

Resolution on Vaccine Mandate and Related Anti-Covid Measures for Spring 2022

This resolution is based on discussions among the members of the ad-hoc committee established by the Faculty Senate, which met twice, and consisted of: David Blitz, (Philosophy); Francesca Testa (Admissions); Kerri Langevin (Nursing); Mark Jackson (Biology/MIS); Sylvia Halkin (Biology); Nicole Elsinger (Student, SGA); Tom Burkholder (Chemistry); John O'Connor (Sociology); and Christina Barmon (Sociology).

Whereas:

1/ Covid-19 remains a serious health threat, due not only to the delta variant now dominant, but also to the potential threat of the new omicron variant;

2/ The CSCU President in his Nov. 1 announcement stressed that “Our overall goals are to
1) decrease the number of students who have not attested to their vaccination status,
2) to decrease the number of non-medical exemptions wherever possible, and
3) to continue to impose consequences for non-compliance.”

3/ The CSCU President in his Nov. 1 announcement also stated that “This continuous improvement will take place at the campus level allowing flexibility to address concerns based on local conditions”, with a mandate to local leadership to:

- 1) “Review and work to reduce the non-medical exemptions provided to students (should be plural)” and
- 2) “Continue to impose consequences for non-compliance for those students that have not attested to their vaccination status or have been granted exemptions but have not consistently reported for weekly testing”

4/ At least one vaccine (Pfizer) has now received final authorization (Biologic License), and vaccination and booster guidance has been extended by the CDC to include college-aged students..

5/ Exemptions for non-medical reasons place in danger not only the individual concerned but others with whom they are in contact, and are inconsistent with the moral requirement of acting so as not to harm others;

6/ Legal challenges to vaccine mandates have been rejected in the paradigm case of Indiana University -- which the Supreme Court declined to review leaving it in full force --, and closer to home, in cases involving challenges to mandates at UMass (Lowell) and UConn, both of which were rejected by district courts;

7/ The goal of controlling any outbreak/uptick/surge of a communicable disease requires knowledge and information, their application through policies to protect all students, faculty and staff, and the means to implement and enforce those policies;

Be it Resolved that:

1/ *Educational Campaign*: An educational campaign be launched, drawing on the audio-video and other communication skills of our students, including but not limited to those in nursing, biology, bio-molecular sciences, communication, and other fields, to produce social media products explaining functioning of the virus and the vaccines, and the need for vaccination. This

campaign could be supplemented by written material on the ethical and legal justifications for mandated vaccination.

2/ Information and Data: There be a meeting of the CCSU President (or designate), the Senate President, and the AAUP and SUOAF Presidents to review data in the following areas to better inform policy and implementation/enforcement measures:

1. Rate of vaccination (full series/two vaccinations spaced as recommended of students living on campus and commuter students, and including statistics on booster vaccinations when available.
2. Rate of vaccination (full series/two vaccinations spaced as recommended) of graduate students, faculty, and staff of CCSU.
3. Number of medical exemptions granted, summed across students, faculty, and staff.
4. Number of nonmedical exemptions granted, summed across students, faculty, and staff.
5. Current and ongoing schedule of random screening of residential and commuter students, faculty, and staff and results of those screenings.
6. Current and ongoing overall positivity rate of the CCSU community, to the extent that this is known from required and non-required self-reporting of individuals tested.

3/ Medical exemptions: Must be accompanied by a statement of the medical reason and an attestation by a licensed medical provider.

4/ Non-Medical Exemptions: Consistent with the stated objective of reducing non-medical exemptions, the ideal would be eliminating the category completely, but short of that CCSU must require of all applicants for non-medical exemptions a statement of their reason for requesting the exemption, with a committee or designated individuals to determine whether an application is to be accepted or not, based on the following criteria:

1. Personal objections (e.g., “fear of needles”, “distrust of government”), or reasons based on misinformation (e.g., “aborted cells were used in producing the vaccine”, “the vaccines are too new and untested”) are to be uniformly rejected;
2. Religious objections are to be allowed for members of religions that preclude medical treatment in their basic tenets (e.g., Christian Scientists), accompanied by an attestation by a minister of that religion;
3. Religious exemptions may be allowed for other individuals but must (i) be accompanied by a statement of strongly held religious belief, (ii) an attestation by a registered minister of that religion, and (iii) be subject to a meeting with the student to discuss this issue and its implications.

5/ Enforcement for non-compliance: Consistent with the objective of imposing consequences for non-compliance:

1. Warnings for first time violators (failure to report vaccination status, failure to be regularly tested in the case of those with exemptions, failure to follow masking or other policies) shall be followed by increasing sanctions, including barring from on campus events and seeking on campus services, health hold on registration, up to and including suspension (but not expulsion) for repeat violators.

2. Students barred from campus until they return to compliance cannot demand online material or online meetings not already provided by the courses for which they are registered.

6/ Booster Vaccination: Given the importance of boosters to increase immunity and CDC guidance for all adults, CCSU should

1. Recommend boosters for those more than 6 months past their mRNA vaccine, or 2 months past their Johnson and Johnson vaccine;
2. Mandate boosters as required once their efficacy against new variants has been established and appropriate guidance from federal, state and system levels has been issued.

7/ Other issues: To fully protect students, faculty and staff, CCSU should for Spring 2022:

1. Increase the number of on-campus vaccinations, with additional stations at each clinic to reduce wait times, including using nursing students to assist in the process;
2. Increase the number of portable ventilation systems in classrooms and accelerate the upgrade of building ventilation systems;
3. Continue the mask mandate for classrooms, and other enclosed rooms, common areas as designated, and for transit through building corridors, stairways and elevators.