June 11, 2021

Dear Faculty and Staff:

I hope your summer is off to a good start and that you are finding ways to recharge before the start of the fall semester. Thank you for welcoming me and my family into the SMU community and for making our first year together so successful. As was the case last summer when I became Provost, I remain very excited about our work to continue advancing SMU forward and upward.

As mentioned in the final weekly update of the spring 2021 semester, my plan is to send these updates twice in the month of June and once in the month of July. 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) Summer 2021, 2) Road to R-1 and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 3) News and Noteworthy.

Summer 2021

- **Updates for the Summer I and June term** – In case you missed this email sent late last month, please see this message highlighting key operational changes for the summer terms during June and July in line with our move toward a fully in-person semester in fall 2021.
- **Mustang Strong website remains the most up-to-date source of information regarding SMU's COVID-19 response** – I would encourage you to continue reviewing the Mustang Strong website for information on SMU's COVID-19 response. Here, you can access the latest campus announcements, review information on receiving and reporting the vaccine, and monitor the latest data on confirmed COVID-19 cases on campus.
- **Updates from the Office of Faculty Success** – Over the spring semester, we have revised the website for the Office of Faculty Success to provide easier access to faculty resources and communications, including governance, policies, equity and access initiatives, adjunct and new faculty information, research and teaching resources, and COVID-19 guidelines. Over the summer, we will continue to add to and update this site, which will provide faculty access to promotion and tenure guidelines and departmental workload policies through their SMU login credentials.

Road to R-1 and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

- **Performance-based funding update** – In consultation with the Deans over the past academic year, my office has developed a performance-based funding model to inform and promote the transparent distribution of discretionary funds annually from the Office of the Provost to SMU's academic units.

  The performance-based funding (PBF) model is designed to reward academic units for actual performance based on transparent measurements and metrics that align with our four academic priority areas for the next 3-5 years: 1) the 2016-2025 Strategic Plan, 2) US News and World Report top-50 status, 3) the Road to R/1 and 4) Inclusive Excellence Initiatives (most immediately SMU's commitments in response to the Black Unity Forum [BUF] Action Plan).

  PBF is intended to be a transparent way to replace all previous ad hoc requests and negotiations for discretionary funding commitments from the Provost's Office by instead directly disseminating this discretionary funding to the Deans. These types of funding decisions include, but are not limited to, the following: executive coaches, conferences, employee retention funds, funding for special projects, funding for spousal hires, intersessions, loans, professional development, scholarships, recruiting costs, stipends, faculty startup funding, specialized recognition awards, etc.

  On average over the 2017-2020 fiscal years the Provost has used discretionary dollars to fund approximately $3.65M annually to the schools in addition to their regular annual budget allocation. In the new PBF structure, we have increased the annual Provost discretionary funding amount to **$4M total** in FY 2022 with hopes to increase this pool in the years to come as we are able to generate additional revenue. To accomplish this, the Provost's Office will retain funding from various sources, later to be used for strategic investments, including but not limited to, future PBF distributions. See the table below for a historical breakdown of the distribution of Provost's discretionary dollars by college/school.

Provost Discretionary Funding to Academic Units			
Unit	**Intersessions Revenue (4Yr Avg. FY 2017-FY2020)**	**Faculty Startups Budget (4Yr Avg. FY 2017-FY2020)**	**Total**
Dedman College	$1,134,104	$401,669	**$1,535,773**
Cox	$389,719	$0	**$389,719**
Lyle	$240,653	704,564	**$945,217**
Meadows	$409,674	$0	**$409,674**
Simmons	$339,704	30,452	**$370,156**
Perkins, Dedman Law, SMU Libraries	$0	$0	**$0**
TOTAL	**$2,513,854**	**$1,136,685**	**$3,650,539**

Later this month, Finance will distribute this year's $4M pool of Provost's discretionary dollars to the college/schools according to their performance against PBF's key performance indicators (KPIs). These dollars will be immediately available for the Deans to use during the 2022 fiscal year (which runs from June 1, 2021 through May 31, 2022) at the college/school discretion for strategic investments of their choice.

