

DATE: September 22, 2020

TO: The Ohio State University Faculty Council

FR: John Blackburn, Enrico Bonello, Jill Galvan, Alex Grieco, Lisa Voigt

RE: A MOTION to Amend the "Together as Buckeyes Pledge"

WHEREAS the "Together as Buckeyes Pledge" has been a source of confusion concerning its legal implications, including whether it is truly mandatory or whether a declination to sign it is subject to sanction, and

WHEREAS the University will continue to admit new students, faculty, and staff to the campus community beyond the recent August 25, 2020 deadline for completing the mandatory training and signing the pledge,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that (1) the "Together as Buckeyes Pledge" be amended as follows to clarify that its signing is not mandatory and that, if signed, it is not a legal waiver of the signer's rights or an assumption of risk; and (2) this change is retroactively applicable to any previous signatures.

.....
[Proposed Version, clean copy]

Amended Together as Buckeyes Pledge

The Buckeye community takes care of each other. Ohio State's highest priority is the safety of its students, faculty, staff, and visitors. All members of the Buckeye community play an important role in keeping our community safe by doing our part to stop the spread of COVID-19. As a member of the Buckeye community, I know that I must take steps to stay well in order to protect others and promote a safe return to campus for all Buckeyes.

As a member of the Buckeye Community, I will:

- Follow the university's physical distancing guidelines;
- Follow the university's guidelines regarding face masks;
- Follow the university's recommended hygiene and personal protection practices including washing my hands frequently and staying home when I begin to feel sick;

- Keep my personal space and shared common spaces clean for use by others;
- Stay informed of changing COVID-19 health updates;
- Be supportive and sensitive to other members of the Buckeye community who may be experiencing physical and mental health challenges;
- Complete a daily health check and contact health care providers when I feel ill; and
- Follow all of the additional health and safety requirements of the university, my college, unit, or department. This may include participating in testing, self-quarantining, and contact tracing.

I acknowledge that observing the University’s health and safety guidelines is a condition of being on any of The Ohio State University campuses, and that a refusal to comply with a legitimate university health directive, pursuant to university policies, will be subject to appropriate accountability measures and disciplinary actions. As Buckeyes, **“We Take Care of Each Other.”**

Your signature on this pledge is not required, and signing this pledge is not a waiver of your legal rights to seek remedies for harm or loss from transmission of COVID–19 and does not constitute an assumption of risk. Your signature affirms your commitment to and observance of the University’s procedures for maintaining everyone’s health and safety.



[Current Pledge text with our proposed revisions shown]

Together as Buckeyes Pledge

The Buckeye community takes care of each other. Ohio State’s highest priority is the safety of its students, faculty, staff, and visitors. All members of the Buckeye community play an important role in keeping our community safe by doing our part to stop the spread of COVID-19. As a member of the Buckeye community, I know that I must take steps to stay well in order to protect others and promote a safe return to campus for all Buckeyes. ~~Taking steps to minimize the risk of COVID-19 at Ohio State is a shared responsibility.~~

~~I know that by coming onto campus to engage in work or education-related activities that I may be exposed to COVID-19. I also understand that despite all reasonable efforts by the university, I can still contract COVID-19.~~

~~In order to reduce my risk, I agree to be an active participant in maintaining my own health, well-being and safety, as well as the safety of others, by following all the guidelines and expectations outlined by the university. I commit to reviewing these guidelines and I understand that Ohio State may provide updates as additional information is known. It is my responsibility to stay apprised of these changes to protect myself and the Buckeye community.~~

As a member of the Ohio State Community, I pledge to:

- Follow the university's physical distancing guidelines;
- Follow the university's guidelines regarding face masks;
- Follow the university's recommended hygiene and personal protection practices including washing my hands frequently and staying home when I begin to feel sick;
- Keep my personal space and shared common spaces clean for use by others;
- Stay informed of changing COVID-19 health updates;
- Be supportive and sensitive to other members of the Buckeye community who may be experiencing physical and mental health challenges;
- Complete a daily health check and contact health care providers when I feel ill; and
- Follow all of the additional health and safety requirements of the university, my college, unit, or department. This may include participating in testing, self-quarantining, and contact tracing.

~~My personal commitment to the health and safety of the campus community is reflected in my completion of the return to campus online training module and agreement to adhere to the behaviors outlined above.~~

I have read, understand, and agree to comply with this Together As Buckeyes Pledge. I understand that COVID-19 is a highly contagious virus and it is possible to develop and contract the COVID-19 disease even if I follow all of the safety recommendations of the university and comply with the pledge. I understand that even though the university is following the guidelines issued by the CDC and other experts to reduce the spread of infection, a COVID-19 free environment can never be guaranteed. I also acknowledge that [observing the University's health and safety guidelines](#) this pledge is a condition of being on any of The Ohio State University campuses, [and that a refusal](#). I understand that if I do not honor my pledge, I would be failing to comply with a legitimate university [health](#) directive and [pursuant to university policies](#), students, faculty, and staff will be subject to

the appropriate accountability measures and disciplinary actions. As Buckeyes, **"We Take Care of Each Other."**

~~Ohio State is a values-driven institution and is mindful of its guiding principles as it navigates a return to campus. The University values are **excellence** in all that we do; **embracing diversity in people and ideas**; fostering the **inclusion** of all Buckeyes; allowing for **access and affordability** of an Ohio State education; subscribing to **innovation** around keeping the Buckeye community safe; relying on **collaboration and multidisciplinary endeavors** to guide best practices; and emphasizing the importance of **transparency, integrity and trust.**~~



[Current Pledge text]

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