

**NDSA-01-2021**

A Resolution in Support of Greater Mandates in response to COVID-19

WHEREAS, the North Dakota Student Association (NDSA) represents the voice of North Dakota's 45,000 public college and university students; and,

WHEREAS, the purpose of NDSA is to represent all students enrolled in the North Dakota University System (NDUS) and advocate on issues of higher education in support of access, affordability, quality, and the student experience; and,

WHEREAS, due to loosening restrictions and the return of students to school, North Dakota has become the state with the highest reported COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people out of all of our neighboring states (Montana, Minnesota, South Dakota); and,

WHEREAS, North Dakota has seen its highest daily positivity rate since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic just this September at 6.74%; and,

WHEREAS, five of the NDUS's public institutions are located in counties that are now determined to be in the moderate risk level category for COVID-19 spread as identified by the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH)²; and,

WHEREAS, the communities that public universities are in play a large part in students' lives and everyday activities, such as work, shopping, etc., and the NDSA recognizes that students conversely play a large role in those communities as well; and,

WHEREAS, many higher education institutions across the United States and around the world have been cancelling in-person classes for the rest of the Fall 2020 semester due to exponentially growing rates of COVID-19 cases on campuses and in their surrounding communities³, and

WHEREAS, the most effective method of educational instruction, and the method that students prefer, is to be on campus and in-person when receiving our education; and,

WHEREAS, another integral aspect of student development and education is found in extracurriculars such as involvement in student organizations, in leadership positions, in volunteer opportunities, and in internship experiences, all of which often require students to be able to meet in person and remain both on campus and in the communities in which their institutions are housed; and

WHEREAS, students want to remain on campus for in-person learning and experiences; and,

WHEREAS, one of the best ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is to wear masks in public

¹ <https://www.health.nd.gov/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/north-dakota-coronavirus-cases>

² <https://www.health.nd.gov/diseases-conditions/coronavirus>

³ <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/08/25/covid-19-roundup-cases-spike-several-universities-students-punished-not-following>



and when social distancing is not possible according to the CDC⁴; and,

WHEREAS, conflicting community narratives on mask requirements can cause confusion among students and undermine the urgency and importance of mask wearing in communities and other preventative measures for slowing the spread of COVID-19; so,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the North Dakota Students Association supports and applauds mask mandates on NDUS campuses; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NDSA encourages NDUS students to continue to wear masks both on campus and in their surrounding communities in order to protect themselves and others; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHERST RESOLVED, that the NDSA supports state and local government mandates and limitations that are proven to slow the spread of COVID-19, particularly mask mandates, especially in those university communities where positive COVID-19 cases have spread at exponential rates, in order to slow the spread of COVID-19 in North Dakota.

Approved by the NDSA General Assembly on Saturday, September 19th, 2020

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>