



# SMU

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Dear Faculty and Staff,

These weekly updates will serve as a tool to keep you informed and engaged with SMU's Academic Affairs division as, together, we work to advance the goals of SMU's strategic plan and continue to move SMU forward and upward. 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) Spring 2021, 2) SMU's Road to R-1, and 3) News and Noteworthy.

## **Spring 2021**

- **COVID-19 vaccine plan updates and new website** – See this week's [e-mail](#) from SMU's Dr. Bob Smith Health Center for the latest updates on our COVID-19 vaccine planning. We have requested allocations under the state's first and second distribution phases but have not yet received confirmation of when we might receive our first allotment or how many doses to expect. However, when the vaccine does arrive, our team will be ready.

You may have noticed the large white tent near the health center that will serve as our campus Vaccination Site. We have our system in place and will follow state guidelines in making the vaccine available, beginning with the 1A phase designated for campus health care workers and police. Next, the 1B phase will prioritize people 65+ and/or those with underlying medical conditions who are directly on campus. Along with faculty and staff, students who fit in this category are also eligible for the vaccine.

For more information on how the process will work, check out the [new vaccination page](#) on the [Mustang Strong website](#). You'll find information and tools to help you identify your eligibility phase, as well as steps on how to register for and receive the vaccine when the time comes. It also contains answers to frequently asked questions you may have. A map is available to help you find the Vaccination Site and additional parking spaces if needed.

While we hope to be offering the vaccines on campus in the near future, we encourage you to take advantage of the first opportunity to get it regardless of whether it is through SMU or another provider. Visit the [Texas COVID-19](#)

[Vaccine Provider Locations map](#) for additional vaccination sites and availability. Whether you've received the vaccine or are still waiting to get it, it's important to continue with the healthy behaviors outlined in our [Pledge to Protect](#).

- **COVID-19 test sites on campus** – As mentioned last week, another option is now available to get a quick and easy COVID-19 test at SMU. The Curative kiosk uses a self-administered oral swab to collect the test sample for faculty, staff and students as well as the general public. It is located near the Airline Parking structure at 6501 Airline Court. [Appointments are required](#). As part of the registration process, your insurance information will be collected and costs will be billed to your insurance.

The Urgent Care for Kids and Families no-cost, rapid drive-through testing site is also still available for employees and their dependents. It is located on the East Campus at Expressway Tower, [6116 North Central Expressway](#). You will need to [complete a telemedicine screening to schedule a test](#).

- **Expectations regarding spring 2021 instruction** – Please see my [e-mail](#) from last week for guidance and expectations around the use of Canvas to support faculty's teaching modalities during the spring, May and summer 2021 terms. We appreciate your attention to these parameters as they are intended to help faculty and students navigate our response to COVID-19 while staying within our compliance guidelines.
- **New Canvas-based student retention tool** – To assist faculty teaching undergraduate courses (especially those with large classes) in proactively monitoring student engagement as reflected by activities within each Canvas course, SMU will pilot the tool Dropout Detective for the spring 2021 semester across all undergraduate Canvas courses. Within your individual Canvas course page, you will find a new "Dropout Detective" link located on the left navigational toolbar.

We hope that this tool will aid you in identifying students who might be at-risk throughout the spring 2021 term. To learn more about this tool and how to use it to detect potentially at-risk students, click here to download a PDF with more information. For specific questions, write the OIT Help Desk by emailing [help@smu.edu](mailto:help@smu.edu). You are also invited to attend a Lunch-and-Learn session organized by Dr. Sheri Kunovich, Associate Provost for Student Academic Engagement and Success (SAES), on Friday, February 5 from 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. Be on the lookout for an invitation with a Zoom link from the SAES office.

- **Faculty welcome-back video** – With spring 2021 now underway, I hope this [video](#) (shared in the previous two newsletters) will be a useful source of encouragement and information. Thank you again for all you have done and continue to do for each other and for our students.
- **Accommodations for students with COVID-related medical conditions** – This is a reminder to faculty that if you have a student experiencing long-term effects from a previous illness (including COVID-19) and who is requesting accommodations for your

course, such as extended testing time or flexible attendance, please refer the student to the Disability Accommodations and Success Strategies ([DASS](#)) process to request temporary accommodations. A student who was ill last fall who may still be experiencing significant symptoms such as pain, respiratory distress, or brain fog would be expected to share supporting documentation with the DASS office and DASS will recommend some reasonable accommodations on a temporary basis.

This follows the same procedure the University has always used to help students who might be impacted longer than 2-3 weeks from a medical issue. Students would be expected to share a letter of accommodation with each instructor for any formal accommodations that are approved by DASS for this temporary situation. The DASS office will consider ways to assist the student in remaining on campus and participating fully in the course as it is designed, but possibly with some reasonable accommodations, such as a reduced course-load, handicapped parking, or extra time on exams.

The process does NOT change for students quarantining due to contact or isolating due to infection, and the campus should follow the same procedures from the fall. The Dean of Student Life's office will continue to work with students who quarantine or isolate. Students should only be referred to the DASS office if they're experiencing lasting and lingering symptoms from a past illness (therefore, experiencing a chronic temporary disability) and are requesting formal accommodations in order to participate in their education.

