Dear Heritage University Community:

Like many of you, I am anxious to return to work on campus. I look forward to the beginning of the Fall semester helping students find their classrooms as they walk from building to building. It is their first step in pursuit of their academic dreams. However, we must prepare for this return.

The biggest responsibility we have as an administration is to assure that we can provide a safe environment for everyone to work and study at Heritage. After much thought, research, and analysis, we have decided that we will require all staff, faculty, and students to be vaccinated for the Covid-19 virus before returning to campus. We have decided this because the overwhelming scientific evidence shows that the vaccines are effective and safe. It is also the recommendation of the Yakima County Health District, the State of Washington, and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. A failure to require vaccinations would legally and ethically constitute a direct threat to the safety of staff, faculty, and students.

The only exceptions to the requirement are for individuals that:

1. Have medical conditions that prevent them from being vaccinated.
2. Have sincerely held religious beliefs that prevent them from being vaccinated.
3. Have other extenuating and exceptional circumstances (evaluated on an individual basis) that prevent them from being vaccinated.

The administration will work with individuals falling into the categories above to find reasonable accommodations.

When we return in the Fall, we will continue to:

1. Require masks in interior spaces. The exception to this is the café, where we can remove our masks while eating.
2. Require social distancing at a minimum of 3-feet.
3. Maintain enhanced cleaning protocols.

In addition, to requiring vaccinations, we strongly recommend that our entire community continue with prevention protocols such as frequent hand washing and covering your cough.

If you have not received your Covid-19 vaccine, we strongly recommend that you get it as soon as possible. This way you will be ready to return by August. We will also have a vaccination day on campus. Additional information regarding this event is forthcoming.

In a different communication, we will provide the procedures on how we will collect vaccination information and enforce the policies we have developed.

Finally, it is important to note that, much like everything with the pandemic, these policies may change as circumstances in our environment change.

I look forward to our work this Fall and seeing you on campus!

Sincerely,

Andrew C. Sund, Ph.D.

President

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