

**Faculty Assembly**  
**Statement on COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement for Fall 2021**  
**June 17, 2021**

In a May 5 letter to the Members of the University Community (“Looking Forward to Post-Covid”), Catholic University President John Garvey explained his decision not to require COVID-19 vaccines. He stated that

*There will always be, here and elsewhere, members of the community who hold conscientious concerns about the vaccine, or who for medical reasons feel that they are at lower risk from the virus itself than from the vaccine. Our survey results indicated that 35-40% of the respondents would not insist that each member of the community get vaccinated. Unless events take an unexpected turn, we will respect that opinion.*

President Garvey’s vaccine policy responds to the feelings and opinions of the minority of community members. Yet a clear majority of those surveyed by the administration support vaccination for the university community. Furthermore, on June 8, the faculty representatives to the Board of Trustees released the results of a poll of the faculty of the Professional Schools. Of 90 respondents, a strong majority (76%) supports a vaccine requirement for students, faculty, and staff. In addition, the Academic Senate brought forth Resolutions advocating mandatory vaccination on May 12, 2021, as did the Conway School of Nursing in its Position Statement on the COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement for Fall 2021.

In the absence of a vaccine requirement, faculty members have numerous questions and concerns as we prepare for the Fall 2021 semester. For instance, exactly what percentage of our community will be vaccinated? Will unvaccinated students, faculty, and staff be required to socially distance or wear masks when in the presence of others? If so, how will these policies be enforced, and who will be responsible for enforcing them? Will those who feel unsafe in the presence of unvaccinated people be able to receive accommodations in order to continue to work remotely? What about classroom situations where students and faculty must work very closely together, such as voice lessons, choir practices, laboratory settings, or team project work?

To answer these questions, the Faculty Assembly strongly recommends that the Administration:

- Require all faculty and staff, as well as students, to anonymously and securely provide their COVID-19 vaccination status to the University as soon as possible for classroom planning purposes;
- Publish de-identified aggregate data about vaccination rates among faculty, staff, and students broken down by School, so that all community members can properly assess the risks of returning to classrooms, meetings and on-campus events;
- Provide clear guidance about how masking and social distancing policies will be implemented and enforced in classrooms, meetings, and on-campus events, and clarify whether faculty will be able to require such policies in their classroom;
- Allow faculty, staff, and students who feel unsafe around unvaccinated community members to continue to work remotely or to teach in a hybrid setting to allow for social distancing.

President Garvey’s vaccine policy prioritizes the feelings and opinions of a minority of community members. We respectfully ask that he expand the policy to address the feelings and opinions of the majority of community members, who believe that they and their loved ones are more at risk from COVID-19 than from the vaccine, who accept the counsel of Pope Francis and the U.S. Catholic Bishops that it is morally permissible for Catholics to take the vaccines, and who are concerned with the principle of the common good.