

HOWARD UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE FACULTY SENATE

August 20th, 2021

Wayne Frederick, M.D.
President
Howard University
Washington DC 20059

Good evening Dr. Frederick,

On August 20, 2021, during an emergency call meeting, the Howard University Faculty Senate adopted the position that all Howard University faculty will be able to choose the modality - in-person, online/virtually, or hybrid - for courses that they are teaching during the Fall 2021 semester. The vote in favor of the above position was unanimous, with 142 faculty members voting in favor and none against. A quorum was achieved as more than 100 faculty members were present.

Faculty are deeply concerned that the layered prevention strategies recommended by the CDC for institutions of higher education have not been implemented at Howard University. This includes, but is not limited to, requiring all faculty, staff, and students to be fully vaccinated, conducting meetings virtually to the greatest extent possible, mandating sensible physical distancing, and using outdoor air to ventilate indoor meeting spaces. The campus cannot be considered fully vaccinated since faculty and staff are not required to receive their second dose of vaccines until October 1, 2021, rendering them unprotected until mid-October, well after classes start in August. In addition, proper pandemic protocols have not been fully developed or communicated to faculty, staff, and students.

Current information on the Delta variant of Covid-19 shows increased hospitalization rates among unvaccinated people and increased breakthrough infections among vaccinated people. The latest data (from a New York Times article on 8/15/2021) shows that the level of protection against the Delta variant among vaccinated individuals has fallen dramatically:

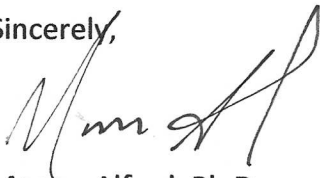
“Researchers at Israel’s Ministry of Health have said that the Pfizer vaccine’s effectiveness in preventing infection fell from 95 percent early in the year to 39 percent from late June to mid-July...the Pfizer vaccine’s efficacy against severe disease had dropped significantly for those 65 and older who got their first shots in January or February.”



It must be noted that many faculty members fall in high risk categories as defined by the CDC and the University's Covid-19 Guiding Principles. Furthermore, many faculty members may serve as primary caregivers for young children who cannot be vaccinated, have family members who are highly susceptible to severe infection, and/or may be 65 years of age or older themselves. Moreover, the administrative process necessary to obtain medical accommodation through proof of ADA status is inadequate and inappropriate.

In conclusion, the Howard University Faculty Senate is notifying the Office of the President that faculty must have the flexibility to choose instruction modality (online, hybrid, in-person) for their courses in the Fall 2021 semester.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marcus Alfred', written in a cursive style.

Marcus Alfred, Ph.D.
Chair, Howard University Faculty Senate
Howard University
Washington, DC 20059

Cc: Dr. Anthony K. Wutoh, Provost
Dr. Laurence Morse, Chair, Howard University Board of Trustees