





This new signage is intended to supplement the QR code signage already in place.



Any additional signs, such as those encouraging social distancing and/or occupancy limitations, should be removed, as SMU does not currently have requirements in place concerning physical distancing or occupancy.

**SMU response to Faculty Senate resolutions** – Last week, the Faculty Senate approved and submitted three COVID-related resolutions to the President and Provost for consideration on the following topics: 1) COVID-19 vaccines, 2) masks, and 3) air intake. President Turner’s response to the Faculty Senate is available [here](#) for review.

**New faculty COVID-19 instructional resource** – While our focus is on providing in-person instruction this fall with safety protocols in place (e.g., temporary mask requirement and vaccinations encouraged), we recognize the need to navigate short-term “what if” scenarios when faculty or students might be in isolation or quarantine. Our academic leadership teams of Deans, Associate Deans, Chairs, and Associate Provosts are working closely together this week and next to develop and implement processes for

consistent, case-by-case guidance so that faculty members can navigate scenarios and confirm plans for solutions.

**Information regarding required syllabus language** – Please see this week's

receiving and reporting the [vaccine](#), and monitor the latest data on [confirmed COVID-19 cases on campus](#)

**Opening Convocation and Rotunda Passage** – On Sunday, August 22, all new first-year and transfer students are invited to participate in SMU's 107th Opening Convocation. At this event, students are formally welcomed to the SMU community in a ceremony dating back to 1915. Highlights of this year's ceremony include a message from SMU President R. Gerald Turner, a convocation address, and the presentation to Dr. Turner of the new class of students by Dean of Admission Elena Hicks. The ceremony is designed to set students on their new path of academic discovery. As a reminder, masks will be required at this year's event.

**Enrollment update for fall 2021** – SMU's fall enrollment outlook remains strong. We are on pace for the most talented and most diverse class in SMU's history – including a record number of students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds. My immense thanks to all of you, SMU's faculty and staff, for the support and preparation required to serve our students in these challenging times.

### **Road to R-1/Scholarly and Creative Excellence:**

– SMU's faculty received \$10.7 million in research awards last month. This represents the highest single-month total in SMU's history. Below, by college/school, are a few examples of the major contributors to July's numbers.

o Simmons School of Education (\$7.5M)

Dean Stephanie Knight received \$3 million from the Toyota Foundation to support the implementation phase of the West Dallas PreK – 8 STEM school.

Associate Professor Candace Walkington in the Department of Teaching and Learning received \$1.3M from the National Science Foundation to work on “Seeing the World through a Mathematical Lens: A Place-Based Mobile App for Creating Math Walks” and \$325,000 from the Department of Education to work on “Exploring Collaborative Embodiment for Learning (EXCEL): Understanding Geometry through Multiple Modalities.”

Associate Dean and Professor Anthony Petrosino in the Department of Teaching and Learning received \$1.36 M from the Department of Education to continue his oversight of SMU's Upward Bound programs. Professors Jill Allor and Stephanie Al Otaiba in the Department of Teaching and Learning received \$750,000 from the Department of Education for continued work on their collaboration, “Friends on the Block: Project Intensity.”

Others:

Regina Nippert, Executive Director of the Budd Center, received \$60,000 from the United Way.

Annie Wright, Executive Director of the Center on Research and Evaluation, received \$115,000 from the Miles Foundation.

Stephanie Al Otaiba, Patsy and Ray Caldwell Centennial Chair in Teaching and Learning, received \$325,000 from the Department

of Education and \$118,000 from the National Institutes of Health in collaboration with Vanderbilt University.

Annie Garrison Wilhelm, Associate Professor in Teaching and Learning, received \$163,000 from the National Science Foundation.

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**Plans for September Board of Trustees meeting** – Plans are underway for this September’s Board of Trustees’ meetings. On September 16, the Committee on Academic Affairs and the Finance Committee will convene a joint meeting to review the strategic academic priorities that will help us meet our goals for greater academic quality along with the financial investments required, through fundraising and/or resource reallocation, to implement them. We will share additional information in future updates.

**Update on faculty hiring deliberations** – Last month, members of the Provost’s Office team and I met in a half-day retreat with the Deans. We reviewed recommendations of the Deans concerning which tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty lines outside of strategic cluster hires to open for searches this fall with the goal of bringing new members to campus in the fall of 2022.

Deans have submitted finalized requests which are under review by my office, and we hope to be able to announce in next week’s newsletter which strategic cluster hires and additional faculty lines will be opened for searches starting this fall.

**Reminder: strategic external searches to begin in early fall 2021** – SMU will launch two national, external searches this fall for two key academic leadership positions: 1) Vice Provost for Research and Chief Innovation Officer and 2) Dean of the Moody School and Associate Provost for Graduate Studies. We are pleased to announce that

successes to all the faculty who anonymously and quietly 'labor in the shadows' and who – out of love for what they do – have made the choice to teach at SMU. He concluded his wonderful letter with a passage from the book *Summer* by Karl Ove Knausgaard: