September 24, 2021

Dear colleagues:

As we approach the Monday, September 27, deadline for students to upload verification of their vaccinations we have been contacted by a number of students who are confused about whether the deadline applies to them. The policy approved by the CUNY Board applies to all students in in-person and hybrid courses. Students have reported being told, for a variety of reasons, that even though they are in a hybrid course, they do not need to be vaccinated. Among those reasons is that the faculty member has made the previously in-person or hybrid course, online.

It is critical that you heed the following and avoid putting your students in serious jeopardy.

Individual faculty members may not decide on their own to change the modality of the course they are teaching. No CUNY courses have been allowed to change what was published in CUNYfirst when students registered. There have been temporary suspensions of in-person meetings due to insufficient space for social distancing of unvaccinated students, but no permanent changes. Students registered for in-person or hybrid courses as so listed in CUNYfirst must be vaccinated. No exceptions. They must follow the vaccination policy, as they have been informed since early May when the vaccine mandate was announced.

If faculty members mislead students by not following these guidelines they are putting students in peril of not only losing the course they are taking, but also financial aid, scholarships and other enrollment-dependent supports they receive. Accommodating
student desires not to be vaccinated may seem like a sympathetic action to take, but it is the total opposite.

If you have made such statements to your students, you must contact them and correct what they have been told. This is a matter of professional duty and ethical responsibility.

Sincerely,

Yi Li

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs