

May 10, 2021

Dear University Committee for Reopening Campus:

I know that The University of South Alabama dedicates itself to diversity, inclusion, and belonging of all students, so I'd like to work on a solution that **allows all faculty and students** the right to religious and medical freedoms, informed consent, and free will in this unique Covid-era. I'm encouraging you to have a conversation with individuals like myself **who are not politically or monetarily funded**. I hope that you will allow the Jags family the freedom to show their faces, breathe fresh oxygen, and connect fully again beginning this Summer term! I strongly urge you to lift your mask mandate immediately!

Why?

#1 - Masks are ineffective, politically motivated, and have health consequences

Masks are ineffective. They actually are proven to cause physiological and psychological health consequences, which I feel the college should be liable for. University decision-makers are listening to Dr. Fauci, who has not treated one Covid patient, the NIH director, which owns patents to the Moderna vaccine. I encourage you to look over my [extensive research](#) - my personal favorite linked in the research is a video of Fauci himself saying that masks only make people "feel good" and they create "unintended consequences." Don't worry; you won't find news articles or conspiracy theories linked here! *Will the University stand for medical freedom?*

#2 - Coercion is Not Consent

USA students are required to attend Sexual Misconduct training online to be a student. I find it ironic that the college teaches young adults about *consent* in regards to hugging, kissing, touching, and sexual activities but *not* in regards to other things *forced upon their bodies* (such as breathing fresh oxygen, the most basic human right; or the option to refuse *non-FDA* approved products such as masks, covid testing, and possibly vaccinations at some point). What's the difference? To some, a forced penis in the body is not nearly as bad as a forced carcinogenic and fetal reproductive toxin forced in the body (I'm speaking of PEG; an ingredient in the vaccine). I know that probably is a "shocker statement" to make....but with all respect, it is the TRUTH for some individuals. *Will the University stand for informed consent, and not coercion?*

#3 - Spiritual/Religious Freedoms

For many people, like my family, a mask is a spiritual/religious point of concern. We are followers of Jesus Christ, who *touched* the leper. Our religion also does not allow a facial covering (veiling the face) and clearly states not to fear a virus/plague. We live in faith that God holds our lives in the palm of His great hand. I have seen masks destroy relationships, love,

connection, and so much more. I strongly believe it is an act of the enemy. According to your [Nondiscrimination Policy](#), religion is a legally protected class *free of discrimination and provided with equal access*. No governor's health order, college policy, or pandemic supersedes our Constitutionally-protected rights (US Federal Law Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964). Both head coverings and facial coverings have a long history in religious writings and are included in religious discrimination law. To put it in perspective, this would be similar to the university asking a Muslim to remove the head covering for entry, or a member of the Jewish faith to remove the yarmulke as a condition of entry. I understand the mask policy applies to "all people the same, regardless of religion" -- which in essence is telling the student body that you have to eat a ham sandwich to enter campus and the rule applies to everyone. Would you make the Muslim student eat the ham sandwich? *Will the University stand for religious freedom and freedom of thought?*

#4 - Masks, Covid Tests, and Vaccines are not authorized, FDA-approved products.

[21 US Code, 360bbb-3](#) that states no emergency authorized medical product can be forced as individuals have "*the option to accept or refuse administration of the product.*" (e 1 A ii III). This includes masks, PCR tests, and vaccinations. I know the college is already pressuring students to get the vaccine, so I'd encourage you to read [this article](#) on why some individuals do not want the vaccine. There is a lot of false information going around that the vaccine "is FDA approved". If you look at the 2nd paragraph of any of the vaccine inserts, you will see this certainly is NOT the case. This is an *experimental* vaccine with no long-term studies. If I am wrong in that statement, please point me to the studies. The CDC who everyone seems to follow has a long history of experimental vaccines/shady past of doing things wrong and apologizing after it's too late. Just one example is the [Tuskegee Experiment](#). *Will the University allow students to decide if they want to be a part of the "Covid-19 experiment" using unauthorized/unapproved products?*

#5 - Alabama State - Governor Mandate Lifted & Personal Responsibility Encouraged

Those who *choose* to get vaccinated and wear masks certainly have the option to do so at this point. I will stand for their freedom as well. I encourage you to allow individuals to "*exercise personal responsibility*", as the Alabama governor advised ([here](#)) on May 3. I'll reference Page 3, where the governor only asks that post-secondary institutions "*encourage*" facial coverings; not mandate. *Will the university allow personal responsibility?*

I look forward to an unmasked future full of smiling faces!

