



SMU®

Office of the Provost

March 26, 2021

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) Road to R-1 and Research/Creative Excellence, 2) Spring 2021, and 3) News and Noteworthy.

Road to R-1 and Research/Creative Excellence

- **College/School Research spotlight** – This week, Dr. Zannie Voss, Director of SMU DataArts, hosted a webinar, “The Alchemy of High Performing Arts Organizations, Part II: A Spotlight on Organizations of Color.” This webinar explored the perspectives of 21 leaders from arts organizations serving communities of color, including performing arts organizations (dance, music/orchestra, theater, performing arts center, and multidisciplinary performing arts sectors) and community-based arts organizations (folk arts, cultural and ethnic awareness, and general arts and culture sectors), with a track record of high performance along seven financial and operating metrics in recent years. This session provided guidance to organizations seeking a path linking strategy and financial sustainability, and serves as a nice example of SMU's goal for research with impact.
- **2022 USN&WR rankings forthcoming** – Next week, *US News and World Report* will release their 2022 discipline- and program-specific graduate rankings, covering fields such as Law, Business, Engineering, Education and certain departments within Dedman College. Look for an update next week that highlights some of SMU's noteworthy advancements in the US News rankings.
- **Research Days 2021 Event Recordings and Student Presentations** – Thank you to everyone who made last week's Research Days 2021 a success. For those who were unable to attend the virtual events live, recordings are available on the [Research Days website](#). I also encourage you to check out the winners of the student research presentation video competition. Those and other student presentation videos can be found [here](#).

- **Engaged Learning announces its summer 2021 research intensive program** – The Office of Engaged Learning’s summer research intensive program will match or fully fund undergraduate research assistants and provide specialized training for students in research methods, oral and written presentation techniques, and other professional development skills. Faculty with research projects that could engage undergraduates are [encouraged to apply](#) from now until the April 11 application deadline.
- **SMU’s Journal of Undergraduate Research expands its outreach and output** – SMU’s Journal of Undergraduate Research (SMU JoUR) has had an exciting and productive semester. Led by student editor Jessie Henderson, the JoUR has gained increased external recognition, including a personal invitation to join the Yale-led [Society of Undergraduate Humanities Publications](#), which is a collective of more than fifty prestigious undergraduate publications from the US, England, and Canada. Additionally, JoUR is preparing for its first publication of a multiple-issue volume at the end of this semester. Digital publication of Volume 6, Issue 2 will occur on April 30, and print publication of both issues of Volume 6 will occur the first week of May. Learn more about the JoUR [here](#).
- **Reminders from previous Friday updates:**
 - **Call for faculty engagement to discuss 3 – 5 academic areas of distinction** – We have scheduled three Zoom calls to facilitate campus discussion this spring and summer around an initial 3-5 academic areas of distinction for SMU – in particular around our strengths in data science and high-performance computing. Our hope is that the ability to hire additional cluster(s) of faculty members would set SMU apart as world class in those fields. All faculty are encouraged to attend any and all sessions. Click [here](#) to register.
 - **Department-level workload policies revised and approved by May 2021** – This is a final reminder that 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 as we seek greater transparency and equity.

Drafts are requested by **March 31** so that feedback can be provided before the May 31 deadline. Chairs and faculty will have an opportunity to make revisions through the month of May, and we will continue to iterate across the academic year ahead. Anyone who would like access to resources gathered from webinars and research focused on best practices on developing equitable workload policies can reach out to the Associate Provost for Faculty Success, Paige Ware, at pware@smu.edu.

Spring 2021

- **Vaccine scheduling now available at SMU** – SMU is pleased to announce the campus is receiving an allotment of the COVID-19 vaccine for distribution to our University community. All SMU faculty, staff and students are eligible. Vaccinations will be administered by appointment only at the SMU COVID-19 vaccination site on the northwest side of the Dr. Bob Smith Health Center.

Please use [this registration link](#) to schedule a vaccination appointment which is available on a first-come, first-serve basis. The registration button is also on the [Mustang Strong vaccine page](#) along with information about what to expect on the day of your appointment. If you have trouble registering, reach out to the Help Desk at 8-HELP (4357). New appointments have been released in the event that you were not successful in registering earlier today.

SMU's initial allotment will be 1,170 "first doses" of the Pfizer vaccine and an equal number of "second doses" designated for the required follow-up appointments. SMU does not currently have second-dose vaccines available for individuals who have already received their first shot of Pfizer or Moderna elsewhere, so please reach out to your initial vaccine provider to complete your treatment. Spouses and dependents of SMU employees and retirees are not currently eligible to register but may be at a later date.

- **Methodist Health System (MHS) offers SMU registration for COVID-19 vaccine** – In addition to the on-campus vaccinations, all SMU students, staff and faculty may also [register for the vaccine through the Methodist Health System](#). If the MHS system is full, please check that site frequently as more appointments will become available as supplies increase.

Please be aware that each COVID vaccine has a specific age limit. Pfizer's vaccine is available for individuals 16 years of age and older. Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines are available for individuals 18 years of age and older. Since the Methodist Health System does not know in advance which vaccine will be available on a given date, it may be necessary to reschedule if the vaccine available for your appointment is not appropriate for your age. If you are unable to register on your first attempt, please continue to check that link as appointments will be added as more vaccines become available.

Vaccine appointments at MHS are available Monday-Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m.– 4:30 p.m. at Methodist Dallas Medical Center on 1441 N Beckley Ave.

