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Faculty Senate - Position on Vaccination Requirement for those on Campus

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University of Maine Faculty Senate

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Faculty Senate



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August 5, 2021

Dear University of Maine Community,

Over the summer, the Faculty Senate leaders have been engaged in ongoing discussions with the University of Maine Administration, the University of Maine System representatives, and the Chancellor to continue to encourage the full vaccination requirement motion that unanimously passed in Senate back in May. Throughout the summer we have listened to and shared the concerns of faculty regarding the fall 2021 semester startup, vaccination requirements, masking, social distancing, and faculty flexibility in teaching modalities and instructional decision making. The Executive Committee of the Senate, along with other faculty representatives has met with President Ferrini-Mundy and collaboratively discussed issues and brainstormed solutions.

On August 4th we were more than pleased to read the decision of our chancellor to take responsible action and mandate vaccination of students returning this fall semester. We know that this decision was made in consultation with President Ferrini-Mundy, Provost Volin and other faculty members who have been discussing the complexities of this issue over the summer. We understand the complexities of this difficult decision and fully believe that the chancellor did the right thing. The Senate at the University of Maine appreciates and admires the chancellor for taking this difficult but important action.

The Executive Committee of the University of Maine Faculty Senate will continue to work with President Ferrini-Mundy, Provost Volin, the University of Maine System and AFUM to require all members of the University of Maine campus to become fully vaccinated. We continue to stand by the motion that the University of Maine Faculty Senate voted unanimously at our final meeting of the academic year (May 5, 2021) to support the requirement that *“all students, faculty and staff who will be present on campus, to be fully vaccinated.”* Our motion was predicated on full FDA authorization, which we now know is not tied to vaccine safety, but more to corporate-related issues of production, distribution, advertising, and the like. Indeed, we have administered more than 340 million shots in American arms, based on the FDA’s Emergency Authorization, an imprimatur of the FDA’s assurance – and unassailable proof – that these vaccines are safe and effective. A strict differentiation drawn by some between “Emergency” vs. “Full” FDA authorization, is neither supported by the data, nor recent court actions.

So now, the Faculty Senate at the University of Maine recommends that we continue on the scientifically and legally defensible (and brave) path that the chancellor has set, and require vaccines among the full University of Maine community. We hope to work with our faculty union, AFUM, the University of Maine System and all others involved to help us reach the goal of full vaccination. We fully support Chancellor Malloy in taking further actions in requiring vaccinations so that we can assure a safe campus return this fall. If we have learned anything from this recent Delta surge, it is that without more complete vaccination protection, this pandemic will only continue.

Sincerely,

William Dee Nichols,
Faculty Senate President
Professor of Literacy, Language and Culture