

July 27, 2020

President James Dean Jr.
Office of the President
Thomson Hall
105 Main St.
Durham, NH 03824

Provost Wayne Jones
Office of the Provost
Thomson Hall
105 Main St.
Durham, NH 03284

University System of New Hampshire
Board of Trustees
5 Chanell Drive, Suite 301
Concord, NH 03301

Dear President Dean, Provost Jones, and Board of Trustees:

We, students of the University of New Hampshire, still do not feel informed. While we appreciate the efforts of the UNH community to reopen safely, our concerns have not been addressed. With less than one week before the deadline for students to sign the University's "Informed Consent Agreement," we write to you to demand more information, more time, and more respect.

Give us enough information and time to give truly informed consent.

1. We demand publicly available answers to every question in [this linked document](#) prior to any deadline for students to choose between in-person and remote learning. We still have *many* questions about the "Informed Consent Agreement" and fall reopening plan that you have been unwilling or unable to answer, or even address, despite numerous town halls and attempts to reach you. We understand that the COVID-19 pandemic is constantly evolving and that USNH is figuring things out in real-time. However, if it is this difficult for you to maintain communication and transparency with students about fall planning, then you are not prepared to undertake the incredible risks of in-person instruction in four weeks. Additionally, we demand a direct communication channel with the administration to address additional student questions and concerns about the fall reopening plan in a timely manner.
2. We demand that you remove the "Tuition Obligations" paragraph and separately and adequately inform students of tuition fee rights and obligations. This paragraph does not adequately inform students of the breakdown of tuition costs and student fees across learning platforms. Many students still have [unanswered questions](#) about tuition and fees. We demand the University

provide all students with an explanation of tuition and fees and information about how fees will be adjusted based on an on-time closing (Thanksgiving) or earlier if the University is forced to switch to remote learning sooner. The stated purpose of the Agreement related to adherence to behavioral and safety rules, not payment obligations.

Take steps to restore students' trust in the administration.

3. We demand the university remove the “risk of responsibility” clause from the Informed Consent Agreement to make the stated purpose clear: students are signing a document of what is expected from them when arriving on campus in the fall of 2020. Provost Jones’s claims that an “informed consent agreement is not the same as a waiver of liability” are not reassuring.
4. We demand that the University cut ties with the American Council for Education, which is [representing USNH’s interests](#) in Congress, by [advocating for corporate immunity](#). State tort law already protects institutions that [exercise reasonable care](#) in preventing the spread of COVID-19, and it would be difficult enough to prove that the University actually caused a student’s or worker’s infection with the Coronavirus. Passing a legal liability shield sends the dangerous message that universities can open while being negligent with our lives and it lessens the financial incentive to keep us as safe as possible.
5. We demand that the University does not force workers who do not feel safe returning to campus to choose between their jobs and their safety for the sake of “student preferences” for in-person instruction. Workers deserve access to accommodations for remote work that will keep them and their families safe. We are concerned for our faculty, staff, and teaching assistants.

The content and timing of the Informed Consent Agreement and your failure to answer all but the easiest of student questions has made us concerned that the University does not have our best interests at heart. No student can make an informed decision about returning to campus this fall until these concerns and questions are addressed. We demand that the deadline for the Informed Consent Agreement be postponed indefinitely until [they](#) are.