The PBF model distributes the $4M discretionary funding pool across five focus areas: 1) undergraduate programs ($1.25M); 2) graduate programs ($250,000); 3) doctoral programs ($250,000); 4) research ($1.5M); and 5) management ($750,000). Key performance indicators (KPIs) align with these five focus areas, and the college/schools earn distribution according to their performance.

The PBF model is designed to be dynamic. Each year, we will review our priorities and adjust the model as needed to incentivize and reward progress. We can do this either by adding/removing KPIs or adjusting their weights. As you will see, this year's PBF model focused most heavily on research as I consider this our area of greatest immediate need for strategic focus.

- **KPIs for undergraduate (UG) programs ($1.25M):**
  - Throughput (50%; $625,000) – Graduation rate for first year, transfer, and Pell-eligible students.
  - Academic Program Health (-5%; -$62,500) – The % of major programs with <20 students.
  - Size of UG courses (-2.5%; -$31,250)

- % of UG courses with enrollment <10 (-1.25%; -$15,625)
  Note: exemption for courses with pedagogical justification:
  e.g., music/art.
- % of UG courses with enrollment >49 (-1.25%; -$15,625).
  Note: We recognize the need for large sections in multiple
  areas. Schools receive no negative valuation until they have
  >30% of courses with >49 students.

- Retention (20%; $250,000) – A comparison of actual retention rates
  of students in the college/schools with a declared major vs. SMU's
  target retention rate of 94%.
- Job Placement (20%; $250,000) – Post graduation job placement
  (including placement in graduate school).
- UG student major diversity (10%; $125,000) – Increase in the % of
  UG under-represented minorities (taking the highest of either a 3-
  year average or the previous year). The goal is 40% diversity in line
  with the 2019 national average of 40% under-represented
  minorities. Units that meet or exceed the national average receive
  their full allocation.

- **KPIs for graduate (GR) programs:**
  - GR student diversity (33%; $83,333) - Increase in the % of GR
    under-represented minorities (taking the highest of either a 3-year
    average or the previous year). The goal is 40% diversity in line with
    the 2019 national average of 40% under-represented minorities.
    Units that meet or exceed the national average receive their full
    allocation.
  - Job Placement (33%; $83,333) – Post graduation job placement
    (including placement in graduate school).
  - Return of Revenue to Provost's Office: Graduate and Online
    Programs (33%; $83,333) – A calculated % of total revenue
    returned back to the Provost's Office based on existing revenue
    split agreements.

- **KPIs for doctoral programs:**
  - Academic quality (15%; $50,000) – Measures the increase/decrease
    in standardized test scores for matriculants.
  - Throughput (35%; $100,000) - % of students who complete their
    Ph.D. within five years of admittance to Ph.D. program. Note:
    Some programs include masters followed by Ph.D. and this might
    take longer. We have tried to isolate data this year to measure
    exclusively the time in a Ph.D. program. Additional standardization
    of data definition and application will be required moving forward.
  - Discontinuance (-10%; -$25,000) – % of students who do not
    persist post-advancement to candidacy.
  - Ph.D.'s with external funding (20%; $50,000) – % of students
    funded with External Grant Funding (per Carnegie Classification
    definition).

- Ph.D.'s with 'other' funding (10%; $25,000) – % of students funded with Other Funding (external funds not captured by Carnegie definition, endowment, gifts).
- Enrollment growth (10%; $25,000) – 3-year average of enrollment growth rate.
- Doctoral student diversity (10%; $25,000) – Increase in the % of doctoral under-represented minorities (taking the highest of either a 3-year average or the previous year). The goal is 40% diversity in line with the 2019 national average of 40% under-represented minorities. Units that meet or exceed the national average receive their full allocation.

