

From: Chancellor Donde Plowman
Sent: Monday, June 14, 2021 8:09 AM
To: Hughes, Karen W <khughes@utk.edu>
Subject: RE: Petition concerning Fall Semester 2021 teaching and Covid-19

Dear Karen,

Thank you for your e-mail. We will continue to work with our emergency management team to monitor changes in public health data, communicate with state and local public health officials, lead contact tracing efforts on campus, present issues that need to be decided at the executive level, make appropriate adjustments in operations, and communicate with our campus community. With vaccines now readily available both on and off campus, we have moved into a new phase where members of our campus community can make informed decisions about their health and how they protect themselves. We will continue to encourage vaccination, provide vaccines on and off campus, and make it as convenient as we can for people to participate. State law prohibits the university from requiring vaccinations.

Best,



Donde Ashmos Plowman, PhD
Chancellor

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From: Hughes, Karen W
Sent: Thursday, June 3, 2021 2:06 PM
To: Chancellor Donde Plowman <chancellor@utk.edu>; UT President Randy Boyd <utpresident@tennessee.edu>
Subject: Petition concerning Fall Semester 2021 teaching and Covid-19

Dear Chancellor Plowman and President Boyd;
We are attaching a petition signed by 591 faculty, students, and staff that expresses our concern about a lack of a covid vaccine mandate for students returning to campus, Fall 2021 given that we will be returning to full classrooms with face-to-face instruction. The petition has been signed by 226 tenure-track professors, 81 lecturers, 129 graduate students, 63 undergraduates, 3 alumni, and 89 staff. The petition is not meant to be adversarial in any way. Rather, it expresses our concerns that the Covid-19 pandemic is far from over and that southern states with low vaccination rates are likely to see a

resurgence of Covid-19 in the fall. Tennessee now has two variants of concern that increase risk and certainly, Tennessee will not reach herd immunity. The result? The unvaccinated would be at the highest risk, but even those who received the vaccine could become ill with new variants if we do not take other mitigation actions.

We request that the administration undertake further planning for protection of students, staff and faculty and that the faculty senate and representative student groups all be involved in plans for safe teaching in the Fall.

Sincerely

Karen W. Hughes, Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

Jessica Budke, Asst. Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

Michael Gilchrist, Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

Maitreyi Das, Assoc. Professor, Biochemistry & Cellular and Molecular Biology