STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

RESOLUTION 2021-1

Over the past 18 months, the COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted the educational, social, and residential experience at Westminster College. On August 23, 2021, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) fully approved the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, providing all individuals on campus with a safe, accessible, and effective means of protecting themselves and others from the pernicious effects of the virus. Prior to the start of the school year, Westminster College made the decision to strongly encourage, but not require the vaccine. Considering the health of faculty, staff, and students, the Westminster College faculty approved a resolution to mandate SARS-CoV-2 vaccines for all members of the Westminster community on September 16, 2021.

*The Student Government Association of Westminster College,*

***Taking into consideration*** the need to prioritize the health and safety of the Westminster College community, including the faculty, staff, and students,

***Recognizing*** several members of the Westminster Community face preexisting health conditions that exacerbate the risk for adverse health effects from COVID-19,

***Noting*** a portion of these individuals cannot receive the vaccine for medical reasons,

***Further noting*** other members of the Westminster Community cannot receive vaccinations citing religious conflicts,

***Bearing in mind*** the high rate of transmission and low vaccination rate in Lawrence and Mercer counties,

***Noting with deep concern*** the emergence of SARS-CoV-2 variants that show an increased rate of transmission, particularly among unvaccinated populations,

***Emphasizing*** the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is fully FDA approved and easily accessible to all members of the Westminster community at no personal expense,

***Observing*** Westminster College mandates innoculations for a number of transmissible diseases for which there are widely accessible, FDA approved vaccines,

***Viewing with appreciation*** private institutions similar to Westminster College in size and location, and with whom Westminster engages in athletic competition as members of the Presidential Athletic Conference, have implemented vaccine mandates, including Allegheny College, Bethany College, Chatham University, and Washington and Jefferson College,

***Expecting*** an increase in vaccinations following the implementation of a mandate would allow for a commensurate relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions,

1. ***Supports*** the faculty resolution: “The faculty of Westminster College calls on the Board of Trustees to immediately institute a mandatory SARS-CoV-2 vaccination requirement for all Westminster College faculty, staff and students with appropriate/documented medical exceptions only.”
2. ***Calls*** ***upon*** the Westminster College Board of Trustees to immediately institute a mandatory SARS-CoV-2 vaccination requirement for all Westminster College faculty, staff, and students  with exempting appropriate religious and medical exceptions.