

December 18, 2020

Dear Faculty and Staff:

These weekly updates will serve as a tool to keep you informed and engaged with



Health Center will administer the vaccine in phases according to the State's [guiding principles for distribution](#). Supplies allocated to our campus are not expected until after the first of the year, but vaccination plans are in place for when they arrive. Watch for a one-question survey in your email about whether you intend to get the vaccine through SMU.

**Faculty instructional technology webinars for spring 2021** – On January 12, 13 and 14, a joint team from the Office of Information Technology (OIT), the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) and SMU Libraries will offer a series of webinars to offer practical insight to enhance your teaching and your use of technology across both SMUFlex and fully virtual courses. Workshop topics will include ways to more effectively use Canvas and Zoom, strategies for taking attendance, and “911” sessions for how to best address challenging teaching scenarios with the right technology systems. CTE has also arranged a special guest speaker who will discuss active learning in these exceptional times. For more information and to register, please visit: <http://keep-teaching.smu.edu>.

**Spring schedule** – [Click here](#) to see the red-blue rotation schedule for spring 2021. Students who are assigned to it will see either a red or blue tile in my.SMU on their student homepage designating their rotation schedule. Undergraduate students who have requested to be fully REMOTE or are taking all VIRTUAL courses will not be assigned to the red-blue rotation schedule.

**New options for addressing attendance issues** – Based on feedback from faculty and students across the semester, we have added 8 new optional additions to the attendance policy for spring 2021 that cover areas such as participation grades, uncounted unexcused absences, Zoom camera expectations, recording availability, and more. We would like to thank members of the academic leadership team of Chairs and Associate Deans, as well as Faculty Senators and individual faculty across 6 departments who worked with their Chairs, to provide very detailed input in the development process. You can watch this [2-minute video](#) explaining the “why and how” of these new options, which are laid out in this [document](#). We will be reaching out to work with the academic leadership team with more information as questions come in from faculty and staff about these options.

**COVID 2021 Operations Plan** – I would encourage faculty and staff to review SMU's [2021 COVID-19 Operations Plan](#) prior to the start of the spring 2021 semester. The information contained in this comprehensive plan is also reflected on the Mustang Strong [website](#).

### **News and Noteworthy**

**CTE's “Thank a Professor” initiative** – This week CTE hosted an initiative called “Thank a Professor” where students were able to send thank you notes to

their professors (after grades and courses evaluations were completed). We have received 378 notes (and counting!) for 284 unique faculty and teaching assistants from every school on campus. This semester has brought more than its fair share of challenges, but I was pleased to see our faculty acknowledged in