With the rapidly changing landscape of the COVID-19 pandemic, the UCLA Division of Academic Senate has been closely monitoring the developments related to the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) vaccination program. After a thorough review, the Executive Board of the UCLA Division has discussed and unanimously agreed on the following:

1. Early Implementation: The Executive Board recommends early implementation of the Vaccination Program for those returning to campus, well before the Fall Quarter begins, with August 1 or earlier being recommended. Implementation and enforcement should not be delayed until full FDA licensure is obtained.

2. Religious Exemption: The board unanimously opposed having a religious exemption in the Vaccination Program. Members noted that Title VII applies narrowly to employees who must cooperate with the employer’s reasonable inquiries, and that the employer may deny the accommodation request if it would pose an undue hardship to the University. It is also noted that vaccines that did not necessitate the use of stem cells in their provision are widely available.

3. Medical Exemption: Members of the Executive Board opined that exemptions could be granted for medical contraindications, but only when necessary, per guidance provided by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as for qualifying disabilities.

The UCLA Division raised questions relating to the policy having religious and medical exemptions, enforcement, its application to affiliates, the likely future need for boosters, and a need for improved clarity (attached).

In summary, the UCLA Division strongly urges changes to the Vaccination Program Policy to include much earlier implementation, the removal of a broad religious exemption, and a narrowing of the language describing medical exemption.
Sincerely,

Shane White
Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

Encl.

Cc: Jody Kreiman, Vice Chair/Chair Elect, UCLA Academic Senate
    Michael Meranze, Immediate Past Chair, UCLA Academic Senate
    April de Stefano, Executive Director, UCLA Academic Senate