



Stony Brook School of Social Welfare

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August 25, 2021

Dear School of Social Welfare students,

Welcome to the start of this academic year -- I hope your semester is off to the best possible start. I look forward to the opportunities that we'll have to meet in a variety of forums, including even passing each other in the halls of the School of Social Welfare, now that we've returned to in-person classes. I hope you'll embrace as many opportunities as possible to engage with your colleagues and with our SSW faculty and staff through the special programs the School offers. With all of the excitement and with the different potential means for connecting that come along with a return to in-person classes, I am also aware that there may be a complex mix of thoughts and feelings among you, and it is essential that we continue to communicate if and as new information emerges. The safety of our campus community is a top priority, so I am reaching out to you today to be sure to alert you to the most recent update from the University regarding the COVID-19 vaccination policy for students. In addition to the shift in policy, there are some important considerations with time-sensitive implications so please read through this message in its entirety.

On Monday of this week, we all learned that the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) granted full approval to the Pfizer vaccine. New York State and the SUNY system has now instituted a policy that requires **all students who are enrolled in at least one in-person class** to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19. All students (except those who are approved for a very limited exemption*) are required to provide proof of their COVID vaccination to the Wolfie Health Portal **no later than Friday, September 24th** in order to remain enrolled in in-person fall classes. For more specific details about the New York State and SUNY policy, please visit:

https://www.suny.edu/sunypp/documents.cfm?doc_id=900

Did you know? To date, **88%** -- more than 21,000 -- of all Stony Brook students enrolled have submitted proof of their COVID vaccination! Thank you for your diligence in this effort. For those of you who are not yet vaccinated, there are resources available to you right here on the Stony Brook campus:

https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/studentaffairs/shs/august_vaccine_pods.php

Or, if you'd prefer you may elect to get vaccinated by an off-campus provider. To find a vaccination site near you, please visit: <https://www.suny.edu/knowyourvax/>

If you do not intend to get the vaccine, please be sure to note that **Sunday, August 29th is the deadline for receiving a 100% refund of your tuition if you decide to take a leave of absence or withdraw from the program.** Important information about University deadlines for withdrawals

and refunds can be found here: <https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/bursar/withdrawals/>. If you have questions about what this means for your movement through your BSW or MSW programs of study, please reach out to the School of Social Welfare's Student Services department via email at ssw_advising@stonybrook.edu

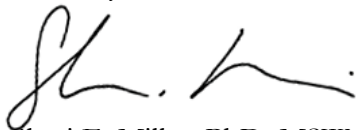
And if you have questions about your Field Placements, please reach out to the School's Office of Field Education.

Note that as per SUNY guidelines, in-person classes will remain in-person only. No additional remote learning options are available for students who do not want to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. If you are seeking more information regarding how the State and SUNY policy specifies *limited medical and religious exemptions, visit the Safe & Strong website: <https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/strongertogether/latest.php>

We're all so looking forward to getting back to the things we've missed most over the past year and a half—and the best way to ensure a smooth and safe return to campus is to get fully vaccinated. So, as we continue to navigate these complex and challenging times together, it is most essential that we stay attuned to that very idea of “together”. Social workers embody the deepest commitment to collaboration, to respecting the dignity and worth of all people, we value human relationships, peoples' rights to self-determine, and we also value social justice, inclusion, equity – this defines our sense of community and how we take action. I invite all of you to allow this shared commitment to inform how you engage with each other with openness, empathy, care, and mindfulness in your use of selves and in how you communicate.

Thank you for your thoughtful attention to this essential matter of our university community's health and safety. I look forward to hearing how your semester unfolds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shari E. Miller', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Shari E. Miller, PhD, MSW
Dean and Professor