



Elizabeth G. Lobo, Ph. D.
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Office of the Provost

November 19, 2021

Dear Colleagues:

Thank you for your interest in, and commitment to, advancing SMU's academic mission. These weekly updates will serve as a tool to keep you informed and engaged with SMU's Academic Affairs division as, together, we continue with a safe, healthy and productive fall semester. 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](#).

I encourage everyone to enjoy next week's Thanksgiving break and am hopeful that you will return renewed and restored for the final weeks of the fall semester. In honor of the holiday, we do not plan to send an update next week.

Today's update falls into three categories: 1) Fall 2021, 2) Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence, and 3) News and Noteworthy.

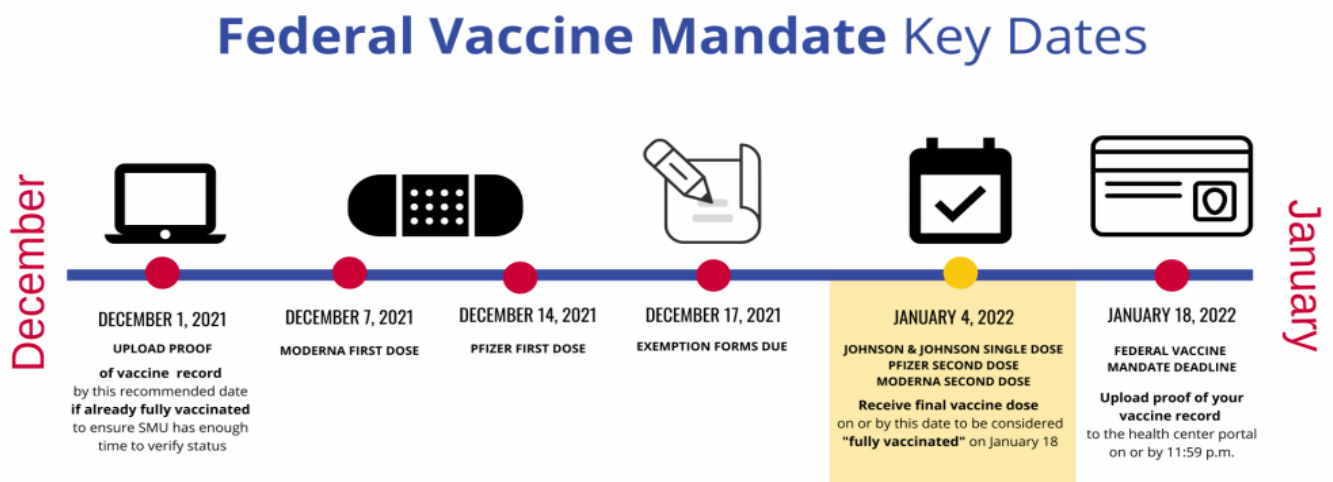
Fall 2021:

- **SMU's response to President Biden's Executive Order (EO) 14042** – As President Turner [announced earlier today](#), SMU must comply with President Biden's EO 14042 requiring those that receive federal contracts and their employees to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by January 18, 2022. This order applies to SMU and all research universities accepting

federal funds through grants and contracts. The order is broad-ranging and applies to all SMU employees – faculty, staff, adjunct faculty, temporary employees, student workers, graduate research/teaching assistants and postdoctoral scholars – unless they seek and are granted an exemption for religious or medical reasons. To seek an accommodation, please apply [through the Office of Institutional Access and Equity](#) by December 17 to ensure that it can be evaluated before the deadline.

About 75% of full-time faculty and 65% of staff have already provided confirmation that they have received the vaccine. For those who have not yet confirmed your vaccination, it is important that you [upload your vaccination information](#) now to assist in our compliance efforts. If you have already uploaded your card and/or received your vaccination at the Dr. Bob Smith Health Center, no further action is needed.

For those who have not yet received the vaccine, [appointments are available](#) through the Dr. Bob Smith Health Center and there is still time to comply before the January 18, 2022 deadline. Depending upon the vaccine you choose, you may need to obtain a first dose by December 7. See the image below for key dates regarding the federal vaccine mandate:



For questions on how this mandate impacts you, we have updated the [FAQ section](#) of the Mustang Strong site, and more information and updates will be provided in the near future. Thank you for your support complying with this federal mandate and for your ongoing commitment to our community's health and safety.

- **FY 2023 budget process underway** – Last month, the Office of Business and Finance initiated the university's development, review and approval process for the fiscal year 2023 (June 2022 – May 2023) budget.

