



DARE TO DO MORE

Results of the CUNY Safe Return Survey: Students Faculty and Staff

Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA)

August 2021

Results of the CUNY Safe Return Survey: Students Faculty and Staff

The Fall 2021 Safe Return Survey was administered between June 11th and June 20th to all staff, faculty, and to degree-seeking students who registered for fall 2021 by June 10, 2021 (126,845 students at the time). The response rates were 33% for staff, 34% for faculty, and 31% for students. It should be noted, however, that only 22% of the student respondents enrolled in Associate degree programs, with the rest enrolled in baccalaureate or graduate degrees. The purpose of the survey was to help CUNY capture real-time vaccination rates and to better adjust fall plans as safety guidelines changed. The staff and faculty surveys were run anonymously, while the student survey was confidential, allowing for future research to track student outcomes.

Reports and analyses of the results should be used only for internal, administrative purposes that assist colleges in determining vaccine needs and campaigns, planning for the fall, and investigating ongoing concerns. Conclusions drawn from reports and analyses are ultimately limited by the short fielding window, the timing of the survey, and the changing landscape of the COVID-19 pandemic and protocols. Generalizations to broader goals, population, and time should be avoided.

Results for Students

The LaGuardia respondents are compared to CUNY overall. Only 22% are enrolled in Associate degree programs; CUNY did not provide a separate community colleges comparison. At LaGuardia, 1,582 students (out of all degree students enrolled when the survey was administered) responded to the survey, representing a 25% response rate, while the overall response rate for CUNY was 31%. Please note that while the survey was administered to all degree students, it was conducted after session 2 started and thus seemed to include only session 2 students (6,440 students were surveyed and our daily enrollment reports show 6,738 degree students at the start of session 2). Most respondents were women at both LaGuardia (68%) and CUNY (69%). Compared to CUNY, a larger proportion of LaGuardia respondents were continuing students and fewer first-time freshmen.

Enrollment status	LaGuardia	CUNY
First-time Freshmen	2%	8%
Advanced Standing Transfer	5%	4%
New Graduate		3%
Continuing	93%	86%

Vaccination status and perceptions

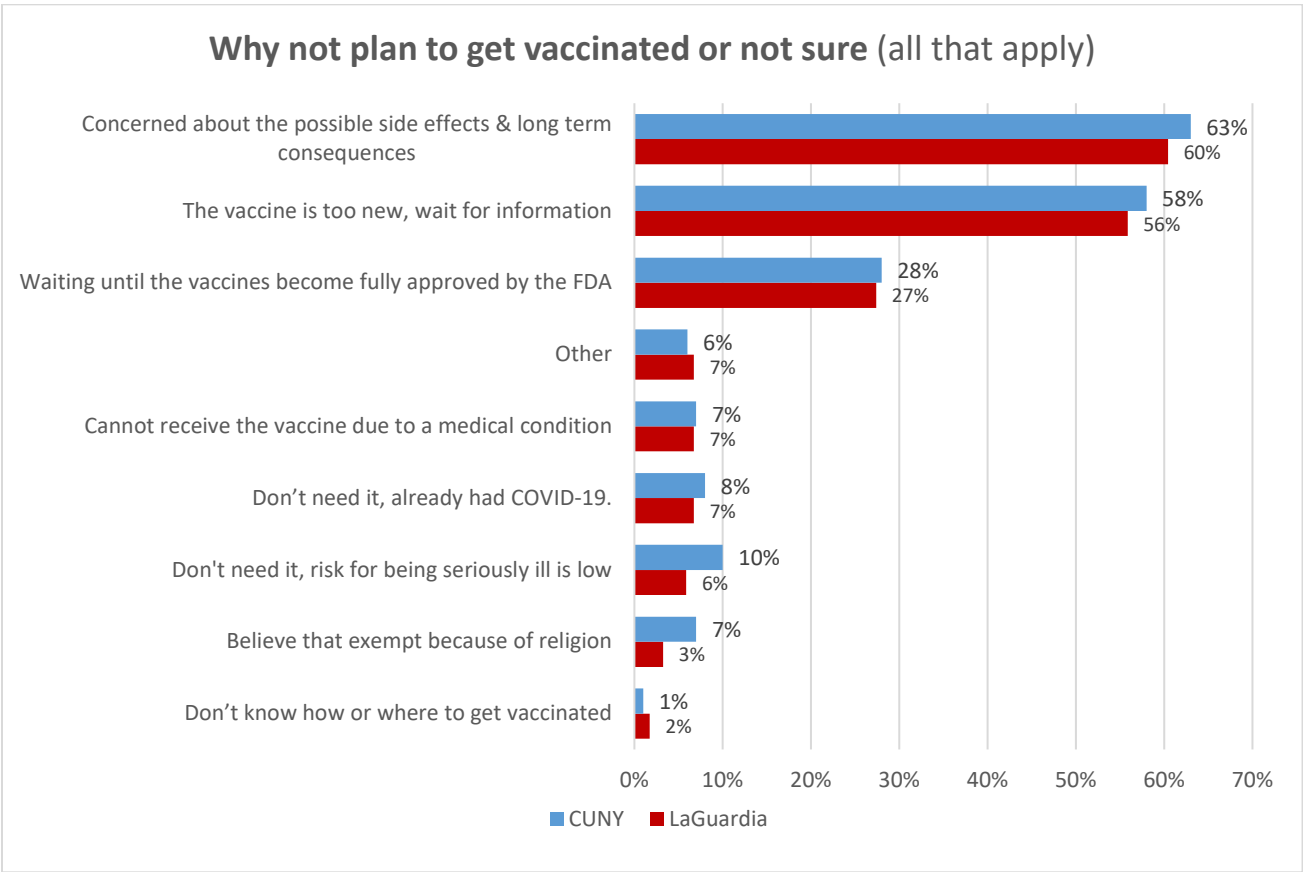
Similarly to CUNY, close to 60% of LaGuardia students were fully or partially vaccinated and over a third were not vaccinated (the rest preferred not to answer).

