

Graduate Student Senate



Graduate Student Senate, UNH Graduate School
Thompson Hall, 105 Main Street, Durham, NH 03824
Email: Grad.Student.Senate@unh.edu

The GSS Health and Wellness Committee submitted the following letter for the consideration of the Graduate Student Senate on 2/24/2020.

To Whom it May Concern,

Given the recent outbreak of mumps on the University of New Hampshire, Durham campus, we are requesting that the University adopt stronger immunization oversight and enforcement policies.

Per a February 7, 2020 campus-wide email from Kevin Charles, the Executive Director of UNH Health and Wellness, we are aware that "UNH has a requirement for students to be vaccinated with the MMR vaccine as a condition of enrollment to protect the UNH community from mumps." We are concerned, however, that there are students who fail to submit immunization records and are allowed to risk the health and wellness of the campus at large. Please note, we understand that there are some students who have medical or religious exemptions to specific vaccines, and as such this letter is not addressed at them. Likewise, we are sympathetic to students who have known barriers to accessing vaccines prior to starting classes, and as such they should be given every encouragement to receive their immunizations through UNH Health and Wellness once they arrive on campus.

Our concern is that at the beginning of each year students are told that they must submit their immunization records, but then there are no penalties if they fail to do so and no additional follow-up by the University to ensure proper immunizations after classes have started. A number of conversations with undergraduate and graduate students reveals a lack of University enforcement, where those students have been allowed to enroll in classes and then complete a year or more of coursework without ever submitting their immunization documents. This lack of oversight poses a significant threat to our community's wellbeing.

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As such, we ask that the University of New Hampshire:

1. Adopt stronger oversight policies to ensure that students are submitting their immunization records prior to moving to campus and/or starting on-campus classes, and
2. Enforce those policies by issuing penalties in the form of academic holds against students who do not provide immunization documentation prior to moving on campus and/or starting on-campus classes.

Sincerely,
Graduate Student Senate

**This letter was approved by the Graduate Student Senate on 4/13/2020.*

Graduate Student Senate President

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Casey O'Heran".

Casey O'Heran