



848 William Pitt Union
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Statement on a Vaccine Mandate at the University of Pittsburgh

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

On Wednesday, June 16th, the University of Pittsburgh encouraged students to fill out a [Vaccine Disclosure form](#) and stated they have no plans to require vaccination, as outlined by a [University-wide email](#) from the Vice Provost and Dean of Student on Wednesday. We appreciate the University's taking steps to create a safer campus community, however, a vaccination mandate is a necessary step towards our return to normal operations. The University of Pittsburgh Student Government Board stands firmly in solidarity with the [University Senate Council](#) in its decision to mandate COVID-19 vaccinations for the student body during the upcoming Fall Semester, and calls on University leadership to implement the measures recommended in the Senate-proposed resolution.

The resolution, previously passed [in favor with 79% support](#) from the University Senate Council, includes vaccination exemptions for those with ["medical conditions, religious beliefs, and access to vaccines for all faculty, students, and staff."](#) These exceptions will ensure that every student feels safe when returning to our campus, while also accommodating students whose beliefs, health, or other circumstances may prevent them from obtaining the COVID-19 vaccine.

Furthermore, we stand by the resolution calling on the University to facilitate vaccination equity to ensure all students have equal access to in-person learning and activities. Anyone who can get a vaccine and desires to receive one should utilize [on campus resources](#) to do so upon their arrival.

We acknowledge that the university is using a positive reinforcement method (i.e. raffle) to encourage students to get vaccinated. However, without a vaccine mandate, we risk another semester of uncertainty, restrictions on campus life, and remote learning. Worse yet, students, faculty, and staff could gain a false sense of security that they can learn and teach in a safe environment.

The pandemic has brought many additional challenges that have caused great stress and anxiety for Pitt students. Now more than ever, our students need to know their concerns are taken seriously, and that includes their calls for a return to in-person learning and activities. This can only happen with a fully vaccinated student body.



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Several public universities including the [University of Delaware](#), [University of Michigan](#), [Indiana University](#), [University of Maryland](#), and [Rutgers University](#), have already required a COVID-19 vaccine for this Fall, along with our neighboring institutions Carnegie Mellon and Duquesne. This has given their students, staff, and faculty the security and peace of mind they need to return to campus and receive the experience they deserve. The University of Pittsburgh students deserve the same assurance.

As the University returns to more normal operations, our primary focus should be the safety and well-being of our students, staff, faculty, and community members. In accordance with this goal, we should ensure that as many students as possible are vaccinated upon their return to campus, and a vaccine mandate is the best way to accomplish that goal.

Below are resources compiled to learn more about the COVID-19 vaccines.

On campus resources:

<https://www.coronavirus.pitt.edu/vaccine-planning-efforts>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Vaccine/Pages/Vaccine.aspx>

<https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Health-Department/Resources/COVID-19/COVID-19-Vaccine-Information.aspx>

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/index.html>

<https://www.upmc.com/coronavirus/covid-vaccine>

[Why Get Vaccinated? | Power of Pitt | University of Pittsburgh](#)

In Solidarity,

Harshitha Ramanan

2021-2022 Student Government Board President

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