Are you fully vaccinated?	LaGuardia	CUNY
Yes, I have received the required single dose, or both required doses of the vaccine	50%	53%
Partially, I have received one of two required doses	7%	6%
No	35%	33%
Prefer not to answer	9%	8%

Only 13% of the LaGuardia respondents and 14% of CUNY respondents who were not vaccinated at the time of the survey indicated that they plan to get vaccinated. The vast majority of respondents who were not vaccinated indicated that they are either not planning to get vaccinated by August 2021 or are not sure (84% at LaGuardia, 85% at CUNY).

If not vaccinated, do you plan to be vaccinated by August 2021?	LaGuardia	CUNY
Yes, I plan to be vaccinated by August.	13%	14%
No, I do not plan to get vaccinated.	46%	50%
I am not sure.	38%	35%
Prefer not to answer.	3%	2%

At both LaGuardia and CUNY overall, the reasons most frequently selected for deciding not to get vaccinated or not being sure were “concerned about the possible side effects and long term consequences of the vaccine” and “The vaccine is too new and I want to wait until we have more information about it”.



Most of reasons for “Other” fell in the existing categories, mainly distrust in the vaccine and medical reasons. An additional reason frequently mentioned was personal choice (“I WILL NOT GET VACCINATED IT’S AN OPTION NOT AN OBLIGATION.”; “Not going to be a sheep. Think it’s unnecessary”; “im not a big fan of needles”).

Course Modality preference for fall 2021

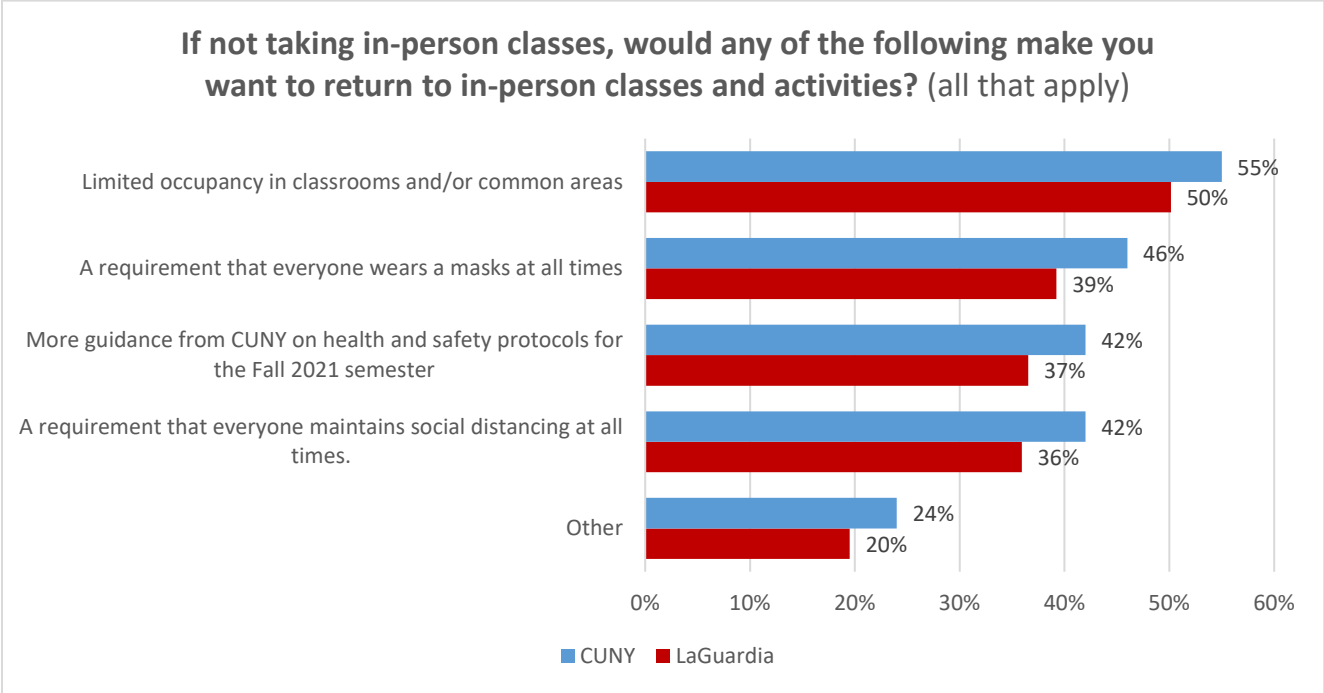
Surprisingly, a considerably smaller proportion of LaGuardia respondents indicated that they would like to take in-person classes in Fall 2021 (14 percentage point difference). Please note, however, that the CUNY

