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*Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs*  
*Office of the Provost*

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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 prepare for a safe, healthy and productive spring 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) Spring 2021, 2) Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 3) News and Noteworthy.

### **Spring 2022:**

- **Welcome back to campus** – On behalf of the Provost's Office, Happy New Year. We are excited to begin the spring 2022 semester and look forward to advancing our goals for even greater academic quality together.

2021 was our second year maintaining academic continuity in the midst of a global pandemic, and our successes in this area have come as a result of your ongoing sacrifices, vigilance and commitment to the safety and wellbeing of community members. We ask for your continued support in the year ahead. Thank you for all you have done, and continue to do, for each other and for our students.

- **COVID-19 health and safety reminders**
  - **Operations for spring 2022** – As President Turner [announced in late December](#), SMU has made the decision to proceed with in-person instruction as scheduled for both Jan term and spring 2022 courses. Masks remain optional for everyone on

campus and faculty may require them in their instructional areas (see below to access language to be included in your syllabus regarding mask requirements).

The Dr. Bob Smith Health Center continues to offer COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters, which we strongly encourage. You can schedule your vaccination appointment through the [SMU Health portal](#).

- **Consult Mustang Strong for most up-to-date guidance** – Please continue consulting the [Mustang Strong website](#) regularly for the latest information, as our pandemic response is dynamic. Based on experience, we expected a surge in [case counts](#) at the beginning of the spring 2022 semester, and, as we have since fall 2020, we will use our COVID-19 operations plan to adjust our response as needed. Also watch for Mustang Strong newsletters, such as the [one today](#), that contain reminders and other important information for students.
- **Reminder: COVID-19 testing resources for faculty and staff** – Convenient no-cost COVID-19 [testing is available](#) for SMU faculty, staff and benefits eligible spouses and dependents at 9 DFW Virtual Care for Families locations. The closest testing center to the SMU campus is minutes away on the corner of Preston Rd. and Forest Ln. Other locations in Arlington, Frisco, Garland, McKinney and Plano may be convenient to your home or along your commute to and from work. They are open 7-days a week. [Locations and maps](#) are listed at the bottom of the appointment page. Results are typically available same day. This [FAQ](#) provides step-by-step instructions for making an appointment.
- **Case management for 2022** – See this [website](#) for an overview of SMU’s COVID-19 case management protocols for spring 2022. With many local governments adjusting their contact tracing efforts and no longer identifying close contacts, SMU will now focus on case management and providing guidance to those who test positive under the new [shortened isolation and quarantine recommendations](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Faculty will continue to be notified of positive cases in their classes. See below for a sample of the revised faculty notification letter.
- **Changes to faculty COVID notification letter** – Starting this week, in line with SMU’s new case management protocols, SMU faculty will receive the following [COVID notification letter](#) from Associate Provost Sheri Kunovich in the Office of Student Academic Engagement and Success.
- **Reminder: Information to be included in Syllabus** – Please see last week’s [email](#) for information concerning required university syllabus statements. At any time

throughout the academic year, faculty can [access the university syllabus statements at this evergreen site](#).

As we did with the fall 2021 term, all classes are being held in person. If you need to isolate or quarantine, you can work directly with your [designated school or college contact to request a temporary move to Zoom](#) for the needed period of time. Faculty may also request a reasonable accommodation on the basis of a disability through [the Office of Institutional Access and Equity](#) as outlined in the Needs of Persons with Disabilities Policy (3.2). Students with a disability may request an exemption through the [Disability Accommodations and Success Strategies \(DASS\) office](#). In student cases, approved accommodation options will be shared with the appropriate faculty.

Faculty can continue to require masks in instructional spaces and can choose whether to attach compliance as part of the professionalism/participation grade (for up to 10% of the overall grade). In either case, mask requirements must be communicated in writing in the syllabus at the beginning of the term and must be [documented at this link](#) so that everyone can help reinforce faculty expectations. In the event that you would like to have backup masks available to students, [please reach out to your dean's office](#), which has been provided with sufficient masks to distribute on an as-requested basis.

- **January Term recap** – For many community members, the spring semester has already begun. Classes began on January 6th for Dedman Law and January 7th for some Cox graduate programs. Today also marks the conclusion of our Jan term. Jan term consists of two primary sessions: a session in Dallas (December 16, 2021 – January 16, 2022) and a January session at SMU-in-Taos (January 4, 2022 – January 16, 2022). Additionally, this year 27 students are abroad for Jan term and studying in Spain and France.

Over 600 students participated in this year's Jan term in Dallas, and 46 students and 8 faculty participated in this year's SMU-in-Taos Jan term. Special thanks to the Taos team, including staff from SMU PD, Student Affairs, the Health Center and SMU Facilities – and to Rumanda Young in particular – for making this year's Jan term in Taos (our first in two years) possible. With 18 inches of snow, sub-zero temperatures and a 20+ hour power outage in the days before the start of instruction, the team overcame extraordinary challenges.

