



August 18, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Last night, following my recommendation, the Board of Trustees unanimously approved a new board policy requiring that all students, faculty, and staff be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 before accessing District facilities, including the Verdugo, Garfield and Montrose Campuses. The policy is in addition to the District's current mask rule that requires all persons to wear a face covering while indoors whether vaccinated or not.

In recent weeks, the spread of the aggressive Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus has risen to alarming levels. The Los Angeles County Department of Health and Human Services says that "the Delta variant is much more adept at finding and infecting unvaccinated individuals" and that "vaccination remains the most effective tool to reduce your risk associated to COVID-19."

The vaccination requirement will go into effect October 31, 2021, which will allow more than ten weeks for the unvaccinated to complete the vaccination cycle. In addition, the board voted Tuesday to require all District employees be fully vaccinated by December 21, 2021, regardless of whether they access District facilities or not.

We are less than two weeks away from the start of the fall semester in which we are re-introducing more than 200 in-person credit classes and 33 noncredit classes. During the rigorous planning stages for a return to campus, two key principles drove the decision-making process: a commitment to protecting the health and safety of the college community and making sure that our students have multiple options for pursuing their educational goals.

The new board policy allows students who have been vaccinated to return to campus for in-person classes and activities while those who prefer learning at home and those who choose not to get vaccinated can still participate in classes and support services online. Students and employees may apply for an exemption to the mandate due to ADA qualifying physical/mental disability or for religious accommodation but will be required to provide proof of a negative test result for COVID-19 each week and shall be required to wear a mask at all times with the exception of a meal period.

Implementation details of the board policy are being worked out (proof of vaccination, exemptions, testing, etc.) with more information released in the near future. Collective bargaining will follow this board action to address working conditions affected by the vaccination mandate and alternatives to unpaid leave or discipline for those employees who are not fully vaccinated before the December 21 deadline.

Contractors, vendors, and visitors to the campus will not be subject to the mandate but will be required to wear a face covering while indoors at any District facility and will be required to follow all State and County safety protocols.

I appreciate all the work that has gone into preparing for a gradual return to in-person classes. This board policy is an important piece of the plan and contributes to the overall health and safety of our community.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Viar".

David Viar
Superintendent/President

Superintendent/President Dr. David Viar

Board of Trustees Sevan Benlian • Yvette Vartanian Davis • Dr. Armine Hacopian • Desireé Portillo Rabinov • Ann H. Ransford