respondents might not be comparable to the LaGuardia’s respondents since close to 80% were baccalaureate and graduate students, and the LaGuardia respondents only included session 2 students.

Are you planning to take in-person classes in Fall 2021?	LaGuardia	CUNY
Yes, I am planning to take in-person or hybrid classes in Fall 2021.	36%	50%
No, I will only take remote classes.	63%	49%
No, I will not be taking any classes at CUNY in Fall 2021.	1%	1%

Student who indicated that they would not be taking in-person classes were asked what would make them want to return to in-person classes and activities. While LaGuardia and CUNY students had similar selection order for the accommodations that will make them want to return to in-person classes and activities, a smaller proportions of LaGuardia students selected them indicating a greater reluctance to return to campus in-person. This aligns with the smaller proportion of LaGuardia respondents planning to take in-person classes in Fall 2021.

The most frequently selected accommodation was “*Limited occupancy in classrooms and/or common areas*” – this was the only option that was selected by at least half of the respondents (55% CUNY, 50% LaGuardia). The other frequently selected choices (“*A requirement that everyone wears a masks at all times*”, “*More guidance from CUNY on health and safety protocols for the Fall 2021 semester*” and “*A requirement that everyone maintains social distancing at all times*”) were made by 42%- 46% for CUNY and 36%-39% for LaGuardia..



A quarter of LaGuardia students who indicated they will not be taking in-person classes chose “*Other*” for accommodations that will make them want to return to in-person classes and activities. Some of the accommodations specified included reasons that appeared in the categories – required masks and social distancing and more CUNY guidelines. However, other measures did not appear in the listed categories. By far, the largest proportions who specified “*Other*” indicated that they prefer remote learning and nothing will convince them to return in person. Requiring vaccinations for all followed in frequencies – although it should be noted, that several students also indicated resistance to vaccination, with some stating that if vaccine is

mandated they will not return to campus. Other reasons listed were childcare issues and fear of using public transportation. Below some of the reasons most frequently mentioned in respondents’ own words:

- Will only attend remote classes: “When COVID is fully gone and no longer a threat to the world”; “Still not safe and it is difficult to return to class with fear.”; “remote learning worked out great there's no need for in person classes”; “No I am happy with remote learning new variants ,are still there so still its not safe until 2022 spring.”; “I have adjusted to online classes and now I prefer them over in-person”.
- Requiring vaccination from all: “I want required vaccinations for the faculty. If students are forced to be vaccinated I don’t know why it would be optional for faculty and staff. I find it incredibly irresponsible and dangerous”; “Everyone required to be vaccinated in the building.”; “A requirement that every person must be vaccinated in order to return to campus.”.

Vaccination status by plans to take in-person classes

The proportion of LaGuardia Students indicating that they are either fully vaccinated, partially vaccinated or plan or getting vaccinated by August 2021 was 61.2% compared to 38.8% who were not vaccinated and did not plan on doing so or were not sure. Additionally, 36.5% of all respondents indicated that they plan on taking in-person or hybrid classes in Fall 2021 while 63.5% indicated they will not.

When vaccination status and students’ plans to take in-person classes are examined – 48% of the vaccinated respondents compared to 18% of the non-vaccinated respondents reported planning on returning to in-person on hybrid courses in Fall 2021. However, it should be noted that over half of the respondents who were going to be vaccinated by August 2021, were also reluctant to return to campus in-person.