- **Spring faculty meeting** – I hope you have seen this [invitation](#) from Judy King in the Office of the Associate Provost for Faculty Success to the spring 2022 General Faculty Meeting, scheduled for Wednesday, January 19th at 3:45 pm.

I look forward to giving you an update on recent accomplishments and latest plans in our pursuit of even greater academic quality at SMU. We also look forward to recognizing the faculty recipients of our many teaching awards: Altshuler Distinguished Teaching Professor Award, Provost's Teaching Recognition Award, the Golden Mustang Award, and the President's Associates Award. We will provide a link to a recording of the meeting for anyone who is unable to attend.

### **Road to R1/Scholarly Creative Excellence:**

- **Key leadership searches underway:**

- **Dedman Law Dean Search Committee formed** – This week, I was pleased [to announce the search committee](#) for our next Dean of the Dedman School of Law. My thanks to committee members for their service and to Matt Myers, Dean of Cox School of Business, for agreeing to chair this committee.

Mr. Chuck O'Boyle, Managing Director of C. V. O'Boyle, a national academic search firm, will be assisting with the process. Previously a practicing attorney in New York and Atlanta, Chuck has specialized in recruiting senior administrators for colleges and universities since 2002 and has a particular expertise in serving law schools.

The committee has its kickoff meeting on January 20th, and Mr. O'Boyle has a full day of meetings with key law school stakeholders to accelerate the development of a position description. We will continue to provide regular updates in subsequent newsletters.

- **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.

This week, Isaacson, Miller shared a slate of recommended applicants to the search committee for consideration. The committee will review applicants in the weeks ahead to recommend candidates for interviews.

- 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.

This month, Isaacson, Miller will provide the search committee with updates on the developing candidate pool and strategize ways to yield applications.

- **Fiscal Year (FY) 2021–2022 Budget Process** – Final budget proposals will be reviewed by members of SMU’s senior leadership team, both this month and next, with final budget decisions announced in March 2022. 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 our four priority areas: Academic Excellence, Research Excellence, the 2016–2025 Strategic Plan, and our Inclusive Excellence Initiatives.
- **Simmons faculty member joins 200 education scholars in Rick Hess’ rating of public influencers** – Dr. Dominique Baker, Assistant Professor in the Department of Education Policy and Leadership in the Simmons School of Education and Human Development, was named one of 200 top education scholars who move ideas from academic journals into the public sphere. [Education Week](#) highlighted Dr. Baker as one of two junior scholars recognized with the honor.

### News and Noteworthy:

- **2023 – 2024 academic calendar approved by Faculty Senate and PEC** – Acting on the recommendation of the Faculty Senate’s calendar committee, the PEC has approved the 2023 – 2024 academic calendar. It will be posted online in a few weeks.
- **SMU Faculty Club to host Nobel Prize panel** – On Wednesday, January 26th, from 4:00 - 5:00 pm, four SMU professors will provide ten-minute lessons on this year’s new Nobel laureates and what their work means to us. Presenter (and topics) include:
  - Alejandro D’Brot, Lecturer in Dedman College’s Department of Biological Sciences (Medicine/Physiology prize)
  - Stephen Arrowsmith, Associate Professor and Hamilton Chair in Dedman College’s Roy M. Huffington Department of Earth Sciences (Physics prize)
  - Anindita Das, Assistant Professor in Dedman College’s Department of Chemistry (Chemistry prize)
  - Dan Millimet, Dedman Trustee Professor and Department Chair in Dedman College’s Department of Economics (Economics prize)

Professor Steven Sekula will emcee the event and an RSVP is requested online at this [website](#) or by contacting Dee Powell by [email](#) or 83012.

- **Dream week activities to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as students begin the spring semester** – By tradition, SMU honors Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with Dream Week to coincide with the return of students to campus for the spring semester, usually the week after the traditional observance of MLK Day. President Turner, students, faculty and staff will honor the enduring influence of Dr. King with a Unity Circle ceremony from noon to 1:00 p.m., Wednesday, January 19th at the University flagpole located in the center of campus. In addition to the Unity Circle, SMU’s Office of Social Change and Intercultural Engagement will hold other Dream Week activities including:
  - A student, faculty and staff viewing of the film, “Selma” at 6:00 p.m., Friday, January 21st at the Hughes-Trigg Student Center Auditorium featuring a keynote from Civil Rights Activist JoAnne Bland.
  - A day of volunteer service for students, faculty and staff from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 22nd starting at the Hughes-Trigg Student Center Ballroom A/B.

Sincerely,



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**World Changers Shaped Here**