- **KPIs for research:**
  - Research expenditures (30%; $450,000) – 3-year avg or previous year, whichever is highest of externally-funded research expenditures.
  - Research expenditures per tenure/tenure-track faculty (30%; $450,000) – Research expenditures per tenured/tenure-track faculty member.
  - Postdocs (20%; $300,000) – # of postdocs funded by external funds.
  - Postdocs funded with unrestricted or restricted funding (15%; $225,000) – # of postdocs funded with internal funding, restricted or unrestricted.
  - Overhead recovery (5%; $75,000) – 3-year avg of the college/schools overhead recovery rate.

- **KPIs for management:**
  - National ranking of programs, current (10%; $75,000) – US News and World Report programs ranked in the top 50 (UG, GR, Doctoral).
  - National ranking of programs, progress (10%; $75,000) – 3-year avg of progress of programs toward top-50 ranking in US News and World Report (UG, GR, Doctoral).
  - Faculty incentives for productivity (10% or -10%; $75,000 or -$75,000) – % of provost-approved workload policies at the departmental level.
  - Strategic merit allocation to reward excellence (10% or -10%; $75,000 or -$75,000) – Academic units are appropriately recognizing exceptional merit for faculty/staff/librarian raises.
  - Increase in net revenue from GR and online programs (20%; $150,000) – 3-year compound annual growth rate of net revenue from graduate and online programs.
  - Use of school-funded financial aid (10% or -10%; $75,000 or -$75,000) – 2019 to 2020 % change in the ratio of Graduate Tuition to graduate aid awarded.
  - Compliance with and support of inclusive excellence initiatives (10% or -10%; $75,000 or -$75,000) – For FY 2022 allocation, a

yes/no determination of whether the college/school appointed a diversity officer.

- Annual gifts to the schools (10%; $75,000) – 2020 gifts as a % of the total gifts received by the college/schools.
- Financial resourcefulness (10%; $75,000) – 3-year avg measuring the college/schools deficit or surplus within their unrestricted funding sources.

Based on performance against the KPIs in these five focus areas reviewed above, the college schools have earned the following distributions as a part of the FY 2022 performance-based funding process:

School/ College	Undergraduate	Graduate	Doctoral	Research (incl. postdocs)	Management	Subtotal	Rollover Distribution*	Grand Total
Cox	$193,715	$52,979	$0	$17,769	$162,071	$426,534	$0	$426,534
Dedman College	$556,940	$8,433	$84,674	$617,127	$70,436	$1,337,610	$0	$1,337,610
Dedman Law	$0	$43,291	$0	$3,704	$57,020	$104,015	$0	$104,015
SMU Libraries	NA	NA	NA	$1,099	$19,018	$20,117	$57,118	$77,235
Lyle	$142,106	$21,801	$39,583	$393,153	$43,506	$640,148	$0	$640,148
Meadows	$182,068	$5,388	$18,087	$16,287	$70,419	$292,250	$0	$292,250
Perkins	$0	$3,809	$15,806	$25,550	$36,378	$81,542	$0	$81,542
Simmons	$61,623	$111,570	$85,034	$425,311	$128,654	$812,193	$0	$812,193
Total allocated	$1,136,452	$247,270	$243,184	$1,500,000	$587,502	$3,714,408	$57,118	$3,771,527
Potential Allocation	$1,250,000	$250,000	$250,000	$1,500,000	$750,000	$4,000,000		$4,000,000
Rollover	$113,548	$2,730	$6,816	$0	$162,498	$285,592		$228,473

*Note: KPI's will continue to be optimized in future years. Given the limited number of metrics in the current year's PBF model associated with SMU Libraries, they will receive 20% of this year's unallocated rollover funding with the remainder to be rolled into next year's PBF model for distribution.

Click here for a detailed presentation on the performance-based funding model for fiscal year 2022, including a college/school breakdown of results for all key performance indicators.