Fully or practically vaccinated, or plan to	Planning to take in-person or hybrid classes in Fall 2021.			
	Yes		No	
	#	%	#	%
Yes	462	48.0%	501	52.0%
No	112	18.4%	498	81.6%

Results for Faculty

All full-time and part-time faculty were surveyed and 335 responded. Using the Fall 2020 full-time and part-time LaGuardia faculty numbers, the response rate was 36%. The CUNY data include all institutions and do not separate community college faculty.

Vaccination status and perceptions

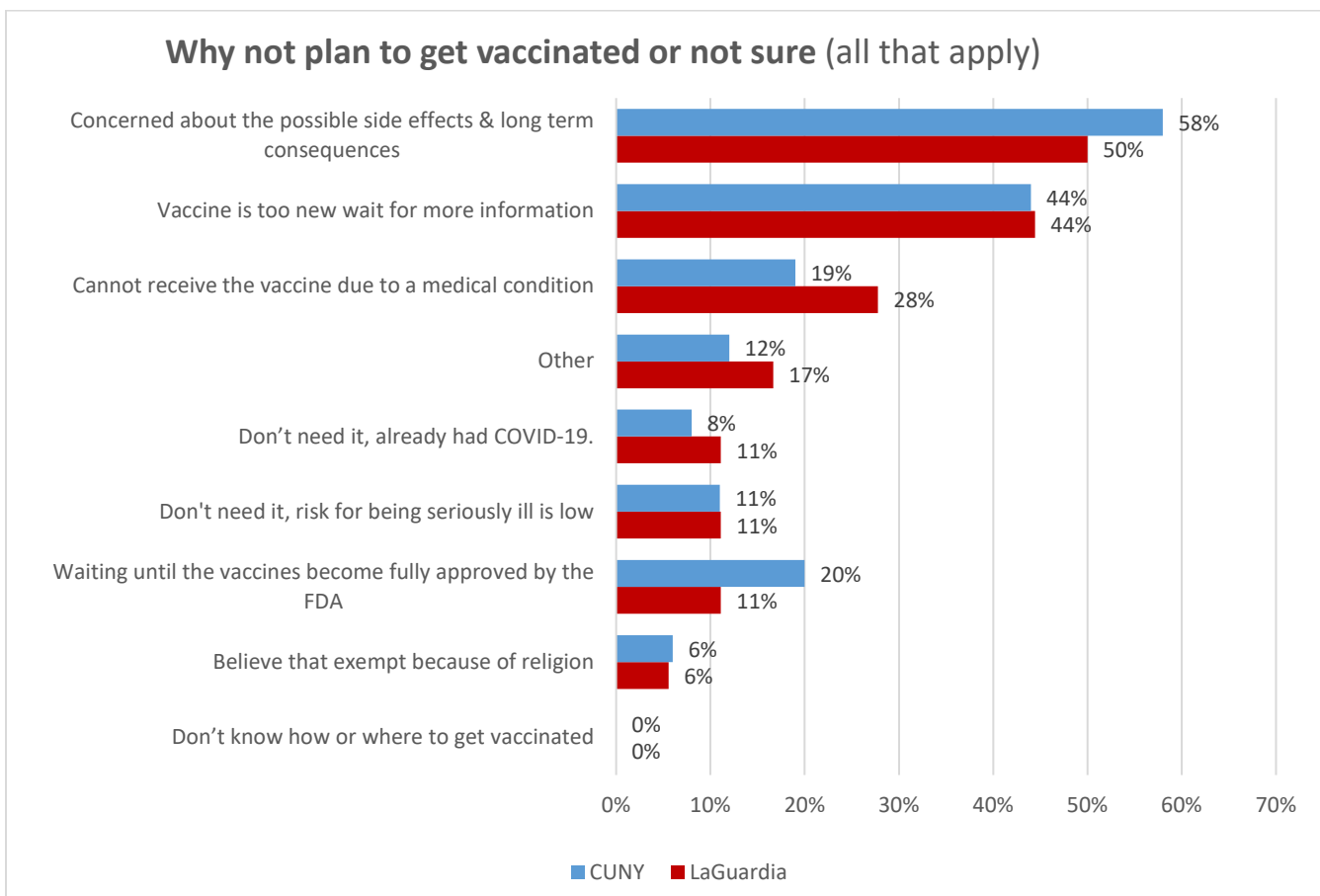
The vast majority of faculty at both LaGuardia and CUNY indicated that they are fully vaccinated. However, only 7% of the LaGuardia respondents who were not vaccinated indicated they plan to do so by August, while 93% either were not planning to get vaccinated or were not sure.

More of the unvaccinated CUNY respondents indicated they plan to be vaccinated (16%), while 80% were not planning to get vaccinated or were not sure.

