

February 12, 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) Spring 2021, 2) SMU's Road to R-, and 3) News and Noteworthy.

### **Spring 2021**

h... V... u... February 17 The North Texas weather forecast for this weekend and into next week indicates the potential for a prolonged winter weather event with significant impacts to travel and infrastructure. As we conclude this week, I would encourage faculty and staff to plan accordingly and take any work-related or instruction-related materials home with you for the weekend in the event campus does need to close. If campus does close, all courses will be offered virtually as opposed to in-person.

If it becomes evident that weather issues will challenge in-person operations next week, members of our leadership team will convene over the weekend to discuss and initiate a response plan. [Policy 9.12 University Operations Affected by Emergency Conditions](#) can

Automatic live transcription services now available in Zoom We received confirmation...@powered live transcription services in Zoom events. This setting (set by the host) creates computer-generated captions at the bottom of the screen as well as a transcript. Click [here](#) for more specific informati...h [Academic Technology Service Director](#) (ATSD) for instructions on activating this advanced setting.

Dr. Bob Smith Health Center still offering flu shots The seasonal flu and COVID-19 have similar

You can help ease the burden on the healthcare system by minimizing your chance of getting the flu, and we encourage all SMU students, faculty and staff to get their flu shot. Click [here](#) for more information on available options.

Reminders from previous Friday updates:

- December faculty survey report and key findings All full-time and part-time faculty were invited to participate in an optional, end-of-term survey during a one-week window from December 11 – 18, 2020. The survey consisted of four open-ended items designed to elicit feedback about experiences across the fall semester.

All raw data associated with each school/college was shared on December 18 with their respective deans and associate deans, and an email was sent to all chairs informing them that those responses would be shared with them by their chairs during the winter break. Click [here](#) for a summary of the feedback received through the December 2020 faculty survey.

- COVID-19 vaccine plan updates We continue to submit weekly requests for vaccine allocations from the state but have not yet received confirmation of when we might receive our first allotment or how many doses to expect.

Once we begin receiving allocations, we will follow state distribution 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](#) with priority given to those in that phase who are working/residing directly on campus. Along with faculty and staff, students who fit in this category are also eligible for the vaccine.

Check out the [vaccination page](#) on the [Mustang Strong website](#) for more information on how the process will work. We encourage you to take advantage of the first opportunity to get the vaccine 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 have received the vaccine or are still waiting to get it, it is important to continue with the healthy behaviors outlined in our community's [Pledge to Protect](#).

- COVID-19 test sites on campus



2021 Sam Taylor Fellowship award recipients announced Each year, the United

workload policies to my office by Wednesday, March 31. Feedback will be provided, and chairs and faculty will have an opportunity to make revisions until the May timeline.

Having departments clarify and operationalize transparent workload policies will be a critical step in helping us reach our research goals and the commitment SMU made in response to the Black Unity Forum action plan. Each workload policy should reflect a clear and transparent understanding of the research, teaching, and service expectations for all faculty.

**News and Noteworthy:**

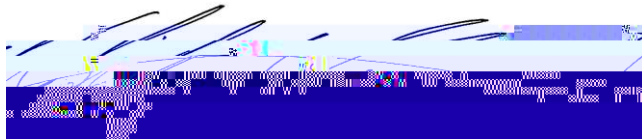
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announce the formation of a University-wide interdisciplinary [Task Force on Social Justice and Equity](#).

My thanks to Jessica Dixon Weaver, Associate Professor of Law in the Dedman School of Law, for agreeing to lead this task force. If you are interested in finding out more information about the task force or to submit your name for consideration to serve on the task force, please send an email to [provost@smu.edu](mailto:provost@smu.edu) by March 1, 2021.

SMU to remain test-optional for upcoming undergraduate recruiting cycle In May 2020, with consideration of the limited opportunities for high school students to take the SAT and ACT during the COVID-19 pandemic, SMU adopted a one-year, temporary test optional policy for undergraduate admission and scholarship awarding for first year applicants to fall 2021 and spring 2022. SMU joined over 1,685 accredited, four-year colleges and universities who utilized test optional policies for fall 2021 admission.

This week, after consultation with the Faculty Senate, the PEC affirmed the recommendation that SMU will remain test-optional for undergraduate students applying in fall 2022 and spring 2023.

Sincerely,



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