

To the Legislative Commission:

I write to reiterate my continued support for a mandatory vaccine requirement for any student or faculty returning to campus for in person instruction.

I, among other family members of students, faculty, and staff, am counting on a vaccine requirement for return to in person instruction at UNLV. I am married to a Boyd law student, both of us proud new parents of a two month old, and we have been relying on this vaccine requirement for my wife to safely return to campus. My two month old baby is left unprotected from COVID aside from the passive immunity my wife/her mother provides her. It is paramount for our family that NSHE requires the utmost protection possible for students, staff, faculty, and their families from this deadly virus. Any lapse in student or employee vaccination requirements that are already being implemented will cause widespread confusion and chaos and would make our campuses, and our households, less safe.

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 rather than political whims.

Although there is a vocal minority against COVID vaccinations and even other simple precautions like face coverings, the overwhelming majority of the NSHE community, including most students and household family members, is in favor of using all valid means including mandatory vaccinations to protect our safety on campus.

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. In fact, Omicron is the majority variant of positive infections in the United States at this time, making it possibly the fastest spreading variant yet.

The Legislative Commission is only asked to determine whether the regulations fall within the authority of the State Board of Health. Political considerations should not come into play at the expense of the health and safety of our students.

Respectfully,

Karl Rothe