Are you fully vaccinated?	LaGuardia	CUNY
Yes, I have received the required single dose, or both required doses of the vaccine	86%	85%
Partially, I have received one of two required doses	2%	2%
No	4%	6%
Prefer not to answer	8%	7%
If not vaccinated, do you plan to be vaccinated by August 2021?	LaGuardia	CUNY
Yes, I plan to be vaccinated by August.	7%	16%
No, I do not plan to get vaccinated.	64%	50%
I am not sure.	29%	30%
Prefer not to answer	0%	4%

For both LaGuardia and CUNY respondents the reasons most frequently selected for deciding not to get vaccinated or not being sure was “concerned about the possible side effects and long term consequences of the vaccine”, (58% CUNY; 50% LaGuardia). The following reason “The vaccine is too new and I want to wait until we have more information about it” was selected by 44% of all respondents.

Those who selected “Other” said “I have natural immunity” and “I plan to PAY for an Antibody Test before I make a decision to Vaccinate. I do believe Antibody Tests are MORE VALID than getting Vaccinated First.”



Returning to campus in Fall 2021

Almost a third of the faculty at CUNY and LaGuardia were “very ready” to return to campus, while about a quarter were not ready at all. The rest were either somewhat ready or not sure (47% LaGuardia, 42% CUNY).

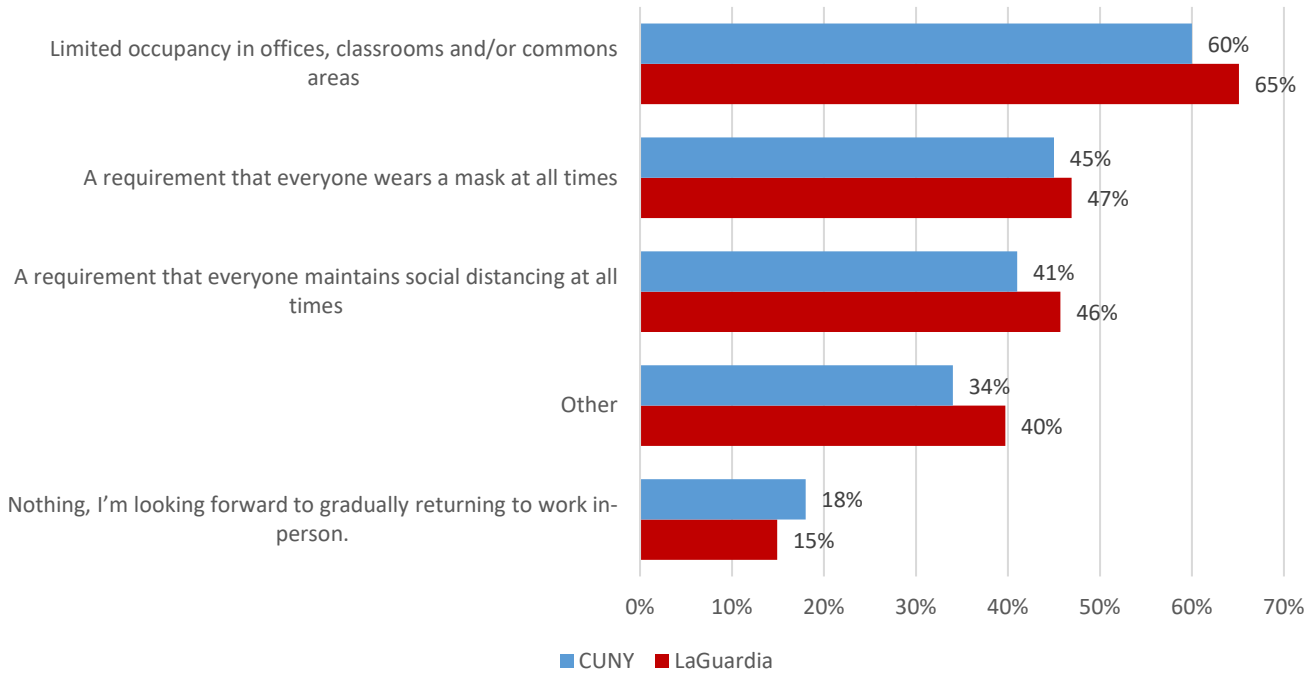
How ready do you feel to return to campus or the office in Fall 2021?	LaGuardia	CUNY
I am not sure.	10%	11%
Not at all ready	23%	26%
Somewhat ready	37%	31%
Very ready	30%	32%

A majority of faculty selected “*Limited occupancy in offices, classrooms and/or commons areas*” as the measure faculty that will make them feel readier to return to campus (65% LaGuardia, 60% CUNY). Over 40% selected “*A requirement that everyone wears a mask at all times*” and “*A requirement that everyone maintains social distancing at all times*”. Finally, less than 20% indicated that they are “*looking forward to gradually returning to work in-person*” (15% at LaGuardia, 18% at CUNY).

