

From: [Loboa, Elizabeth](#)  
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Subject: Weekly Update - July 17, 2020  
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elective schedule changes. Sheri's email to students is available [here](#)

Expanded faculty/staff outreach – We recognize that Sheri's email to students about the fall 2020 course schedule and formats will likely generate questions from students to faculty and staff. In response, we sent an email to faculty and staff with a few key points to keep in mind when communicating with students and their parents about changes to the fall academic schedule of classes. The faculty version of the email is available [here](#)

Faculty preparation for online-only course delivery– Working with

Using the Canvas Gradebook so that students can keep track of their progress.

Connecting smoothly to SMU library course resources.

results of this sort give people the impression that they are healthy & they might actually be asymptotically exposing community members. Everyone needs to wear masks, social distance and not have a false belief that they are not positive when it is possible they are, or may become, positive. With this in mind, SMU does not plan to conduct blanket return-to-campus COVID-19 testing for students at the start of the fall 2020 semester.

This decision is also supported by concerns raised in a [WashStreet Journal article](#) about the strains that asymptomatic testing would put on the supply chain. The article is behind a paywall, but here is a key quote: “The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is discouraging widespread testing of the asymptomatic as a screening tool, recommending instead that schools follow the lead of such cities as Austin, Texas, which is preserving testing capacity by focusing on symptomatic patients. The American Academy of Pediatrics, in a statement, said testing all students for infection before the start of school is ‘not feasible in most settings at this time.’”

Refreshed website – A refreshed website has been launched to give students, faculty and staff a more seamless navigation experience into SMU’s COVID-19-related information. The website includes the latest campus updates, resources and frequently asked questions, as well as a preview of what the SMU community can expect as they learn, teach and work in the fall. Visit [www.smu.edu/coronavirus](http://www.smu.edu/coronavirus) for more information.

SMU CAN and community pledge to protect – The SMU Community Action Network (SMU CAN) was established last month to support greater understanding and adoption of the personal responsibilities (e.g., regular handwashing, social distancing, face coverings, self-monitoring and reporting in the event of exposure to COVID-19, and taking additional proactive measures such as flu shots, all in a spirit of cooperation). SMU CAN includes members from SMU’s faculty, staff and student communities, including Student Senate, whose leaders have committed to promoting the need for personal responsibilities among students. As a first step to promote a safe return, SMU CAN has developed a community “pledge to protect” which we will be encouraging all community members to review and sign. More information will be coming soon.

Town halls – President R. Gerald Turner and I will hold a town hall with SMU’s faculty and staff to provide updates on our plans for a safe and healthy fall 2020. That meeting, the first of many engagement activities, will take place today, July 17th from 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. I encourage you to join the meeting via zoom <https://smu.zoom.us/j/9138614480>. We anticipate hosting more opportunities for engagement, focused on particular issues so that we can invite more opportunities for synchronous faculty and staff input.

Enrollment update – Despite the challenges of recruiting and enrollin

students during a global pandemic, we expect to open the fall semester with full enrollment. Though these numbers change even in a calm year, we currently estimate that we will have approximately 6,700 undergraduate students with us this fall either in person or online. An incredible effort to recruit new students in a new virtual admission environment will lead to a record first-year class that is more ethnically and racially diverse than any in SMU's history. We expect retention will increase as well, thanks to the work to enroll continuing students. I applaud those in the Division of Enrollment Services, in Student Academic Engagement and Success, and across the University who have made these efforts successful.

Contact tracing – In conversations with faculty, staff and students, it has become clear that we need to distribute clear and concise information about SMU's approach to contact tracing, communication regarding positive cases, etc. The Emergency Operations Center (EOC), in partnership with the OIT and Student Affairs, has developed detailed documentation. The Health Center, with help from Risk Management and Marketing and Communications (MarComm), has developed easy-to-understand visuals and printable instructions on the contact tracing process, available [here](#)

Black @ SMU – The urgency for true equality that the senseless deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and countless other Black men and women has galvanized across our country has been on my heart and mind for weeks. Over the past weeks, President Turner, Vice President K.C. Mmeje and Dr. Maria Dixon Hall convened a series of 90-minute town halls with our Black faculty, students, staff, and alumni. Although I had not officially started as provost at the time, I am thankful that President Turner included me and I was able to attend all of these town halls. While painful and profound, these meetings left each of us with a renewed commitment to ensure that we are all living the SMU values of excellence, integrity, intellectual freedom, open dialogue, diversity and inclusion. The University and this office have begun the task of reviewing their recommendations and charting a path forward. The deans and I began this work last week. I will continue to update you as we proceed.

### Faculty Success

Associate Provost for Faculty Success – Paige Ware, professor and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs in the Simmons School of Education and Human Development, joined the Provost's Office team on Monday, July 13 as Associate Provost for Faculty Success. See [announcement here](#) I am thrilled to have Paige on the team and encourage you to welcome her to this new role. She has asked me to let you know that she will be communicating frequently with our associate deans and department chairs in the days and weeks ahead, and that she welcomes anyone to reach out.

University Distinguished Professors – Seven (!) SMU professors have been either reappointed or newly appointed as University Distinguished Professors. Appointment decisions are based on recommendations from deans and endorsed by a six-person ad hoc faculty committee working with the Office of the Provost. See the announcements [here](#) and [here](#) and please congratulate the following faculty members on this distinction:

- Jill Allor, Simmons School of Education and Human Development (newly appointed)
- Yildirim Hurmuzlu, Lyle School of Engineering (newly appointed)
- Lolita Buckner Inniss, Dedman School of Law (newly appointed)
- Jeffrey Kahn, Dedman School of Law (newly appointed)
- Sukumaran Nair, Lyle School of Engineering (reappointed)
- Santanu Roy, Dedman College (reappointed)
- Stephen Wegren, Dedman College (newly appointed)

SMU Faculty Career Achievement Award– Caroline Brettell, University Distinguished Professor of Anthropology, has been named the 2020 recipient of the SMU Faculty Career Achievement Award for her contributions to the teaching, scholarship and service missions of the University. Contributions on the level of Professor Brettell's are critical in support of SMU's efforts to reach R1 and top 50 USNWR status. I am thankful to her for her service to SMU and am honored to have the chance to present her with this award. See SMU's press release [here](#)

Sincerely,



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