Student vaccination rate at ‘excellent place’

by LUCIA KOURI
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Mask-mandate, delta, breakthrough — words of summer 2021. As the fully in-person school year approached, one word in particular was on the mind of many people: vaccination. Though more than 98% of eligible Laboratory Schools students are vaccinated, many are beginning the school year with varying comfort levels about safety precautions.

In a letter sent to parents on Aug. 13, Interim Director David Magill outlined the COVID-19 expectations and precautions that will be taken this school year. The University of Chicago is not mandating vaccination for Lab students, but it is strongly encouraged for students 12 and older. In addition, all employees, vendors and volunteers are expected to get vaccinated unless they have received an authorized exemption.

Even though COVID-19 vaccinations are not required, nearly 98% of students eligible for vaccines were fully vaccinated by the first day of school, according to an additional email sent to parents Sept. 1. Nurse Mary Toledo-Treviño said, “Especially since there is know that the unvaccinated people are being enforced.

The one thing I do have an issue with is that I feel like it is not being necessarily controlled — like I don’t know that the unvaccinated people are actually sitting farther apart.”

Ninth grader Zarak Siddiqi said the guidelines could have been more strictly enforced in his class, even with so few unvaccinated students. Specifically, he noticed the three-feet rule was not enforced in some cases. On the other hand, junior Male Nauc said the school’s high vaccination rates and safety precautions, such as the mask mandate, were enough to make her feel safe. “I think the school is being pretty cautious, even though they’re not requiring a vaccine,” Maile said.

Knowing that a lot of our school is vaccinated, I think it’s a good thing to kind of move in the direction of going back to how we normally were, even though there are people who aren’t vaccinated.”

While the future is uncertain, Ms. Toledo-Treviño said that, for now, the low number of unvaccinated students is worth recognition. “We can literally count it in two hands,” she said. “That’s phenomenal.”

Comfort levels vary among students regarding current virus mitigations

by LUCIA KOURI
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

VARSITY BOYS SOCCER

GAME PREP. Sophomore Mahin Schneider (center) attempts to intercept senior Philipp Kellermeier during boys varsity soccer practice Sept. 9 at Jackman Field. The team was practicing for its Sept. 10 away game against Francis W. Parker School in an effort to break U-High’s two-game losing streak. The Maroons’ record this season is 3–5.

28 students join U-High; financial support stable

by PETER PU
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

U-High welcomed 28 ninth graders, four sophomores, three juniors and one senior for the 2021-22 school year.

While enrollment remains in flux, 625 students are enrolled in U-High and 2,201 students in all of the Laboratory Schools.

The return to routine in-person learning accompanies the return of almost all students who temporarily withdrew in the 2021-22 school year, according Brent LaRowe, director of registrar Services and Information Management. The withdrawal option has made essentially no impact on this year’s enrollment.

“Our number of withdrawals and new students is remarkably similar to last year past. Our families’ commitment to Lab is both humbling and inspiring,” Mr. LaRowe wrote in an email to the Midway.

According to Mr. LaRowe, enrollment at other Chicago private schools like Latin School of Chicago, St. Ignatius College Prep and Francis W. Parker School has also remained stable.

High school tuition for 2021-22 increased 3.9% to $38,776, following the rolled-back 2.73% markup last school year. Lab issued about $4 million of financial aid this year, and the ability to meet aid demands of families is increasing, according to Irene Reed, executive director of admissions and financial aid.

Emergency financial aid requests increased last year with some parents’ employers announcing layoffs, but Ms. Reed said year-long financial aid requests have remained largely stable. Non-tuition costs are a challenge for families. These costs vary based on student commitment, such as extracurricular activities and extended day.

“We can’t act like the tuition is the only cost of attending Lab,” Ms. Reed said. “I think that’s a good takeaway. Families are asked to do much more than that.”

It remains to be seen whether families will submit a similar number of emergency aid requests this year, according to Ms. Reed.
New faces in FACULTY

What makes you excited about your subject, and why do you like teaching it?

I really love how diverse Spanish speaking communities are across the world. There's so many different countries and cities with their own unique history, their own accents, values, traditions, all of that.

I enjoy teaching students things that are not only important, but also how to think outside the box. I like teaching my students about the real world. When I teach them how math is applied to other subjects. And I like teaching them that sometimes you feel pressure that Lab students sometimes feel, and how to deal with that.

Reading and writing obviously teach great critical life skills, but then also they do cool other things, which is how you have to be critical of those critical life skills, or how to think outside of those boundaries and frameworks as well.

What is one thing that students should know about your subject, and why do you like teaching it?

I like sort of engaging with these ideas about why communities form together, like what allows communities to form because they're kind of miraculous in a lot of ways because we're weird, like the way we cooperate.

I play a lot of RPGs, both pen and paper, like Dungeons and Dragons in the Dark and also video games as well. My favorite kind of RPG that I played wouldbe Mass Effect. My son and I are playing the Final Fantasy series.

What makes you excited about your subject, and why do you like teaching it?

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I like to play music. I think at this point, I almost played a show in all 50 states, just about there. I play drum set.

I want to volunteer a lot with kids, with young kids elementary aged and pre-school aged kids, and I love reading, and I'm always up for good book suggestions, or I'm currently looking for pod-cast suggestions.

I know in an institution like this grades are very important, and I respect that, but for me, what's important to me is that students learn here empowers them.

We can kind of use words and storytelling to not only create. We can use it to create the world that we kind of want to see and also kind of venture into someone else's world that we don't necessarily get to experience firsthand.

“Can a student get to a point where they are very important, and I respect that, but for me, what's important to me is that students learn here empowers them.

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