April 9, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

As you all know, the success of our pandemic response has relied on a number of different approaches for combating COVID-19—social distancing and densification, enhanced cleaning and controlled facilities access, restrictions on visitors and events, and the expectations outlined in the Duke Compact.

This spring, we have added a powerful new weapon to our quiver: three safe and effective vaccines, which are proven to significantly reduce COVID-19 transmission and the risk of serious illness when the disease is contracted. Duke research played an important role in the development of these vaccines, and we are committed to leading the way in vaccine access for students and employees.

Looking ahead, we know that widespread vaccination will be the only way to facilitate a return to normal and robust campus life.

With this in mind, we plan to require all new and returning Duke students to present proof of vaccination to Student Health before they can enroll for the Fall 2021 semester. This policy will cover all undergraduate, graduate, and professional students—in all degree programs—who intend to be on the Duke
campus for any period of time starting with the Fall 2021 semester. Documented medical and religious exemptions will be accommodated.

We have offered every current Duke student and employee the opportunity to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Those students and employees who have not yet received a vaccination from Duke are urged to schedule an appointment as soon as possible through the message you received earlier. We cannot guarantee that our supply of vaccines will continue at the same rate; if you miss this opportunity, you will have to obtain a vaccination from another health care provider or a public health agency and provide confirmation to Student Health.

The past fourteen months have been among the most difficult and exhausting in our university’s history. Under great stress, and often at great peril, we have remained committed to each other—and to our missions of discovery, research, and patient care. Today, I ask you to join me in taking the next step toward ensuring the safety and vitality of our university community.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment and flexibility. I am so very proud to call you fellow members of the Duke family.

Vincent E. Price
President

This message has been sent to all Duke students, faculty and staff.