

## **RESOLUTION ON COVID-19 GUIDELINES FOR FALL 2021**

On behalf of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, Catherine Ambrose (Faculty Senate Chair and Associate Professor) submitted the following resolution, which was informed by the Faculty Senate Resolution from Texas A&M University and the Faculty Council Resolution from The University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Ambrose proposes that the McGovern Medical School Faculty Senate consider the resolution via an online vote Friday, August 20 - Thursday, August 26, 2021.

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Whereas the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) presently recommend that people in areas of high transmission of COVID-19 resume wearing masks indoors;

Whereas the medical evidence estimates the new Delta variant may be twice as contagious as the original COVID-19 virus;

Whereas the CDC provides data that places Harris County in the highest risk category for transmission of COVID-19;

Whereas Harris County Public Health (HCPH) raised our city's risk-based guidance to Level 1 (red, the highest risk level);

Whereas forecasters at The University of Texas at Austin COVID-19 Modeling Consortium concluded recently that most regions of the state will experience overflowing hospitalization rates similar to those of January 2021, unless people resume masking and maintain social distancing;

Whereas institutions in The University of Texas system are prohibited from requiring masks or vaccinations for faculty, staff, and students who are in face-to-face classes and meetings on campus;

Whereas many classrooms and other facilities used for academic purposes such as advising do not permit proper social distancing for faculty, staff, students, and visitors;

Whereas The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston has built a rich academic history based on scientific principles and practices; and

Whereas The University of Texas system is being constrained in its protective and preventive measures by forces outside its control; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, that the Faculty Senate of McGovern Medical School at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston urges that individual institutions be allowed to make their own decisions involving the responses to the COVID-19 pandemic based on sound scientific evidence, local health conditions, and public health standards.