

April 30, 2021

Dear Faculty and Staff:

These weekly updates will serve as a tool to keep you informed and engaged with

New international students — those who weren't in the U.S. before March 9, 2020 — won't be able to enter the U.S. if their course of study is 100-percent

To incentivize student reporting, and acting on the suggestion of SMU's Community Action Network (SMU CAN), we will give a one-time \$10 electronic Amazon gift card to all SMU undergraduate and graduate students who use our self-reporting tool to submit their vaccination status. Available responses include: I have received first/second/single dose; I plan to receive the vaccine; I am undecided; and I do not plan to receive the vaccine. Note: Students who have already reported their vaccine status are also eligible to receive the gift card. They will receive an email and must reply to verify their interest in receiving the \$10 gift card.

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.](#)

- **May commencement** – The [May Commencement website](#) provides the most up-to-date information for graduates, guests, and faculty/staff participants. For the ceremony (Saturday, May 15, at 8:00 a.m.), we anticipate following the same health and safety guidelines put in place during our previous commencement ceremonies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you are unable to attend May Commencement in person, you may also view the ceremony virtually at smu.edu/live. Whether you attend in person or watch the webcast, I hope you will join with your colleagues in support of these events, the students graduating, and the values commencement represents.

- **School-specific May Commencement ceremonies in Moody and McFarlin** – School-specific commencement ceremonies will resume this spring in both Moody Coliseum and McFarlin Auditorium. Masks will be required in these facilities and, in keeping with current CDC and state/local guidelines, 5' – 6' spacing will be observed. For those unable to participate in person, these events will be livestreamed as well. Please contact your dean's office for additional information.
- **Update on the Social Justice and Equity Task Force** – Last week, Task Force Chair Associate Professor Jessica Dixon Weaver of the Dedman School of Law and I announced the [members of the Social Justice and Equity task force](#). Thanks to all who offered to serve. We anticipate launching the Task Force in the coming weeks.
- **Memo to faculty regarding final exams** – Faculty, please review my [email](#) from last week with important reminders about University policies

and procedures related to final exams and final grades. Thank you for your tremendous efforts in making spring 2021 a success. Note: If you have not already received approval for in-person exams, proceed with virtual exams only. The time window has closed for accommodating in-person exam scheduling.

Road to R-1 and Research/Creative Excellence

- **Virtual Town Hall schedule change and reminder to sign-up** – Today, over 70 faculty members joined me and Jim Quick, Associate Provost for Research and Dean of the Moody School, in a virtual townhall to discuss 3-5 areas of distinction for SMU. Our hope is that being able to hire additional, interdisciplinary clusters of faculty in strategic areas of strength, coupled with SMU's emerging capabilities in data science and high-performance computing, will set SMU apart in these fields.

As with our [previous session](#), we recorded today's meeting and will provide a link to all faculty in next week's newsletter.

All faculty are encouraged to attend our final session, scheduled for Wednesday, May 12, at 4:00 pm. Click [here](#) to register.

- **Clarity and transparency in workload documents** – SMU is committed to developing and approving department-level and unit-level workload documents that make our SMU policies clear and transparent at the unit level, which will be a critical step in helping us reach our BUF goals around greater transparency

assistance to organize the meetings and events, and up to \$4,000 in funding to support the act

