

Pat Pitney  
Interim President

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October 18, 2021

Dear UA Community,

After discussion with leaders throughout the UA system, I have decided to maintain the existing process for specific programmatic vaccine requirements and not require COVID-19 vaccination for Fairbanks-based faculty, staff and in-person students at this time.

While I wholeheartedly believe that vaccination is our best line of defense against COVID-19, and encourage all students and employees to get vaccinated, other considerations led me to this decision.

Chief among those is the increased potential for a federal vaccination requirement in the near future. We are already receiving information about targeted federal requirements, and we will apply those as necessary. However, it appears likely that we may need to institute a systemwide vaccination requirement to comply with one or more of our federal funding agencies. It makes sense to hold implementation of any broad vaccination requirement until we have more clarity on the extent and scope of the anticipated federal vaccination requirements.

In the meantime, we are relying on your attention to the university's multi-layer mitigation strategy, which includes masking and staying home when you are sick. These simple measures will help continue to keep COVID infection rates at a manageable level within our campus communities.

Additionally, we continue to prepare for the logistics to implement any broad-based COVID vaccination requirements, should that become a reality. Those preparations include identifying a system for vaccination verification. Consistent with federal regulations and our current practices, any vaccination requirement would also include provisions for medical and religious exemptions. We are also discussing ways to incentivize and support vaccination among students and employees, regardless of any action by our federal funding agencies.

Thank you for your patience as we analyzed this request and the federal landscape surrounding vaccination requirements. As I have more information to share, I will be in touch with you about our COVID-19 operations.

As we expect a broad vaccine mandate to eventually be implemented, if you are not already vaccinated, now is a good time to do so. You can find vaccination appointments in your area by visiting [the CDC's vaccine finder](#).

Sincerely,

Pat Pitney  
Interim UA President