

Greetings, I am writing to urge the Legislative Commission to support the emergency NSHE Student Vaccination Mandate approved by the Nevada State Board of Health for the following reasons:

- I am a member of the faculty at TMCC, although I am here expressing my personal opinion. I have taught from home for nearly two years and I am anxious to return to the classroom to teach face to face with students. But I am high risk and dare not do so without a vaccine mandate for everyone at the college. College is, and should be, very interactive. It is important that we are able to provide the best protection so that our courses will not be disrupted or distracted by COVID positive cases, any more than absolutely necessary. Last semester it is my understanding that a number of students, and even a few instructors, contracted COVID. This was extremely disruptive for everyone involved. In order to move forward we need to have a vaccination mandate in place.
- NSHE faculty, staff, and students are counting on returning to fully vaccinated campuses after the winter break. Any lapse in student or employee vaccination requirements that are already being implemented will cause widespread confusion and chaos and would make our campuses less safe. We faculty have been scheduled to teach courses, with the understanding that a student vax mandate is in place. It is unfair to take this degree of protection away from our colleges and universities.
- If the vaccination mandate lapses, some students will decide to disenroll from in-person classes and faculty will feel less comfortable returning to 100% in-person instruction. This could lead to class schedule disruptions and impede student progress.
- NSHE has relied on medical experts and regulatory bodies like the Board of Health to determine responses to the pandemic. The State Board of Health is charged by statute to make decisions based on medical and scientific evidence. We should continue to leave decisions about vaccinations to the medical experts appointed to the Board of Health.
- Although there is a vocal minority against Covid vaccinations and even other simple precautions like face coverings, the overwhelming majority of the NSHE community is in favor of using all valid means including mandatory vaccinations to protect our safety on campus. Prior to the Board of Health emergency regulation in August 2021, over 1270 faculty members, staff, students, and family members signed a petition in favor of mandatory student vaccinations and other appropriate measures. The Nevada Faculty Alliance is on record in support of both student and faculty vaccination.
- The Board of Regents followed the State Board of Health mandate for students in applying a vaccination mandate for NSHE employees. As of December 13, only 3.5% of all NSHE employees were not yet in compliance—with a deadline for December 31 and a chance for reinstatement by compliance in January.
- As of December 16, 2021, as reported by “The Chronicle of Higher Education,” 1123 colleges and universities nationwide have mandated vaccination against Covid for students, employees, or both. Among those with student vaccination mandates are the University of Utah, Utah State University, University of Oregon, Oregon State University, University of California, and California State University.
- With the coming wave of Omicron variant infections, now is no time to let up on pandemic safety measures, especially since PEBP no longer provides Long-Term Disability Insurance for faculty and staff which may be needed for those who contract a disabling long Covid case.
- Our understanding is that the role of the Legislative Commission in reviewing regulations under NRS 233B.0618 and 233B.067 is to determine whether the regulations fall within the authority

and legislative intent of the statutes for the agency, namely the State Board of Health. NRS 439.150, 439.200 and 441A.120 give very broad authority to the Board of Health on public health measures. Political considerations should not come into play at the expense of the health and safety of our students or anyone at our colleges and universities.

Thank you for considering my views, which I believe are consistent with the vast majority of NSHE faculty, students, employees and their families.

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Julia Hammett, Ph.D.

Ecological Anthropologist