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August 26, 2022

Dear Faculty and Staff:

Welcome back to fall 2022 on the Hilltop! While Dedman Law and Cox graduate classes started last week, the fall semester began in earnest for most of you this Monday. I hope that ywith SMU's Academic Affairs division as, together, we w achieving the goals that fall within our four priority areas through 2025: 1) academic excellence/

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additional funds for the next four years to hire critical faculty and staff needed for this, our largest, academically strongest and most diverse class.

- **SMU's updated staff childbirth and parental leave policy** – Earlier this month, SMU announced changes to the University's parental leave policy for staff. Under the new policy, all deliveries are eligible to receive eight weeks leave (previously six weeks). Applicants can receive an additional four weeks leave through FMLA. Contact [benefitsu@smu.edu](mailto:benefitsu@smu.edu) for additional information.
- **Parking and transportation reminders** – As announced in my summer newsletters, SMU launched a new parking system this month. Last week, SMU Parking and ID services sent the [following message](#) with important reminders about parking and transportation options on campus. Thank you for your patience and flexibility during this time of transition, as we recognize that parking changes have posed challenges for many of you. Please continue to send your questions or comments to [newparking@smu.edu](mailto:newparking@smu.edu).
- **Expanded Options for Offering Mental Health Services for Students** – All SMU students now have access to on-demand teletherapy counseling and video appointments with a medical professional at Academic Live Care on their smartphone, tablet, or computer at no cost. These sessions can be accessed from students' dorms, homes, or on-the-go 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Please promote this resource in your classes as a way to ensure that the students in our community have access to preventative care and crisis support at all times. Visit [SMU Teletherapy](#) for additional information. In addition, if someone is in crisis at any time and needs to speak to an on-call counselor (24/7), they can call 214-768-2277 and select option 2.

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exclusively on the business processes associated with searches and are designed to enhance efficiency as we build time-saving tools into the process.

- **Building on Lessons Learned from FY 2022** – Maria Dixon Hall, Chief Diversity Officer, reviewed key learnings from FY 2022’s faculty searches. As a reminder, last year we introduced process changes, including mandatory training, to promote greater diversity, equity and inclusion within the faculty search process. Working with Maria, this year and moving forward, we hope for continuous improvement and even greater outcomes in line with our goals for inclusive excellence.
- **Equity and Transparency in Workload Procedures** – Paige Ware updated the Deans on next steps for confirming and strengthening transparency and equity in SMU’s workload procedures. With support from Performance-Based Funding, a Working Group with representatives from each of the Schools/College will meet bi-weekly in this academic year. This group will review faculty feedback from the spring survey on Workload Procedures, which was the result of joint efforts between the President’s Commission on the Status of Women and the Office of Faculty Success. In addition, they will work with faculty and department chairs in their areas to ensure that faculty efforts dedicated to teaching and research/creative activity are supported, and that service across department-, school-, and University levels is transparently and equitably distributed.
- **Leveraging value for strategic priorities** – Wes Waggoner, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management, facilitated a discussion amongst the Deans about ways to optimize SMU’s aid structures in line with SMU’s academic goals and strategic priorities.
- **Three-year budget planning** – To begin our planning conversation during the retreat, Ernie Barry, Associate Vice President for Budgets

and Finance, reviewed SMU's consolidated financial statements and FY 2022 Operating Budgets with the Deans.

From there, we continued conversations that began this summer around revenue sources and strategic areas of investment for FY 2024 – 2026. Having better projections, across multiple years, for revenue, expenses and strategic investments will inform our planning efforts as we strive to meet our goals for greater academic quality. Conversations around three-year budget planning will continue in September, and we plan to share specific details, once finalized, early in the fall 2022 semester.

- **Update on** – Brad Cheves, Vice President for Development and External Affairs, shared an update on *SMU Ignited*, SMU's \$1.5B capital campaign that launched in September 2021.
- **Carnegie Classification/American Council on Education (ACE) partnership and anticipated changes** – Michael Tumeo, Director of the Office of University Decision Support, updated the Deans on the new partnership between the Carnegie Classification System and ACE and the potential impacts this merger will have on Carnegie's assessment in both 2024 and 2027.
- **US News and World Report (USN&WR) Analysis and Strategy** – Michael Tumeo concluded the meeting by sharing a 10-year assessment of USN&WR rankings to identify the strategies taken by high-performing universities who made significant jumps both into and within the USN&WR top 50. His analysis affirmed SMU's strategy to focus on the following in our quest for top 50 status: 1) student excellence, 2) retention/graduation, 3) social mobility/access, and 4) expert/peer assessment.

## **News and Noteworthy**

