership positions – the Dean of the Moody School for Graduate and Advanced Studies and the Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer.

By design, Moody Hall will be a portal through which our students, faculty, their academic collaborators and corporate partners can connect to our research and innovation resources. Thank you to the Moody Foundation for this landmark generosity that will propel and ignite SMU's transformative advance toward scholarly and research excellence.

- **Faculty research continues on historic pace** – As of November 30 of the current fiscal year, SMU's research office has processed 201 awards totaling \$28,202,753. This is SMU's highest-ever research award total by November of any fiscal year in our history. We have only reached this mark three times in an entire fiscal year. Congratulations and thank you to our faculty and research staff for this accomplishment! Click [here](#) for a breakdown of results by college/school/department and an example of the reports we review on a monthly basis.
- **Update on key leadership position searches underway** –
  - **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. Please share this profile with members of your network who might be interested in applying or know someone who should.

Last month, the search committee met with Isaacson, Miller, our executive search consultants, to review a preliminary slate of candidates, and they anticipate receiving a completed applicant pool for review in January. My thanks to Dean Stephanie Knight as chair and the entire search committee for their work advancing this strategic hire.

- **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. Please share this profile with members of your network who might be interested in applying or know someone who should.

Next month, the search committee will meet with Isaacson, Miller to review a preliminary slate of candidates. My thanks to Dean Tom DiPiero as chair and the entire search committee for their work advancing this strategic hire.

- **New system for financial conflict of interest (FCOI) disclosure management** – Research Compliance has recently implemented a new electronic FCOI disclosure management system – Axiom Mentor. Those conducting research with human subjects may already be familiar with the platform. This electronic system automates the initial and yearly disclosure process, simplifies the process for PIs and Co-PIs and eliminates PDF forms and the duplication of disclosures.

As a reminder, federal regulations and SMU policy require that all PIs and Co-PIs on externally-funded research projects disclose their research-related financial interests every year. These interests can include remuneration from an external entity, equity interest in an external entity, and intellectual property rights and related royalties. Financial interests include the interests of your immediate family as well.

Additional information is provided in the [Research Handbook](#) or please reach out to [Heather McClary](#) for assistance.

- **Holiday break deadlines from the Office of Sponsored Projects** – In preparation for SMU’s Holiday Break, December 23-31, the [Office of Research](#) and the [Office of Grant and Contract Accounting](#) have established the following end-of-year deadlines:

- **Sponsored Projects and Contracts** –
- **December 15** to request a new proposal for 2021 submission
- **December 21** to submit a progress report

Visit our [Contact Information](#) site with questions or concerns.

- **Grant and Contract Accounting** –
- **December 20** to submit AAFs for entry into PeopleSoft
- **December 21** to submit vendor and subaward invoices for processing

Please contact [Office of Grant and Contract Accounting](#) with questions or concerns

#### News and Noteworthy:

- **SMU Law Dean named President of Rhodes College** – As [announced earlier this week](#), Jennifer Collins, Judge James Noel Dean and Professor in the Dedman School of Law, has accepted an offer to become the next President of Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee on July 1, 2022. Please join me in congratulating President-Elect Collins on her new appointment. You can read more [here](#). Prior to Dean Collins’ departure from SMU, we will launch a national search for her replacement. I will appoint a Dean to chair the search. And together, we will charge a search committee in early spring 2022 to identify candidates for the permanent Dean of the School of Law.

Her presence and contributions to our campus will be sorely missed, and I want to commend Jennifer for outstanding leadership over the Dedman School of Law. We are fortunate to retain Jennifer for the spring semester and will find ways to celebrate both her accomplishments as our Dean and her future trajectory.


- **Perkins School of Theology Dean receives five-year reappointment** – Also [announced this week](#), Dr. Craig Hill, Dean of the Perkins School of Theology, has received a five-year extension of his decanal contract. To inform the reappointment decision, letters requesting feedback were sent to the faculty and administrative staff of Perkins; to SMU's senior administrators (e.g., President's Executive Council, Deans); to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees' Committee on Academic Affairs; and to the Chair, and Past Chair, of the Perkins Executive Board. Those solicitations did not preclude others from providing feedback. Please join me in congratulating Dean Hill on his reappointment.

- **SMU undergraduate receives prestigious Pickering fellowship** – Earlier this month, we received notification that Nia Kamau, SMU's undergraduate student representative to the Board of Trustees, has won a Pickering fellowship. The Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship Program is a program funded by the U.S. Department of State, administered by Howard University, that attracts and prepares outstanding young people for Foreign Service careers in the U.S. Department of State. It welcomes the application of members of minority groups historically underrepresented in the State Department, women, and those with financial need.

Nia has completed the Hilltop Scholars first-year experience, is a Big iDeas winner, has participated in undergraduate research, and is expected to complete the University Honors Program. Congratulations, Nia, on receiving this prestigious fellowship!

- **Reminder: New Associate Provost for Institutional Planning and Effectiveness** – Last week, I [introduced](#) Dr. Dayna Oscherwitz, Professor of World Languages and Literature and Assistant Provost for General Education, as our new Associate Provost for Institutional Planning and Effectiveness. Dayna will assume her new responsibilities on January 3, 2022. She will succeed Dr. Patty Alvey, who will retire from SMU after nearly two decades of committed service to SMU. Drs. Alvey and Oscherwitz will work together for the next six months to ensure a seamless transition, given the complexities and importance of compliance to our University.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth G. Loba, PhD  
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Southern Methodist University

<https://www.smu.edu/provost>

**World Changers Shaped Here**