

**Heard, Julia**

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**From:** Office of the MSU Provost  
**Sent:** Friday, August 13, 2021 9:08 AM  
**Subject:** Syllabi guidance on face coverings and vaccinations



Office of the Provost

Dear MSU Faculty,

I hope you are enjoying the summer and enjoying some well-deserved time to relax along with your friends and loved ones. As we near the start of the fall semester, we are looking forward to seeing you on campus as we welcome new and returning students back to our classrooms, labs, studios and field sites.

Because of the constant state of change that has characterized the pandemic, some of you have asked about whether to include specific language in your syllabi relative to face masks and COVID-19 vaccinations. If you wish to include such language in your syllabi, here is sample wording you might want to consider:

***Montana State University strongly recommends students, faculty and staff wear face masks in indoor public spaces, in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control recommendations. Montana State University encourages students, faculty and staff to take advantage of convenient, on-campus clinics for the COVID-19 vaccine. Schedule your appointment by going to: [www.montana.edu/health/coronavirus](http://www.montana.edu/health/coronavirus).***

At the time of this writing, neither the Montana Board of Regents nor the Montana Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education has instituted face mask mandates or COVID-19 vaccine requirements for the campuses of the Montana University System. This information was communicated on [Aug. 6 in a memo from Commissioner Clayton Christian](#).

[Under Montana House Bill 702](#), Montana State University is expressly prohibited from requiring a vaccine that is under emergency use authorization. Moreover, HB 702: Section 1, states, “. . . it is an unlawful discriminatory practice for (a) a person or a governmental entity to refuse, withhold from, or deny to a person any local or state services, goods, facilities, advantages, privileges, licensing, educational opportunities, health care access, or employment opportunities based on the person’s vaccination status or whether the person has an immunity passport.”

In addition, [Montana Code Annotated 20-5-403](#) articulates that a campus could only mandate vaccines if authorized to do so by its “*governing authority*,” which for the Montana University System is the Board of Regents.

I recognize that some of you may not have accessed this information before and, therefore, I am sharing it here for your benefit and the benefit of your students.

All of us at Montana State University continue to encourage faculty, students and staff to protect themselves and others during this pandemic. I will keep you informed as we receive additional guidance from our health authorities or university officials.

I appreciate greatly everything that you do for our students and for all your important contributions to Montana State University.

Most Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob".

**Dr. Robert L. Mokwa | Executive Vice President and Provost**

Montana State University

Tel. 406-994-4371

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Office of the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost  
Montana Hall | P.O. Box 172560 | Bozeman, MT 59717-2560  
[www.montana.edu](http://www.montana.edu) | [provost@montana.edu](mailto:provost@montana.edu) | 406-994-4371