

## Mt. San Antonio College Academic Senate Recommendations for Safe Learning Environments

### Background:

Mt. San Antonio College (Mt. SAC) [Board Resolution 21-05](#) is set to expire at the end of the Spring 2022 semester. If not renewed by the Board of Trustees, vaccination mandates for students to register for on-campus courses would sunset. Masking policies were not articulated in Board Resolution 21-05 for Spring 2022 but rather were negotiated between the Faculty Association and College District. Implementation of continued masking after Spring 2022 has currently not been negotiated.

The Mt. SAC Academic Senate passed its own [Resolution 21-05](#) in the Fall of 2021, Urging the Board of Trustees to Uphold Resolution 21-05 in the Interest of Safe Learning Environments and Public Health, when a proposal was made to the board to alter the COVID-19 protocols plan established in Board of Trustees Resolution 21-05. The resolution resolved the following:

*Resolved, The Academic Senate asserts that a safe learning environment for students and faculty is an academic and professional matter; and,*

*Resolved, The Academic Senate urges the Board of Trustees to uphold their Resolution 21-05, including the vaccination requirement for Winter 2022 and Spring 2022; and,*

*Resolved, The Academic Senate encourages the expansion and implementation of targeted vaccination outreach for “promotion of vaccination clinics” to support vaccination among the Mt. SAC community as outlined in the Board of Trustees Resolution 21-05; and,<sup>1</sup>*

*Resolved, The Academic Senate reminds campus constituents of the College’s dedication to “...enhancing personal well-being (and) developing critical thinking” as stated in our Mission Statement and emphasizes the need to maintain the Public Trust to protect public health and provide equitable learning environments in a safe manner including following all Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Los Angeles County Department of Public Health orders and guidelines for institutions of higher learning.*

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) passed [Resolution 13.02](#) In Support of Prevention and Control of COVID-19 in the Interest of Safe Learning Environments in the Fall of 2021. The Resolution resolved the following:

*Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Colleges assert that a safe teaching and learning environment for students and faculty is vital for student success, which is an academic and professional matter, and urge that local academic senates communicate this necessity to their administrations and governing boards;*

*Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges work with the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, the Student Senate for California Community Colleges, collective bargaining units, and other system partners to explore options to require all newly hired and existing employees and students to be vaccinated for COVID-19, with appropriate exemptions for medical and religious reasons; and,*

*Resolved, The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges support the Student Senate for California Community College Board of Directors position on COVID-19 vaccinations.*

The California Community College Chancellor's office issued [2021-01 Advisory](#) - Mandated COVID-19 Vaccinations in California community colleges. The advisory provides community college districts with an explanation of their authority to impose a vaccination requirement and surveys factors districts should consider when determining whether and how a vaccine mandate could be implemented.

The Los Angeles Department of Health recommends in their [Best Practices Guidance for Higher Education](#) several practices including the following:

- Wearing a well-fitting highly protective mask is strongly recommended, especially when indoors.
- Encouraging vaccination of faculty, staff, and students, including booster doses as soon as someone becomes eligible as vaccines are safe and effective and are the best way to prevent COVID-19 outbreaks on your campus and in the community.
- Physical distancing in lecture halls, specialized classroom settings, and all other indoor spaces remains an effective mitigation strategy and is recommended if it does not interfere with campus operations. Increasing physical distance between individuals is recommended in settings where masking is not maintained, such as in dining halls.
- Continued personal screening for COVID-19 symptoms and Contact Tracing
- Weekly asymptomatic screening testing is recommended for all students and staff who are not up to date on their COVID vaccination status, which includes anyone who has not completed a primary COVID-19 vaccine series, and anyone who is fully vaccinated and due for a booster dose but has not yet received it.

At the [April 13, 2022 Mt SAC Board of Trustees meeting](#) the Board clarified that they would likely not renew vaccine mandates in summer and fall for on-campus students and asked District Administrative Leadership to bring a plan for consideration at the May 11<sup>th</sup> Board of Trustees meeting outlining continued safety and educational protocols other than vaccine mandates and masking that would continue after Spring 2022.

### Recommendations:

If the Vaccine Mandate sunsets and faculty and student Masking is not continued the following recommendations are strongly urged in the interest of safe learning environments:

1. Clear communication to all Mt. SAC students and employees that previous vaccination and masking policies have been halted, to ensure that students who have opted to participate in on-campus classes and services because of vaccine and masking mandates can make informed decisions when enrolling and signing up for services in future semesters.
2. The creation of an actionable administrative plan with implementation timeline should a future COVID-19 outbreak or surge occur, as was seen in both Fall 2021 (Delta variant) and Winter 2022 (Omicron variant).
3. Continued COVID-19 vaccination clinics on campus for those who desire vaccinations or boosters.
4. Continued COVID-19 testing sites on campus for those in need of accessible testing.
5. Continued communication from the college promoting COVID-19 vaccination.
6. Clear messaging reflecting the Los Angeles County Department of Health Guidance strongly recommending the wearing of masks to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Approved by Full Senate on 5/5/2022.

