8/20/21

Dear University of Iowa Faculty,

As you may have seen, last night Mayor Bruce Teague issued a mask mandate for Iowa City due to increasing rates of COVID-19 associated with the delta variant. The mandate requires everyone in Iowa City to wear a face covering over their nose and mouth when in public spaces – particularly indoors – when social distancing is not feasible. While the mayor suggests that the mandate applies to the University of Iowa, University administration suggests otherwise as we are governed by the Board of Regents, State of Iowa. University administrators believe they are unable to mandate mask use, although they strongly encourage mask use.

As Faculty Senate Officers, we understand that the University of Iowa (UI) coexists with Iowa City and that COVID-19 does not respect property lines or structural boundaries. Most UI faculty appear to support mandating mask use in classrooms, laboratories, clinics, and other indoor spaces. As Faculty Senate Officers, we support a mask mandate because it is consistent with science and current Johnson County Public Health and CDC recommendations. This guidance is based on scientific evidence that masks reduce COVID-19 transmission and can greatly mitigate this public health crisis. Our objective as elected faculty representatives is to advocate for an environment that produces the lowest risk of COVID-19 transmission among students, staff, and faculty, many of whom are members of the Iowa City community. Our position as faculty leaders is that a mask mandate is consistent with this objective.

We thank Mayor Teague and the Iowa City Council for taking strides to address COVID-19 within our community.

Sincerely,

Teresa Marshall, PhD
Professor, College of Dentistry
President, University of Iowa Faculty Senate

Ana Rodriguez-Rodriguez, PhD
Associate Professor, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Vice President, University of Iowa Faculty Senate

Melissa Lehan Mackin, PhD
Associate Professor, College of Nursing
Secretary, University of Iowa Faculty Senate

Joe Yockey, JD
David H. Vernon Professor of Law, College of Law
Past President, University of Iowa Faculty Senate