Respectfully,

Kimberly Ellis (77ellisk77@gmail.com)

Below is a string of emails in my fight against the mask requirements set forth by the University of South Alabama. Scroll to the bottom to see the last letter which finally got the University to surrender and change the policy. Masks are now optional for all students, faculty, and staff. Covid testing is no longer required as well. The COVID vaccine was never required, but I felt like it was moving in that direction. This is why this effort was so important. It laid the groundwork to let them know that all individuals have the right to choose.

Original Email (5/3/21):

Dr. Estis,

I spoke with Mr. Laventrice Ridgeway regarding a mask exemption and he pointed me in your direction since I did not believe my daughter's need was disability-related. I spoke with him because your [website](#) said to direct mask exemption requests to the Office of Student Disability Services. After reviewing the USA Accommodation Application and Documentation Criteria that was sent to me, I'm not sure that my daughter's situation fits the protocol set forth by the Office of Student Disability Services. I am, however, confident that the COVID-era has brought on ***new challenges*** that need to be addressed in regards to the exemption of the face mask mandate.

First, let me share that I have done [extensive research](#), indicating the potential physiological and psychological harms of face masks. I have seen and experienced several of these effects in my family. Is the University of South Alabama liable for these potential health consequences? Wouldn't you advocate for individuals at your institution to have medical freedom?

Second, a mask is a spiritual/religious point of concern for our family, as we practice faith, not fear. We are followers of Jesus Christ, who *touch*ed the leper. Our religion also does not allow the use of a facial covering (veiling the face) and clearly states not to fear a virus/plague. According to your [Nondiscrimination Policy](#), religion is a legally protected class *free of discrimination and provided with equal access*. No governor's health order, college policy, or pandemic supersedes our Constitutionally protected rights (US Federal Law Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964). To put it in perspective, this would be similar to the university asking a Muslim to remove the head covering for entry, or a member of the Jewish faith to remove the yarmulke as a condition of entry.

Lastly, I'll reference [21 US Code, 360bbb-3](#) that states no emergency authorized medical product can be forced as individuals have "*the option to accept or refuse administration of the product.*" (e 1 A ii III). **This includes masks, PCR tests, and vaccinations.**

I know that your university is dedicated to diversity, inclusion, and belonging, so I'd like to work on a solution that allows *all* faculty and students the right to their religious and medical freedoms, especially in this unique Covid-era. **Please let me know how to proceed with an exemption, given the information above.** I'm happy to have a *recorded* Zoom meeting to discuss further if needed.

Thanks for your time,
Kimberly Ellis

Response from College (5/3/21):



← Julie Estis
to me ▾

Mon, May 3, 5:07 PM (3 days ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮

Hi Ms. Ellis,
I am writing to let you know that I received your email, and I will get back to you with a more detailed response in the next few days. Thank you for your patience as we take time to thoroughly consider your request and the information you provided.

Sincerely,
Julie M. Estis, Ph.D., CCC-SLP
University of South Alabama
COVID-19 Response Coordinator
Associate Professor of Speech-Language Pathology
jestis@southalabama.edu
251.461.1590

Response from College (5/6/21):

Ms. Ellis,

Thank you for your email inquiry regarding the University's masking policy. As you noted, medical requests for mask exemptions are handled through the University's Office of Student Disability Services. If you believe your daughter may qualify for a medical exemption, please follow the protocol provided by the Office of Student Disability Services.

At present, there is no generally available religious exemption to the masking requirement. The University's policy is based on public health guidance published by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Alabama Department of Public Health and is intended to reduce transmission of COVID-19 among the campus community. The policy itself is neutral and of general applicability to all members of the campus community, regardless of religious affiliation or lack thereof, which is consistent with state and federal law and the University's Nondiscrimination Policy.

Sincerely,
Julie M. Estis, Ph.D., CCC-SLP
University of South Alabama
COVID-19 Response Coordinator
Associate Professor of Speech-Language Pathology
jestis@southalabama.edu
251.461.1590

My Response (5/6/21):

Hi Dr. Estis,

Thank you for your timely response. I appreciate you getting back to me. I understand that your masking policy is based on government **guidance**. I also understand that your policies likely have to do with monetization. However, that **guidance** is **not a state or federal law**. What I've provided you with is, however, US Code/Federal Law.

If we want to take a look further into the state **order**, let me remind you that on May 3, 2021, the governor of Alabama lifted the statewide mask mandate and now only asks post-secondary institutions to "**encourage**" the use of face masks and encourages individuals to take "**personal responsibility**" ([here](#)).

I know my daughter had to go through a required Sexual Misconduct training online to be a student at USA. I find it ironic that the college teaches young adults about **consent** in regards to hugging, kissing, and touching but not in regards to other things **forced** upon their bodies (such as breathing fresh oxygen, the most basic human right; or the option to refuse **non-FDA** approved products such as masks, nasal testing, and possibly vaccinations at some point).

