

*Office of the Provost*

September 11, 2020

Dear Faculty and Staff:

through a series of task forces, to further inform our strategic goals and aspirations. As I read through these documents, I am encouraged to see that a lot of the preliminary work has been completed and that we have a strong blueprint in place.

I recognize that spending so much time focusing on strategy (and currently, COVID-19), in addition to faithfully executing your day-to-day work, has been very demanding. I also understand that budget challenges, such as those we are currently managing due to COVID-19 and those that many of you experienced during the OE2C cost-savings initiative, can serve to diminish enthusiasm toward achieving our goals. But, as I am learning more and experiencing first-hand, SMU continues to face and overcome challenges in a way that makes us stronger as a result. We do this through outstanding leadership and exceptional faculty and staff.

**We have made significant strides in recent years** Now at the mid-point of our current 10-year strategic plan, there are many accomplishments within Academic Affairs that will have tremendous and lasting impact on our R-1 aspirations. Chief among these is the [Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies](#). The \$100 million commitment from the Moody

areas for strategic investment. I plan to provide to the Board of Trustees during the September meeting high-level plans on how we will advance in

- and so there was no need at this time to change our instructional approach.

As our testing increases, so does the likelihood of positive cases. As with many of the schools who started in-person instruction before us, the majority of positive cases are within the student population. While currently active student cases have increased, as of September 9, only 232 out of nearly 12,400 students have tested positive, and we have continued to have a very low rate of infection among employees. Currently, three employees are positive for COVID-19. During July term, with ~80 students on campus, we also had very few employees testing positive at any time.

thank you for all you have done and are continuing to do to make SMU a fantastic place to live and learn.

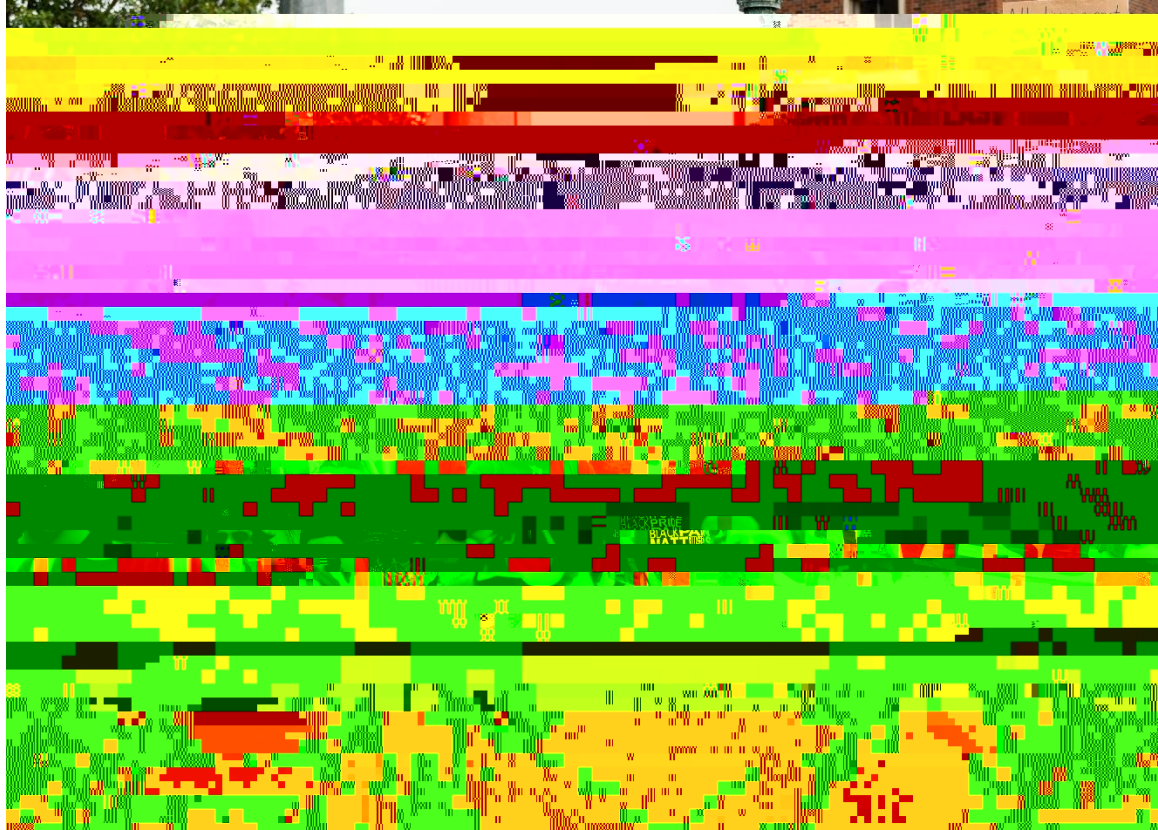
**COVID-19 website updated case count display** In response to feedback, SMU has updated its [COVID-19 reporting page](#) with a dashboard and additional reporting details for greater transparency, including isolation capacity levels and quarantine numbers. Individual active and non-



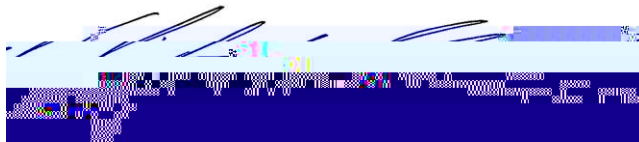
## **News and Noteworthy**

**Faculty Fellows application process (final reminder)** The application

Fellows. All full-time faculty members can [apply](#), with a preference for tenured faculty or non-



Sincerely,



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