A third of the LaGuardia faculty respondents selected “Other” for a measure that will make them readier to return to campus. Some of the comments included reasons that appeared in the categories – limited class size, required masks and social distancing. However, other reasons did not appear in the listed categories. By far, the largest proportions who specified “Other” mentioned requiring vaccinations, followed by proper ventilation and increased cleaning. Transportation safety was followed. Below are examples in respondents’ own words:

- The vast majority entered a vaccinations requirement: “All staff, students and faculty are fully vaccinated.”; “A requirement that everyone be fully vaccinated.”; “Mandatory vaccination requirement”.
- Proper filtration, ventilation and sanitation was also entered by a large number of faculty: “well working AC and safe ventilation”; “Strong air ventilation & filtration with MERV 13 filters regularly replaced”; “ fix or replace ventilation system, which was awful before COVID”; Making sure that all areas, including the atrium, offices, hallways and classrooms in B Building have upgraded air filtration systems”.
- Public transportation safety and lack of parking; “Campus is not the problem, it is getting there by public transportation”; “I teach night class, I am concern about the safety in the school’s neighborhood & on the subway. My class finishes at 10:00 pm”; elimination of COVID-19 in NYC so that the commute to work will be safe.”; “The city needs to allow street parking for faculty. Campus could be safe, but what about getting to college by public transportation?”

What measures will make you feel readier to return (all that apply)?



Vaccination status by plans to return to campus

The vast majority of LaGuardia faculty respondents indicated that are either fully vaccinated, partially vaccinated or plan on getting vaccinated by August 2021 (88.1%). Additionally, 67.5% of all faculty indicated that felt they either somewhat (37%) or very (30.4%) ready to return to campus in fall 2021

When vaccination status by readiness to return to campus are examined – over 70% of the vaccinated faculty compared to 40% of the non-vaccinated faculty indicated the feel somewhat or very ready to return to campus. It should be note though that the difference is more pronounced for being *somewhat ready*. 31% of the vaccinated faculty compared to 25% of the non-vaccinated faculty were *very ready*, while 40% of the vaccinated faculty and 15% of the non-vaccinated faculty were *somewhat ready*.

Fully or practically vaccinated, or plan to	Feel ready to return to campus or the office in Fall 2021							
	Not sure.		Not at all ready		Somewhat ready		Very ready	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes	26	8.8%	59	20.0%	118	40.0%	92	31.2%
No	6	15.0%	18	45.0%	6	15.0%	10	25.0%

Results for Staff

All full-time and part-time employees, including those from the Research Foundation, were surveyed. Using the Fall 2020 employee numbers, overall response rate was 34%, with 29% for Research Foundation employees and 35% for CUNY employees. A quarter of the respondents were Research Foundation employees (26% at LaGuardia, 25% at CUNY).