I'd like to speak with someone who has the authority to make a change in the current school policy and allow students and faculty to have personal responsibility, medical choice, free will, and religious thought. Can you please direct me to whom I should speak with who has policy authority?

Again, thank you for your time,
Kimberly Ellis

While I waited on Dr. Estis' response, I wrote a [letter to the President and Board](#).

On Mon, May 10, 2021 at 11:24 AM Julie Estis <jestis@southalabama.edu> wrote:

Ms. Ellis,

Our University Committee for Reopening Campus sets policies and practices to provide as safe an environment as possible for students, faculty, and staff throughout the duration of the pandemic. If you would like to request a review by this committee, I can present a written request from you to them for consideration.

Sincerely,

Julie M. Estis, Ph.D., CCC-SLP
University of South Alabama
COVID-19 Response Coordinator
Associate Professor of Speech-Language Pathology
jestis@southalabama.edu
251.461.1590

On May 10, 2021, at 5:11 PM, K. Ellis <77ellisk77@gmail.com> wrote:

Yes, that would be great! Please let me know how I can proceed to talk with the committee. What do you need from me?

On Mon, May 10, 2021 at 6:03 PM Julie Estis <jestis@southalabama.edu> wrote:

Good evening,
Please submit a written document explaining your position, and I will share it with the committee for consideration.

Thanks,
Julie M. Estis, Ph.D., CCC-SLP
COVID-19 Response Coordinator
Associate Professor, Speech Language Pathology

K. Ellis <77ellisk77@gmail.com>

to Julie ▾

Dr. Estis,

Attached is my letter to the committee.
I look forward to hearing from them.

Kimberly Ellis

📧 Mon, May 10, 7:39 PM (1 day ago) ☆ ↩

Letter to Committee



← Julie Estis

to me ▾

Ms. Ellis,

Your request has been received. I will keep you updated on the status after the committee review.

Thank you,

Julie M. Estis, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

University of South Alabama

COVID-19 Response Coordinator

Associate Professor of Speech-Language Pathology

jestis@southalabama.edu

251.461.1590

Response from College (5/3/21):

Julie Estis

to me ▾

8:38 AM (11 minutes ago)



Ms. Ellis,

The Reopening Committee thoughtfully considered your request. Just last week, we updated our University campus [COVID-19 policies and practices](#) to align with the latest Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. Our guiding principle is to provide as safe an environment as possible for students, faculty and staff. We will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and update our policies and practices accordingly. We encourage you to periodically check our website for additional changes that may be made.

Thank you,

Julie M. Estis, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

University of South Alabama

COVID-19 Response Coordinator

Associate Professor of Speech-Language Pathology

jestis@southalabama.edu

251.461.1590

Response from Me (5/3/21):

Hi Dr. Estis,

Thank you for your response. I understand that you and the Committee are working hard to provide a safe environment for all Jags. I'm happy to hear that people like yourself and the members of the Committee now feel safe with the availability of the vaccine and no required mask.

The medical textbooks that health professionals like yourself have learned from are highly biased and censored, but let me remind you that the CDC has been wrong many, many times

before. I am speaking on behalf of individuals who do not trust the CDC and would like to make their own informed health choices.

The bottom line is this: mandating products authorized for [Emergency Use Authorization status \(EUA\)](#) violates federal law as detailed in the following [legal notifications](#). All COVID vaccines, COVID PCR and antigen tests, and masks are merely EUA-authorized, not approved or licensed by the federal government. Long-term safety and efficacy have not been proven. I've attached three notices to this email regarding such.

After reading the attachments, please let me know **how non-vaccinated faculty/students have the option to refuse** according to [21 US Code, 360bbb-3](#).

Thank you,
Kimberly Ellis

[\(Linked Documents Here\)](#)

University Response 5/26/21:



← Julie Estis
to me ▾

8:26 AM (3 hours ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮

Hi Ms. Ellis,
The University's current masking policy is consistent with federal and state law. Please continue to check our website periodically for our latest [COVID-19 policies and practices](#) as we anticipate updated guidelines in advance of the fall 2021 semester.