- **Scheduling process for fall 2021 classes** – Earlier this month, President Turner [announced](#) SMU's plans to return to a primarily in-person fall 2021 semester, while remaining vigilant in our prevention and safety protocols on campus. We also will continue to carefully monitor health trends and create contingency plans so we are ready to meet any new challenges that might arise.

Building upon lessons learned and best practices from our experience developing fall 2020 and spring 2021 schedules, Peter Moore, Associate Provost for Curricular Innovation and Policy, has begun to work with Deans, Associate Deans, Department Chairs, and class schedulers to develop the schedule for fall 2021. May-term and summer courses will maintain an SMUFlex and Virtual schedule.

## **SMU'S Road to R-1**

- **Fiscal Year (FY) 2021–2022 Budget Process** – Final budget proposals were reviewed by members of SMU's senior leadership team beginning last week, continuing next month, with final budget decisions announced in March 2021. The focus throughout our budget deliberations this year, including faculty/staff hiring requests, has been on how budget requests will help us attain SMU's goals within the 2016–2025 Strategic Plan and Black Unity Forum (BUF) Action Plan, as well as *U.S. News & World Report* top 50 ranking and R1 status. Thanks to the Deans and Associate Provosts for their collaborative approaches to prioritization.

- **Department-level workload policies revised and approved by May 2021** – As mentioned last week, SMU is committed to developing and approving department-level workload policies by May 2021. Having departments clarify and operationalize transparent workload policies will be a critical step in helping us reach our research goals. Additionally, establishing these workload policies by the end of spring 2021 is a commitment SMU made in response to the Black Unity Forum action plan.

Ultimately, each department's workload policies should reflect a clear and transparent understanding of the research, teaching, and service expectations for all faculty. To meet the late-May timeline, I have asked deans to engage faculty and department chairs to develop and submit draft workload policies to my office by Wednesday, March 31. Meeting this deadline will give my office sufficient time to review and recommend any modifications prior to final approval by each Dean and by me in late May.

- **Research days 2021** – Each spring, the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies hosts SMU Research Days, a showcase and celebration of graduate and undergraduate student research at SMU, in collaboration with the Office of Engaged Learning. This year, Research Days is going virtual. Graduate and undergraduate students will have the opportunity to compete in 5-minute research presentation video competitions with cash prizes, and competitor videos will be publicly available on [this site](#) March 15-19. Research Days will also include live talks and panels that week. [Registration](#) for the graduate and undergraduate video competitions is open now through February 5.
- **Recent publication of SMU's Journal of Undergraduate Research** – The Office of Engaged Learning and SMU Libraries are proud to present the [SMU Journal of Undergraduate Research \(JoUR\)](#). This is a double-blind, peer-reviewed journal dedicated to publishing the finest accomplishments of SMU student researchers. The SMU JoUR, run entirely by an editorial board of undergraduate students, showcases the diverse research and scholarship performed by SMU undergraduates and their faculty mentors.

### **News and Noteworthy**

- **SMU faculty member named to the Committee on Science Policy of the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics** – Congratulations to Dr. Alejandro Aceves, Professor and Chair of the Department of Mathematics, for being named to the Committee on Science Policy of the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics. The [Committee on Science Policy](#) works with industry, government, and other agencies to ensure that math research brings benefits to society. They advise policy makers and influential organizations—including governmental agencies and offices in Washington, D.C.
- **Corporate Communication and Public Affairs faculty informing the conversation about the 2020 election** – Dr. Stephanie (Sam) Martin Associate Professor of Corporate Communication and Public Affairs in Meadows has received the most

pageviews (exceeding 1,600) of her article, *Resisting a rhetoric of active-passivism: How evangelical women have enacted new modes and meanings of citizenship in response to the election of Donald Trump*, in a special issue of the highly regarded *Quarterly Journal of Speech* commemorating the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage.

- **Spring faculty meeting debrief** – The spring general faculty meeting took place on January 27, SMUFlex-style – in Crum Auditorium and via Zoom. Faculty Senate President Aurelie Thiele gave the Faculty Senate's report, and I delivered the faculty address. Congratulations to the following faculty on receiving prestigious teaching awards:
  - President's Associate Award: Jill DeTemple, Ph.D.; Chair and Professor, Department of Religious Studies, Dedman College
  - Golden Mustang Award: Natalie Nanasi, J.D.; Director of the Judge Elmo B. Hunter Legal Center for Victims of Crimes Against Women and Assistant Professor, Dedman School of Law
  - Provost's Teaching Recognition Award:
    - Mark Allen, Ph.D.; Senior Lecturer, Advertising and Director of Creative Specializations, Meadows School of the Arts
    - Brian "Squirrel" Eiserloh: Professor of Practice, Programming, in SMU's Guildhall

Thanks to those who were able to attend. A recording is available [here](#) and presentation materials can be found [here](#). Also, faculty can request a copy of the book, *The Speed of Trust*, that I presented during the spring general faculty meeting by completing the following [form](#).

Sincerely,



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