

All of our decisions regarding vaccination requirements were made with the safety of our university community in mind. Ultimately, the difference in vaccination requirements stems from our belief that the best way to protect the greatest number of people to the greatest possible extent is to require all students be vaccinated.

The difference in how we handled students and employees stemmed from several factors:

- **Students are more susceptible.** Students live, study and socialize in settings where the virus is easily spread. During the 2020-2021 academic year, more than 90% of our reported COVID-19 cases came from students.
- **Students often spread the virus unknowingly.** Of the 381 total positive cases found thru surveillance testing, 95% were students who did not know they were carrying the virus.
- **Vaccination is already a standard practice.** The university already requires students to be vaccinated against several other serious diseases, so this policy aligns with a long-existing practice that has proven highly effective.
- **Employees on campus have been better about following the rules.** There have been very few complaints about employees following rules regarding masking, social distancing, etc. Conversely, during the past year, we regularly received reports of students putting people's health at risk by not following COVID-19 protocols.
- **Employees have been more cooperative.** In instances when a positive case was detected, employees willingly participated in contact tracing. Conversely, the DeKalb County Department of Public Health reported that students frequently ignored calls or hung up on contact tracers.
- **Many employees voluntarily got vaccinated.** Participation in vaccine clinics for employees was very high – at a March 18 clinic, more than 1,100 employees got vaccinated. Many more participated in another clinic in April and, anecdotally, we know that many employees were vaccinated at other locations.
- **Unvaccinated employees will be closely monitored.** Employees who cannot provide proof of vaccination will follow the same rules as students who receive an exemption, including participation in weekly surveillance testing, wearing masks and practicing physical distancing. Failure to comply with these rules may result in disciplinary action, including termination.

We know that our entire community – students, employees, residents of DeKalb and Sycamore, our partners who offer clinicals and internships – want to return to normal as quickly as possible. Leading public health authorities including the CDC, WHO and Illinois Department of Public Health have all validated the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines and declared that they are essential to the health and wellbeing of the public. We hope that our students and employees will take the necessary precautions to protect their health and that of others.