As a reminder, and to provide academic units additional time to conduct searches for faculty who will join SMU in fiscal year 2023 (fall 2022), the deans and I met this summer to review and authorize searches for nearly 70 faculty position searches currently underway. Added to the previous approvals made via mission critical requests during the hiring freeze last year, 82 faculty positions have been approved for searches.

Over the past two weeks, I, along with representatives from Business and Finance, have met with deans individually to review and prioritize their remaining (non-faculty) college/school FY 2023 budget requests. This week, the deans and I met collectively for an initial review of one another's budget requests.

Echoing last year's approach, the deans and my office will collaborate on which budget requests to put forward for final consideration during the final budget review and approval meetings that occur in January and February. We will continue to provide updates throughout this year's process.

- **Quarterly BUF meeting update** – Today, President Turner and I joined with Chief Diversity Officer Dr. Maria Dixon Hall and Vice President for Student Affairs Dr. K.C. Mmeje to provide our quarterly update to SMU's Black Unity Forum (BUF). In addition to reporting on this quarter's

progress toward fulfilling SMU's commitments in response to the BUF Action Plan, such as posting all approved department-level [workload documents](#), I reviewed data on the approved faculty searches by college/school, discussed the representation of underrepresented faculty on academic search committees, and committed to sharing a demographic breakdown of the racial diversity of finalists for each faculty position.

Research and Scholarly/Creative Excellence

- **SMU launches new supercomputing research system with NVIDIA** – Last week, SMU [announced](#) our collaboration with accelerated computing leader NVIDIA to bring a transformational high-performance computing ecosystem, a DGX SuperPOD, to SMU and the North Texas region. The new system, anticipated to be online in early 2022, increases SMU's supercomputer memory tenfold and sets the stage for artificial intelligence and machine learning 25 times faster than current levels. This is an incredibly exciting advance forward for SMU and is a key investment towards realizing our goals for even greater research excellence.

Over the next several weeks Jim Quick, Associate Provost for Research and Dean of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies; and Michael Hites, SMU's Chief Information Officer, will host various face-to-face and Zoom meetings to introduce you to the new machine and to the higher education group at NVIDIA who will be providing support.

- **Update on key leadership position searches underway** –
 - **Position profile for SMU's Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer** – Click [here](#) to review the position profile that is guiding our search for SMU's new Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer. Please share this profile with members of your network who might be interested in applying. My thanks to the search committee for their work advancing this strategic hire.

- **Timeline overview for Dean of the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies and Associate Provost for Graduate Education** – The search committee, working in consultation with Isaacson, Miller Executive Search, is currently finalizing a position profile. We anticipate completion within the next 2-3 weeks and will share once available.

News and Noteworthy:

- **SMU professor appointed Chair of TexNet Technical Advisory Committee** – Governor Greg Abbott has named prominent SMU seismologist Brian Stump, Albritton Professor of Earth Sciences in Dedman College's Roy M. Huffington Department of Earth Sciences, as chair of the [TexNet Technical Advisory Committee](#), which is charged with providing oversight and advice on the operation of the Texas wide seismic network, TexNet.
- **SMU paleontologists analyze giant bottom-dwelling fish fossils in Northeast Texas** – SMU paleontologists, Michael Polcyn, Research Associate and Director of the Digital Earth Sciences Laboratory, and Dale Winkler, Research Director and Director of the Shuler Museum of Paleontology, have helped in the analysis of fossils from an ancient fish, called a mawsoniid coelacanth, found in Texas. Isolated bones from this fish were found in the Cenomanian Woodbine Formation in northeast Texas. Collector and Texan Bradley Carter, who made the discovery, donated the bones to SMU's Shuler Museum of Paleontology for examination.
- **Former library intern named a Class of 2022 American Library Association (ALA) Emerging Leader** – Congratulations to Ramón Garcia, a SMU Libraries intern from 2019 – 2021, on his selection as a Class of 2022 ALA Emerging Leader (EL). The ALA's EL program is a leadership development initiative that enables newer library workers from across the country to participate in problem-solving work groups, network with

peers, gain an inside look into ALA's structure, and have an opportunity to serve the profession in a leadership capacity. ALA EL puts participants on the fast track to ALA committee volunteerism as well as other professional library-related organizations. The program is limited to no more than 50 participants each year.

In closing, I wish you and your family and friends a rejuvenating Thanksgiving holiday.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth G. Lobo', written in a cursive style.

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

World Changers Shaped Here