

Motion 1 10-4-21

WHEREAS data establish conclusively that vaccine-induced immunity to COVID infection wanes significantly over time; and

WHEREAS recent data indicate that the effectiveness of current vaccines is far lower than the pre-August 80% figure the administration has cited as a basis for their policies; and

WHEREAS medical conditions and other factors, such as systemic racism or advanced age, render some instructors and staff members particularly vulnerable to both infection and serious negative outcomes; and

WHEREAS we owe these community members protection and support; and

WHEREAS [Work Connections](#), a unit that reports to Risk Management, is tasked by the university to validate the medical documentation staff and instructors submit in support of their requests to work remotely; and

WHEREAS 15 faculty have submitted reports to a community advocates group disclosing that Work Connections failed to support their medically-documented need to teach remotely or to take the paid medical leave they requested, dismissed their and their physicians' valid concerns, and, in some cases, illegitimately interfered in their medical treatment plans; and

WHEREAS Work Connections has frequently refused to validate documentation that established the need to teach remotely, advising faculty to observe social distancing instead, despite the fact that social distance cannot be achieved in their classrooms; and

WHEREAS the current routine denials of instructors and staff concerns about their individual risk contravenes the administration's oft-cited commitment to the health and well-being of instructors and staff; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the University direct Work Connections to validate and support all medically supported requests to work remotely and not substitute their own judgment for that of requesters' physicians; and

BE IT RESOLVED that if medical recommendations require an instructor to socially distance, and if this distancing is not possible, that the instructor be allowed to work remotely; and

BE IT RESOLVED that Work Connections be re-organized and re-conceptualized with significant input from elected faculty governance and representatives of other affected constituencies; and

BE IT RESOLVED that the university institute processes by which determinations by Work Connections can be appealed; this process must be independent while maintaining strict confidentiality if requested.

Motion Submitted by:

Silke-Maria Weineck, Grace Lee Boggs Professor of Comparative Literature and German Studies*, Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, LSA *regents approval pending

Supporting Members:

Valerie Traub, Adrienne Rich Distinguished University Professor of English and Women's and Gender Studies and Frederick G. L. Huetwell Professor of English and Women's and Gender Studies, LSA

Emmanuelle Marquis, Professor of Materials Science and Engineering, CoE

Rebekah Modrak, Professor, Stamps School of Art and Design

Su'ad Abdul Khabeer, Associate Professor, American Culture, LSA

Gillian White, Associate Professor, English, LSA

M. Remi Yergeau, Associate Professor of English, LSA

A total of 681 votes were cast in support of Motion 1 and a total of 329 votes were cast in opposition. The motion passed. 68 abstentions were recorded.

Link to News Item: <https://facultysenate.umich.edu/17002-2/>