As demonstrated above, PBF provides a strategic and transparent model for the distribution of Provost's Office discretionary dollars to all SMU schools/college. We will continue to adjust PBF metrics and weights in future years as our priorities change and as we achieve our goals.

- **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 Black Unity Forum (BUF) commitments

around greater transparency and equity and our research and creative impact goals for R1.

This *Chronicle* article highlights the importance of creating equitable and transparent workloads at the departmental level.

My thanks to you, under the leadership of Deans and Department Chairs, for your efforts to draft, refine and finalize clear and transparent workload policies at the unit level. All academic schools and colleges submitted first draft workload documents in March as requested. The Provost's Office team, including the Faculty Fellow for Equity and Inclusion, reviewed all drafts and provided thematic, high-level feedback with the Deans in April. One-on-one meetings between Deans and the Provost's Office took place throughout May.

Since then, we have worked with the deans to consolidate the feedback and are taking steps this summer to ensure that faculty and chairs can be involved in working with the feedback as they finalize their documents. In consultation with the Deans, we will be hosting workshops for department chairs over the summer and early fall to provide tools from the American Council on Education's (ACE) report, "Equity-minded Faculty Workloads; What we can and should do now." For example, see this workbook provided by ACE that my office has been sharing with the Deans over the past months as a step forward.

Through these conversations, we aim for clarity and transparency so that the final versions can be approved and then posted to the Provost's Office website, with a goal of having all documents available early in the fall semester. As we continue this work, click here for a preview of those documents that are close to full approval. We will let you know when more documents are finalized and posted to our website.

- **Faculty searches to begin in fall 2021** – In June and July, the Deans and I will be having conversations about which faculty lines to open for searches in fall 2021 to join SMU in fall 2022. Normally, decisions about faculty lines have been made as part of the budget cycle (November – March). This year, however, in light of the pandemic and in an effort to transition to using university-wide data to make these decisions, we have moved the process initiation to the summer. We are compiling the information gathered from the town halls about cluster hires, as well as data from the Office of Institutional Research about student-faculty ratios, student credit hours and faculty-to-program ratios this month to share with the Deans later this month. After a month to review this information, in late July, the Deans and I will make final decisions about which faculty lines to open for the upcoming academic year. In the meantime, during the regular budget cycle that began last November, over 30 positions (including visiting professors, lecturers, professors of practice, assistant/associate/full professors) were proposed by the Deans in March of this year and approved to begin positions this fall 2021. The data model we put in place this summer will be replicated in future years and we will be able to transition back to reviewing faculty lines as a part of the budget process moving forward.

News and Noteworthy:

- **SMU staff member to chair national organization dedicated to student access, affordability and success** – Congratulations to Elena D. Hicks, Dean of Admission and Executive Director of Enrollment Services, for selection into a three-year Chair rotation, serving this year as Vice-Chair of the Coalition for Colleges. Membership in this coalition includes 150 top universities dedicated to access, affordability and success for all students.
- **Spring 2021 'Thank a Professor' program** – The Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) launched its 'Thank a Professor' program this spring as a way, particularly during this challenging year, for students to express their appreciation to faculty members. Through the program, CTE sent 262 messages from our students to faculty across all our schools and plans to continue offering this recognition in in the future.
- **SMU's Geothermal Laboratory recognized by Texas Legislature** – To celebrate 51 years of the SMU Geothermal Laboratory's research and outreach to advance the understanding of geothermal resources throughout the Unites States, the Texas Legislature passed HR Bill 2078 to congratulate the lab on its legacy and to extend best wishes for continued success. Kudos to Dr. Matthew Hornbach, Professor in Dedman College's Roy M. Huffington Department of Earth Sciences, and the Geothermal Lab staff and graduate students for continuing the legacy of Dr. Dave Blackwell, Professor *Emeritus*.

Sincerely,

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