

“A Call to Bring LSU’s Vaccination Mandate Into Conformity

With State Law and National Guidelines.”

Sponsored by Inessa Bazayev, Robert Mann, Jeffrey Roland, Daniel Tirone, Meredith Veldman

Whereas the Faculty Senate welcomes the Covid-19 vaccine mandate announced by President Tate on August 24, 2021, as a crucial step in enabling LSU to fulfill its educational mission in the midst of the global Covid-19 pandemic; and

Whereas lack of vaccination compliance presents a clear threat to the health and safety of all LSU students, staff, and faculty; and

Whereas the resolutions passed by the Faculty Senate, Student Senate, and Faculty Council in April and May of 2021¹ indicate the overwhelming desire of the LSU community for a robust mandatory vaccination policy; and

Whereas Louisiana Rev. Stat. 17:170(E) states that students may be exempted from a vaccination requirement “if the student or his parent or guardian presents a written statement from a physician stating that the procedure is contraindicated for medical reasons, or a written dissent from the student or his parent or guardian is presented;” and

Whereas LSU’s current Covid-19 vaccination exemption procedure does not require a written statement but instead allows students to seek an exemption by checking a series of boxes online; and

Whereas the current policy of randomly testing 25% of all unvaccinated students once a week is effectively, at best, a policy of monthly testing while the CDC and the American College Health Association both recommend at least twice weekly testing of unvaccinated students²; and

Therefore, be it resolved that the LSU Faculty Senate commends the University leaders for instituting a Covid-19 vaccination mandate; and

Therefore, be it further resolved that the LSU Faculty Senate calls on the University leaders to amend LSU’s Covid-19 vaccination exemption form so that it requires students to submit written documentation providing the rationale behind their desire to seek exemption and to consult with other institutions of higher education within the state of Louisiana who utilize these procedures on best practices for submission and evaluation of such statements; and:

Therefore, be it further resolved that the LSU Faculty Senate calls on the University leaders to impose at least a once weekly testing requirement for all non-vaccinated and partially vaccinated individuals on campus.

¹ Faculty Senate Resolution 21-05: “A Call to Add Covid-19 Vaccination as a Requirement to the Existing List of Mandatory Immunizations at LSU (April 21, 2021); S.G.R. 21-30: *A Resolution to urge and request LSU Administration to mandate Covid-19 vaccinations for students and faculty as a requirement for Fall 2021 attendance* (April 20, 2021); LSU A&M Faculty Council Resolution: “A Call to Add COVID-19 Vaccination as a Requirement for Attendance at In-Person Classes and Events on Campus” (May 25, 2021).

² <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/ihe-testing.html>

Appendix: Faculty Senate, Student Senate, and Faculty Council Resolutions.

LSU A&M Faculty Council Resolution: “A Call to Add COVID-19 Vaccination as a Requirement for Attendance at In-Person Classes and Events on Campus”

May 25, 2021

Sponsored by Inessa Bazayev, Robert Mann, Michelle Massé, Olivier Moréteau, A. Ravi P. Rau, Jeffrey Roland, Adelaide Russo, Edward Shihadeh, Daniel Tirone, Meredith Veldman

Whereas LSU A&M Faculty Senate Resolution 21-05: *A Call to Add COVID-19 Vaccination as a Requirement to the Existing List of Mandatory Immunizations at LSU* passed the Faculty Senate with overwhelming support (52–1) on April 22, 2021;

Whereas LSU Student Senate also passed S.G.R. 21-30: *A Resolution to urge and request LSU Administration to mandate Covid-19 vaccinations for students and faculty as a requirement for Fall 2021 attendance* on April 20, 2021;

Whereas the LSU administration has failed to address the faculty concerns and arguments expressed in LSU A&M Faculty Senate Resolution 21-05: *A Call to Add Covid-19 Vaccination as a Requirement to the Existing List of Mandatory Immunizations at LSU* and its appendix, and have announced that LSU will resume normal operations in the fall of 2021, with no vaccination mandate;