- **Reminder to report your COVID-19 vaccination** – To tailor the University's requested vaccine allotments each week and assess the quantity of doses that best meet the needs of our campus, it is important to know how many people have already been vaccinated or are scheduled to get either a single dose of the Johnson and Johnson or the first and/or second doses of either the Moderna or Pfizer vaccines.

If you have already received your vaccine, please remember to fill out the self-reporting tool – *and keep it up to date if a second dose is required* – on the [Mustang Strong vaccine page](#). Your voluntary submission will not be used to communicate to you directly about your own vaccine status. Unsure of what activities are safe after you are vaccinated? [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offer guidelines for what vaccinated individuals may do](#).

- **Reminder: Guidance for staff who are able to schedule vaccine shots during working hours** – SMU encourages you to schedule a time to get your COVID vaccination as soon as you are eligible and can find one. While you are not required to take vacation/sick leave to get your vaccine during working hours, you should notify your dean or manager if you miss time and also plan to make up any lost work. We also encourage faculty to be supportive of students who are able to acquire their vaccination during classroom time. Once you've received the vaccination, please [remember to update your status and report it through the reporting tool](#).
- **Adjusting isolation capacity on campus** – Throughout the pandemic, SMU has maintained portable isolation pods and off-campus apartment spaces to supplement our on-campus isolation space capacity. Fortunately, these spaces have remained largely unused throughout the pandemic. As campus cases continue to decline, and as our current contracts with those providing these spaces come to an end, we have decided not to retain these options in our isolation space inventory. Reductions for the isolation pods will go into effect on March 29, and for off-campus apartments on April 22. While we have made the decision to reduce isolation capacity, we will maintain flexibility to quickly add more if needed. For those monitoring our [COVID dashboard](#), you will likely see a decrease in the percentage of isolation beds available as a result of this planned reduction.
- **Planning for May/summer instruction** – As announced in previous newsletters, we are currently planning for the continued utilization of Virtual and SMUFlex modalities during the May and summer terms, with hopes of a return to normal, in-person operations in fall 2021. We are currently reviewing CDC guidelines to determine how recent changes might impact instructional delivery during May and summer terms and, working in consultation with the deans, are developing recommendations for the summer that will facilitate a return to normal fall operations. After reviewing these recommendations with the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and the President's Executive Council (PEC), we hope to share additional communication within the next two weeks.
- **Request from the Provost's Student Advisory board** – During this week's meeting with the Student Advisory Board, student leaders reiterated their concerns about how challenging this spring semester has been, particularly for students and faculty, from a mental health perspective. I would encourage faculty to review the Center for Teaching Excellence's (CTE) quick reference guide

for [ten pedagogical tips to reduce student anxiety](#). As mentioned previously, I would also encourage faculty to administer [Mid-Semester Feedback](#) surveys – [Mid-Semester Feedback](#) enables faculty to fine-tune a course that is already in progress. Gathering this type of feedback sends a message to students that you care about their success.

To assist you, the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) has created two editable mid-semester feedback instruments which consist of mid-semester related questions. These instruments are available as downloadable PDFs, Canvas Quizzes, and Qualtrics surveys. Additional information, including detailed instructions for accessing and creating a mid-semester feedback survey, is available on the [CTE website](#).

- **Additional reminder from previous Friday updates:**
 - **Information about textbook and course resource adoptions** – Last week, we announced the launch of a [new portal](#) using the SMU ID for sign-on to place textbook and course materials orders: Barnes & Noble College Adoption & Insights Portal (AIP). We highly recommend this 2-minute overview (click [here](#)) to see a quick demo of the AIP Portal. May, summer and fall terms are already loaded into the system.

This new portal, replacing FacultyEnlight, is very easy to use; you have options to re-adopt from past course adoptions, navigate through the adoption process with easily searchable databases, build course packets for non-textbook resources, or simply indicate that you will not be using materials for a particular course.

SMU is required to communicate all book and course materials adoptions to our bookstore partner to ensure SMU's compliance with Senate Bill (SB) 810 – the law relating to how the university provides information on course material (e.g., textbooks, packets, open educational resources) to our students. Many of our students are on financial aid packages that rely on our partnership with the SMU Bookstore, which is committed to supporting our students in obtaining the most affordable options, including many Open Educational Resources and other low-cost solutions.

News and Noteworthy

- **SMU Police Department annual report** – One of the topics in this week's PEC meeting was the SMU Police Department's (PD) annual report. This document provides a year-in-review of our officers' activities to maintain a safe and inclusive campus and will be posted to the SMU PD's [website](#) on Monday, March 29. This year, and as part of SMU's [response to the Black Unity Forum action plan](#), the SMU PD established the Police Community Advisory Board (PCAB) to

provide perspectives on issues related to race and campus policing. Subject to applicable law, this committee will have access to all SMU Police Department statistics including arrest, citation, and referral statistics. The committee will administer the campus community policing survey and provide advice on police-community engagement.

- **Inclusive excellence and our support for SMU's Asian community** – This week, President Turner sent a campus-wide [message](#) addressing concerns of harassment and hostility directed against members of our campus' Asian community. In light of the unconscionable rhetoric and violence experienced nationwide by people of Asian and Pacific Islander descent, we must continue to come together around our shared goal of developing a campus climate based on equity and inclusion for all members of the SMU community.
- **SMU presents the Dallas Literary Festival** – Congratulations and thank you to Dr. Sanderia Smith, Assistant Professor of Practice in Dedman College's Department of English, for her leadership and direction over the [Dallas Literary Festival](#) – a free, virtual event that begins today and runs through March 28. This year's event will bring together renowned authors to explore the turbulence of the current moment. This festival is a wonderful gift of conversation and thought to the Dallas community and beyond.

Sincerely,



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