



July 30, 2021

Dear Faculty,

I am thrilled to welcome you back for the 2021 – 2022 Academic year. We have prepared some answers to [frequently asked questions](#) about the fall semester, and we plan to continue to add answers to this site as your questions come in. We also encourage you to attend the upcoming Town Hall next Thursday (8/5) at 3 p.m. in McFarlin Auditorium. [If you have a question you'd like to submit](#) in advance, please remember that you can do so through today (Friday, July 30 at 5:00 pm). If you are unable to attend, a link to watch the Town Hall will be available [on this page](#).

To ensure that you and your students are able to smoothly navigate the transition back to campus, if you choose to require masks, we ask you to confirm two weeks prior to the first day of class by [using this simple online form](#). Doing so will notify your chair, dean, and provost office and inform plans to distribute masks through the deans' offices so you can have them on hand for students who might forget to bring one to class.

In an effort to support consistent, clear communication, we collaborated with the Executive Committee of Faculty Senate, the Council of Deans, Associate Deans, and Department Chairs to craft the following statements about masking for your use this fall. Please add one of these statements to both your syllabus and your Canvas syllabus. We also strongly encourage you, during the week prior to classes, to send an email to your class roster(s) that confirms classroom masking requirements. You can choose to change your masking policy as the semester unfolds by simply revisiting the [online form](#), which will also be posted on the [Mustang Strong Faculty page](#).

- *No masks will be required; students are welcome to wear masks if they choose. This masking requirement is subject to change during the semester, and any changes will be announced in class, posted clearly in Canvas, and updated in the syllabus.*
- *Masks are strongly recommended for all students but not required. This masking recommendation is subject to change during the semester, and any changes will be announced in class, posted clearly in Canvas, and updated in the syllabus.*
- *Masks are required in this course. This masking requirement is subject to change during the semester, and any changes will be announced in class, posted clearly in Canvas, and updated in the syllabus.*

Please be aware that, if you choose to require masks, we cannot ask students about their vaccination status or for proof of vaccination. Consequences for students who do not follow your masking requirements can be clearly tied to a professionalism/participation grade; however, other consequences, such as removing students from class or isolating them within class, either physically or via Zoom, are not options.

For instructors who use a professionalism/participation grade in class tied to the mask requirement, the following statement should be included.

- *Mask wearing in this class is included in the expectations of professionalism within a culture of respect, such that failure to follow this classroom requirement would negatively impact the overall professionalism/participation grade for up to [insert percentage of no more than 10%] of the final course grade.*

The newly-refreshed [Faculty FAQ](#) contains some helpful information, including more detailed suggestions for managing cooperation and support for classroom mask requirements. We will continue to add questions and answers in the coming days. Following the guidance of SMUCAN, which will reconvene next week, let's work together to keep SMU safe and respectful for all members of our community.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth G. Lobo, PhD
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
<https://www.smu.edu/provost>



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