Sincerely,
Julie M. Estis, Ph.D., CCC-SLP
University of South Alabama
COVID-19 Response Coordinator
Associate Professor of Speech-Language Pathology
jestis@southalabama.edu
251.461.1590

My Response 5/26/21:

Dr. Estis,

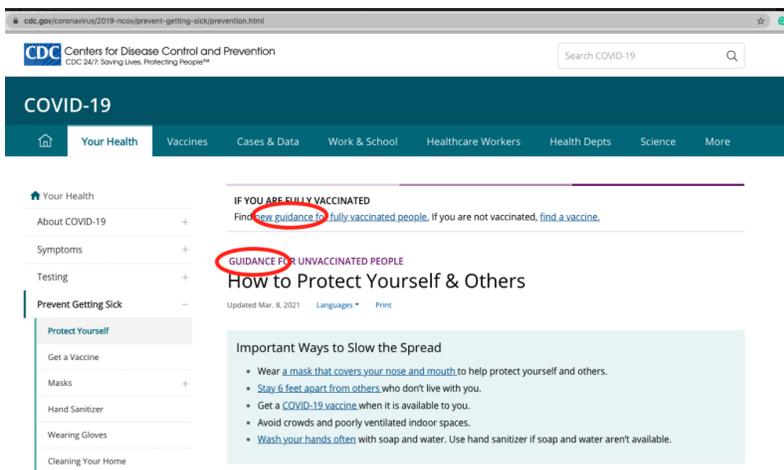
I know you must be really tired of me, and I hate to continue to bother you with my concerns. But I have two questions:

- Which "**federal and state laws**" are you referring to? I have not heard of any state or federal law requiring non-vaccinated students to wear a face mask. However, laws exist to protect individuals' choices around using unauthorized medical products, which your university is ignoring. The right for a healthy individual to breathe fresh air should not be up for debate.
- How can a student proceed with a mask exemption for religious or philosophical reasons? Do you allow an exemption for these things? If not, how can I file a formal grievance?

I'm copying the standing President on this email because he is aware of my letter to the Committee. I feel like upper leadership, whether it be the Board or the President, should be involved here.

To protect the university, I urge you to change the verbiage of your policy to be **consistent with the CDC**, since that is what you are using as a base for your policies. Notice at the top of the CDC's website it says "GUIDANCE" (not a law - there is a big difference). The tacking on of the policing of students through possibly disciplinary action and requirements in specific settings is overstepping the "guidance" and not allowing choice. I'd like to recommend how you might easily change your policy and still follow CDC guidelines and allow "personal responsibility" as the Alabama Governor suggested:

Masking. While on University of South Alabama academic campuses or while participating in USA-sponsored activities, employees, students, and guests are **encouraged** to follow current [CDC guidelines for face masks](#). At this time, CDC's guidelines include [masks optional for those who are fully vaccinated](#) and [required for those who are not vaccinated](#). It is the responsibility of each individual to comply with the CDC's guidelines. **Requirements based on their vaccine status. Noncompliance is subject to University disciplinary processes. Additional requirements may apply, and must be followed as announced, in specific settings.**



I look forward to hearing from you soon,
Kimberly Ellis

June 7 - Face Masks made OPTIONAL!!

Message from the Acting President Inbox x  

 **Office of the President** <president@southalabama.edu> Mon, Jun 7, 10:58 AM (20 hours ago)   

to ▾

Dear USA Students, Faculty and Staff,

Beginning July 1, face masks will be optional for all students, employees and visitors while on USA academic campuses (main campus and Baldwin County campus) or while participating in USA-sponsored activities. USA Health employees and visitors must continue to follow the directives and policies at USA Health facilities.

The University may apply additional requirements for specific settings or events, and these requirements must be followed as announced. Those who are not fully vaccinated are encouraged to continue to follow [CDC guidelines for face masks](#).

The decision to move to a mask-optional policy for our academic campuses is due to a number of factors. We continue to see a decline in COVID-19 cases in the community and on campus. Vaccines are widely and immediately available to anyone age 12 and above, and more than 1,000 of our main campus employees have already been vaccinated.

USA continues to provide opportunities for students and employees to be vaccinated if they wish to do so. Employees may sign up to receive a vaccine on the [USA website](#). Vaccine clinics will continue to be held on campus over the summer, and announcements about dates and times will be sent to the University community.

As an incentive, academic campus employees who accrue vacation and who are fully vaccinated for COVID-19 by July 31, 2021, are eligible to receive one day of personal leave, prorated based on FTE. University academic campus employees who do not accrue vacation may receive a \$50 gift card as an incentive for getting the COVID-19 vaccine. The \$50 will be reported as wages on each recipient's W-2. Employees should email a photo or scan of their vaccine card to vaccineincentcampus@southalabama.edu to receive the incentive.

The University also is working on the possibility of an incentive for students who choose to be vaccinated. More details about this will be announced by COVID-19 Response Coordinator Dr. Julie Estis.

Thank you for all you are doing to keep South healthy and safe.

John Smith
Acting President