Whereas as of May 16, 2021, only 19.4 percent of Louisianians in the 18-29 age group were vaccinated against the coronavirus;

Whereas the American College Health Association (ACHA) [recommends](#) mandated vaccinations;

Whereas, as of May 20, 2021, [387 campuses](#) in the U.S. require Covid vaccinations for their students or employees;

Whereas classroom assignments for the fall of 2021 show a complete disregard for [CDCguidelines](#) regarding social distancing of unvaccinated populations;

Whereas LSU’s classroom and HVAC facilities are ill equipped to meet [CDC recommendations concerning aerosol transmission of SARS-CoV-2](#), specifically with regard to crowding and adequate ventilation;

Whereas the Faculty Senate voted overwhelmingly in favor of Faculty Senate Resolution 21-03: *Continued Vote of No Confidence in the LSU Board of Supervisors* on April 22, 2021 in part because the ongoing Title IX noncompliance revelations reveal a systemic pattern of the LSU Board of Supervisors and high-ranking administrators ignoring the safety and well-being of students, a pattern that continues with the resumption of normal campus operations in the fall of 2021, with no social distancing and no vaccination requirement;

Whereas the current policy of eliminating social distancing and not requiring vaccinations violates the university's duty of care;

Whereas it is incumbent on LSU as a principal institution of higher education to inform and lead the public of the state, now on the value of highly effective and safe vaccines against a novel disease, and to set an example by requiring it of the LSU community for the Fall semester,

Whereas the lack of a vaccination mandate puts not only students, staff, and faculty at risk but also the wider community, particularly those with conditions that prohibit them from being vaccinated;

Whereas LSU's refusal to require vaccinations contributes to low vaccination rates, which facilitates the spread of COVID-19 and the evolution of more lethal, more contagious, antibody-dodging virus variants, such as B.1.1.7 (first identified in Britain), P.1 (first identified in Brazil), and B.1.617 (first noted in India) all of which are now circulating in the United States;

Whereas a large cohort of unvaccinated individuals has the potential to severely disrupt learning because of the high likelihood of a virus outbreak on campus that will then require students to remain out of class for extended periods of time and potentially require a mass return to remote instruction;

Whereas students have reported increasing levels of [depression](#), loneliness, and inability to keep up with their classes in the remote learning environment;

Therefore, the Faculty Council resolves that PS-72, which requires other vaccinations, be revised to require COVID-19 vaccinations for all students wishing to enroll in in-person classes or other events on campus or implement a similar requirement via another administrative policy or procedure.

Should such a commitment prove legally impossible until the vaccines receive permanent FDA approval, then we demand the following:

- a commitment to adding the COVID-19 vaccination to the current list of required vaccinations and immunizations for all students, **as soon as** a vaccine receives FDA approval;
- and in the period before such approval is received:
 - immediate implementation of a vaccination incentive program for students (e.g., [on-campus housing rebates](#), [cash payments](#), [free parking](#), and [exemption](#) from the on-campus mask mandate, as other universities have offered);
 - installation of suitable HEPA air filters in as many classrooms as possible;
 - immediate restoration of social distancing measures, including limiting capacity to no more than 50% of maximum occupancy for classrooms and other indoor campus spaces, and continued enforcement of a universal mask mandate;

- implementation of a robust mitigation testing regime such as that used at Indiana University in 2020-2021, testing at least 8% of students, faculty and staff at random every week (with exemptions for fully vaccinated persons);
- rapid implementation of a thorough, ongoing education campaign re: the vaccine versus the variants race--both on campus and throughout Louisiana;
- immediate withdrawal of [Policy Statement 22, Part 3, Section B](#) that [requires faculty members to provide alternative assignments](#) for students who miss class because of COVID-19 quarantining requirements. Students who choose not to be vaccinated must assume the responsibility for keeping up with their coursework and fulfilling all requirements, even if they contract COVID-19 or must quarantine because they have been exposed to COVID-19.