

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

OSHA

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Thank You!

Your Safety and Health Hazard Notice has been forwarded to the OSHA Federal Area Office listed below.

Your complaint may be forwarded to the State of Iowa, which operates its own OSHA approved State Plan. Click here for more information on State Plans or if you would like to contact the state directly.

If you identified yourself, you will be contacted by OSHA.

Please call the OSHA Federal Area Office below if you are not contacted.

Complaint Number: 42865762

Iowa

Des Moines Area Office
210 Walnut Street, Room 815
Des Moines, Iowa 50309
(515) 284-4794
(515) 284-4058 FAX

Establishment Name:	University of Northern Iowa
Site Street:	1227 W 27th St
Site City:	Cedar Falls
Site State:	Iowa
Site Zip:	50614
Management Official:	John Vallentine, Associate Provost of Faculty
Telephone Number:	319-273-2519
Type of Business:	university/education

Hazard Description:

The University of Northern Iowa (UNI) begins holding classes on Aug. 23, 2021. Under the auspices of the State of Iowa Board of Regents, UNI took many COVID-19 precautions during the fall 2020 and spring 2021 semesters, with mandatory mask wearing, socially distanced instructional spaces, and a number of online-only instructional situations. In spring 2021, vaccinations became available to the public, COVID-19 cases declined in Iowa and across the U.S. As faculty members needed to schedule their courses for fall 2021, most choose (or were required) to teach face-to-face. On May 20, 2021, the State Board of Regents President Mike Richards lifted the State of Emergency at the Board of Regents institutions (which include UNI, Iowa State, and the University of Iowa). [<https://www.iowaregents.edu/news/board-news/statement-from-president-mike-richards-lifting-regents-state-of-emergency>] The new policy stated: “Effective for the Fall 2021 semester, the institutions are required to return to offering in-person academic coursework and educational experiences to the same extent such academic coursework or educational experiences were offered in-person prior to the pandemic.” Moreover, the May 20, 2021 statement said “Effective immediately, faculty, staff, students, and visitors to campus will not be required to wear a mask or other face covering.” And, “All members of the campus community are strongly encouraged to receive a vaccination against COVID-19.” However, the institutions under the jurisdiction of the Board of Regents (with the

exception of University of Iowa Healthcare) may not impose any requirement that students, faculty, or staff receive or provide evidence of having received a vaccination for COVID-19. Since that May 20, 2021 statement by the Board of Regents, two things have happened that have undermined the optimism that the pandemic was over. First, vaccination trend levels have dropped off, with only 47.6% of Iowa's population vaccinated by Aug. 13, 2021. [https://coronavirus.iowa.gov/pages/vaccineinformation] Second, the Delta variant of COVID-19 has generated a significant new wave of COVID-19 cases. By Aug. 13, 2021, Black Hawk County, Iowa (where UNI is located) put the county on HIGH status for COVID-19 spread, with a 14-day average percent positive of 13%. Levels of cases have not been this high in the county since February 2021, when most people were just beginning to get access to the COVID-19 vaccines. Cases by age in the county are highest in the 19-39 age range (the most common age range of students) at 43.1% of all cases. [https://blackhawkcovid19-bhengineer.hub.arcgis.com/] In this resurgent wave of COVID-19, UNI faculty, staff, and students are teaching in workplace environments that are typically small and crowded. UNI and the Board of Regents do not require vaccinations (in fact, UNI is prohibited from requiring them for student admission, unlike the commonly required MMR vaccinations for other diseases, and faculty cannot inquire about anyone's vaccination status). Moreover, faculty are prohibited from requiring masks, and the university is not making widespread accommodations for distancing in face-to-face classes (as they did in the previous academic year), or enabling faculty — even those with pre-existing health conditions — to now opt for switching to online instruction. These unsafe working conditions affect approximately 650 faculty members.

Hazard Location:

These violations occur across UNI's Cedar Falls, Iowa campus, in every unit, affecting about 650 faculty members.

This condition has previously been brought to the attention of:

* The employer

I am Other: Both Employee and Representative of Employees

My name may be revealed to the employer.

Complainant Name: Christopher R. Martin

[SIGNED]

(Complainant checked the electronic signature checkbox to indicate this submission shall be considered as having an authorized written signature.)

Complainant Telephone Number: 319-883-5088

Complainant Mailing Address:

421 W. Seerley Blvd
Cedar Falls
Iowa
50613

Complainant Email: chris.martin@cfu.net

Complainant Organization Name: United Faculty

Complainant Title: Vice President

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Occupational Safety and Health Administration
200 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20210
☎ 800-321-6742 (OSHA)
TTY

www.OSHA.gov

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