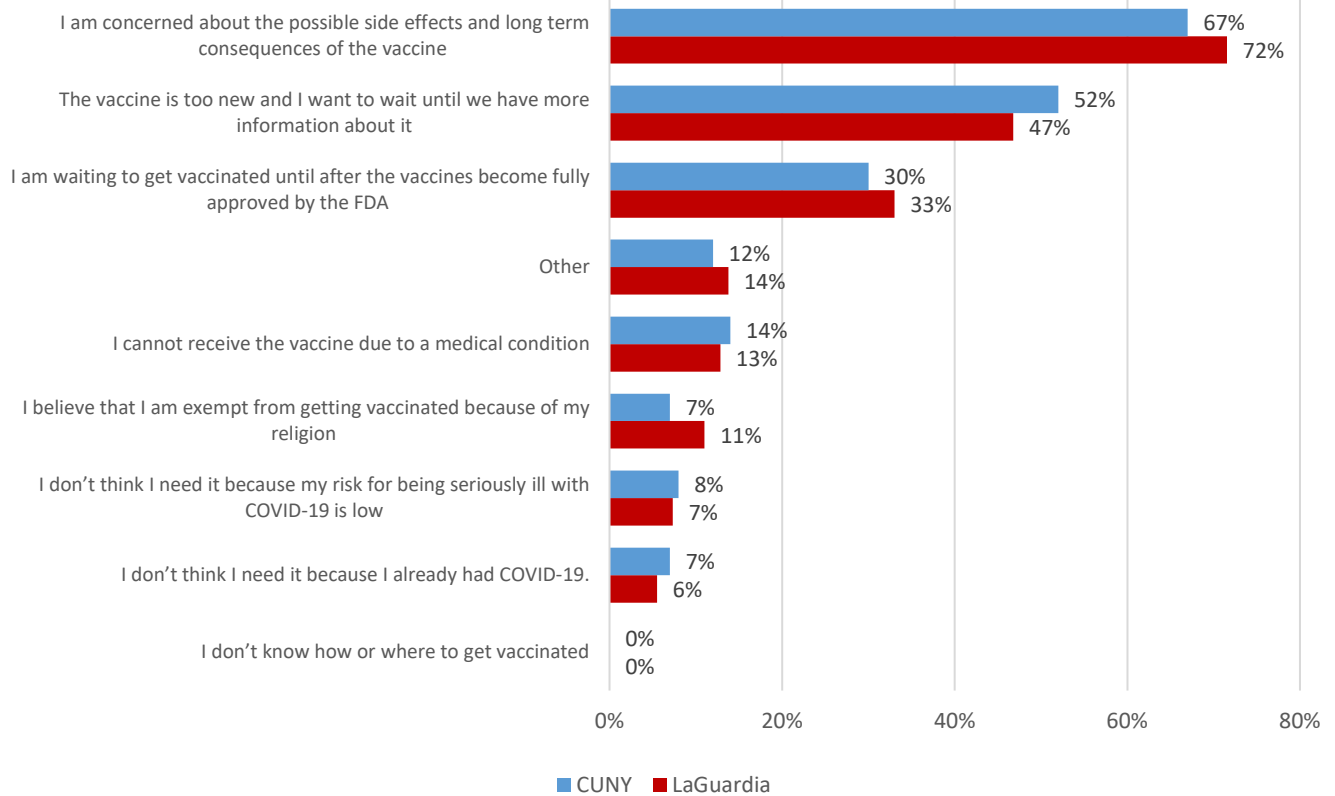
Vaccination status and perceptions

Over 60% of the staff indicated they are full vaccinated. However, a smaller proportion of LaGuardia staff indicated they are fully vaccinated compared to CUNY (-6 percentage points). Additionally, over half of the LaGuardia (52%) and CUNY staff (53%) who are not vaccinated indicated they do not plan to get vaccinated, and about a third were not sure.

Are you fully vaccinated?	LaGuardia	CUNY
Yes, I have received the required single dose, or both required doses of the vaccine	61%	67%
Partially, I have received one of two required doses	2%	3%
No	22%	17%
Prefer not to answer	15%	14%
If not vaccinated, do you plan to be vaccinated by August 2021?	LaGuardia	CUNY
Yes, I plan to be vaccinated by August.	9%	7%
No, I do not plan to get vaccinated.	52%	53%
I am not sure.	35%	34%
Prefer not to answer	5%	6%

Over two-thirds of both LaGuardia and CUNY selected *“concerned about the possible side effects and long term consequences of the vaccine”* as the reason for deciding not get vaccinated or not being sure (72% CUNY; 67% LaGuardia). The following reason *“The vaccine is too new and I want to wait until we have more information about it”* was selected by 47% of the LaGuardia and 52% of the CUNY respondents. Most of responses to *“Other”* not already included in the existing categories, were general reluctance – *“Not interested in getting vaccinated”*; *“no trust”*; *“I do not want to get forced”*.

Why not plan to get vaccinated or not sure (all that apply)

