

Location and Names have been edited to protect privacy.

To: "University T"
From: SR
Date: 8/22/21
RE: Vaccine Mandate Contingency

Subject: Vaccine Mandate Contingency

Dear _____,

My name is SR. I am a fifth-year senior hoping to enter his final semester at "University T" with a Vocal Performance Major and a Music Technology minor. I am requesting a contingency plan for attendance at "University T" because I do not feel peaceful getting a covid vaccination due to personal conscience and safety concerns, yet I desire to complete my degree this upcoming semester.

Over my three plus years at "University T" I have done everything I can to spread positive energy, model high expectations and citizenship, and keep morale high in the music department. I have been honored with significant music scholarships and gladly want to give back to my community. Recently, with the sudden vaccine mandate, I feel somewhat singled out, as I had every intention of waiting until the clinical safety trials were complete to get my vaccine. Now, I feel forced to take a vaccine that has only been cleared for emergency use due to societal pressures. On one hand, I support the obligation to do my part as a member of society and keep others safe, but on the other hand, I am concerned about the unknown, long-term effects of the vaccine ... even more than the coronavirus itself.

As someone who is closer to 20 years old than 30, covid would most likely not have severe effects on me. I have had several friends who contacted covid and shook it off like it was nothing more than a common cold. I, myself, may have had covid in July 2020. I became ill, obtained the covid test, but my test results were corrupted. By the time the test results came back, I was significantly better health-wise so I did not retest, but quarantined anyway. The antibody tests were not yet being administered so I do not have definite proof of experiencing covid. A big concern for me is the lack of sound data and science to date that proves the vaccination effective and without significant side effects in the long-term. Similarly, I have witnessed people having side effects from the vaccine itself, including symptoms that are not associated with the disease; such as partial paralysis. This scares me as I have my whole life in front of me.

I am sympathetic and careful towards others, intentionally staying away from anyone who is not feeling well or people who may be health risks, and I always bring a mask in public with me out of respect for others. I wear a mask on my job when appropriate.

I do not believe that I am the only student who shares this sentiment of desiring to wait on the vaccine until more time has passed and its safety is proven long-term. However, I do feel that I am in a unique situation as I do not have online alternatives to take classes from home. Prior to covid there were no online classes in the music department, which would make sense for music

classes that are lecture-oriented. During covid the university mandated that all classes were online. The non-lecture-oriented classes are hands-on and crucial to a student's development, and we could not attend this last year. I am hoping that the lecture-oriented classes could still be offered online this coming semester. All of my remaining music classes are of this nature and if I could take them online, I could fulfill my graduation requirements without needing the vaccine.

I do have religious reservations about the handling of the covid vaccines, yet, I was willing to get the flu shot last year when it was mandated, showing that I am by no means against vaccination at large for religious reasons. It is the long-term safety that concerns me.

I would be willing to wear a mask for the remainder of my time at "University T", to take the covid test weekly, and other reasonable measures if it meant I could continue my studies and obtain the degree I have worked so hard for. Otherwise, I feel stuck between a rock and a hard place by a university I have sought to give everything back to up to this point. I do not wish to defer my education, but feel I cannot, in good conscience, receive the vaccine.

I respect how the university has handled all of the tough situations and decisions necessary since the pandemic outbreak in early 2020 and I hope you can see it in your heart to meet me in the middle. I am asking that you allow me to complete my degree at "University T" without forcing me to get the vaccine. I am willing to wear a mask, take covid testing, keep to myself, etc. I also ask that classes be offered online for those who struggle with this issue as a matter of conscience.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

SR