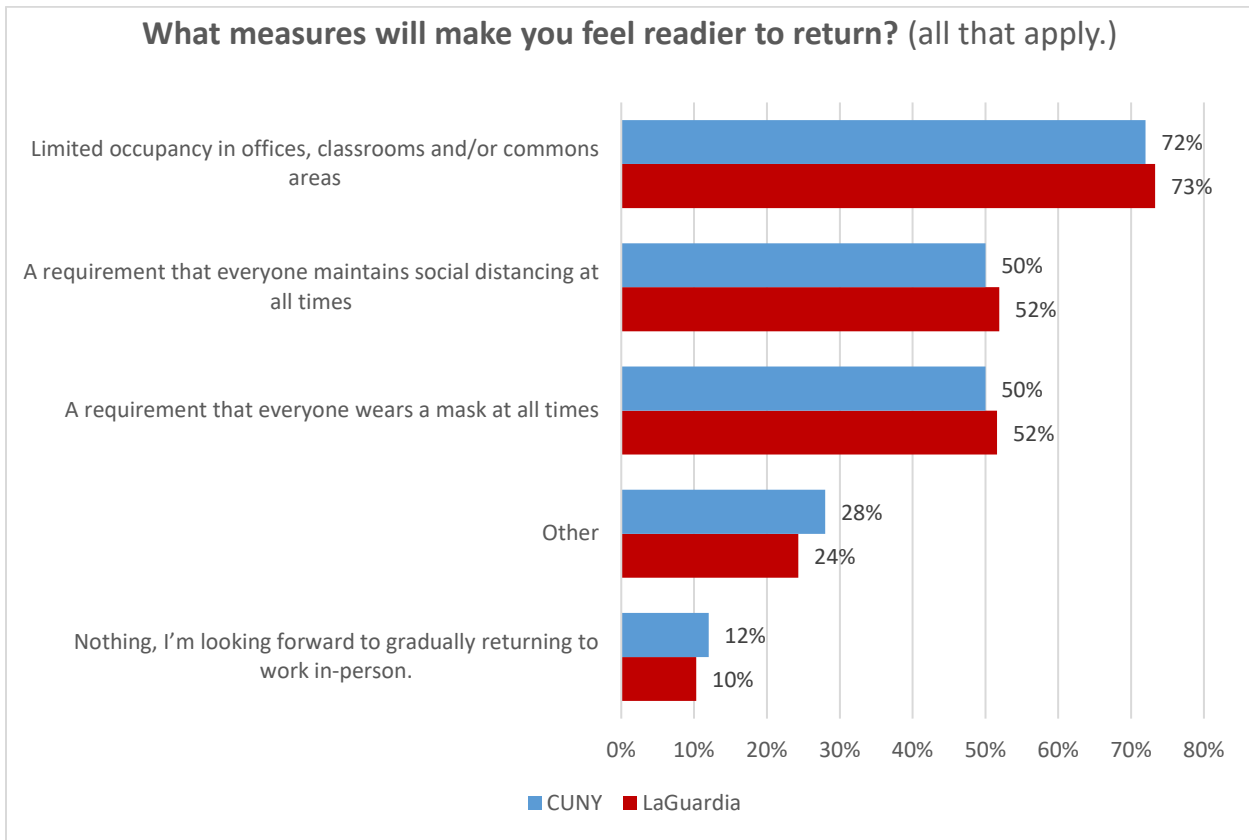


Returning to campus in Fall 2021

CUNY and LaGuardia staff were considerably less ready to return to campus compared to faculty. Less than fifth of the staff at CUNY (18%) and LaGuardia (16%) were “very ready” to return to campus, compared to about a third of the faculty. Furthermore, about 40% were *not ready at all*, compared to about a quarter of the faculty. The rest were either *somewhat ready* or *not sure* (44% LaGuardia, 45% CUNY).

How ready do you feel to return to campus or the office in Fall 2021?	LaGuardia	CUNY
I am not sure.	12%	12%
Not at all ready	40%	37%
Somewhat ready	32%	33%
Very ready	16%	18%

Close to three-quarters of the staff at CUNY and LaGuardia indicated that “*Limited occupancy in offices, classrooms and/or commons areas*” will make them readier to return to campus. Two other reasons selected by about half of the respondents were: “*A requirement that everyone maintains social distancing at all times*” and “*A requirement that everyone wears a mask at all times*”. It is also important to note that only 10% of the LaGuardia and 12% of the CUNY staff indicated that they are “*looking forward to gradually returning to work in-person*”. These proportion are lightly lower than the faculty’s (15% LaGuardia and 18% CUNY)



A quarter of the LaGuardia staff respondents selected “Other” for a measure that will make them readier to return to campus. Some of the comments included reasons that appeared in the categories – limited class size, required masks and social distancing. However, other reasons did not appear in the listed categories. Note that the staff responses are very similar to those of the faculty – the most frequently mention requiring vaccination, followed by proper ventilation and cleaning. However, while safety of public transportation was frequently mentioned, a larger number of staff respondents mentioned being allowed to work remotely either fully or partially. Below are some of the reasons in respondents’ words:

- The vast majority entered a vaccinations requirement: “Everybody, students, staff and faculty must be fully vaccinated.”; “I prefer a requirement that everyone be vaccinated. And a second choice, Would absolutely insist that everyone either be vaccinated or provide weekly proof of new negative covid tests”; “I'd feel most safe if there were mandatory vaccinations for students and staff.”; “Only allowing fully vaccinated people on campus with no exemptions or exceptions.”.
- Proper filtration, ventilation and sanitation was also a reason entered by a large number of LaGuardia faculty: “Improved air filtration and ventilation”; “Full and continuous transparency of HVAC systems in what is being done in the fight and prevention of COVID19.”; “Updated ventilation system, with regular inspection and maintenance, and with transparent reporting thereof.”; “upgrades to the OLD ventilation system in the buildings to prevent the spread of illness”.
- Fully or partially remote work: “The option to continue working 100% remote. We have been doing so for over a year and have had wonderful results, why change it just to go back to the way things used to be. Moving forward, not moving backwards.”; “Work remotely for part of the week”; “remote work for employees who have demonstrated they can meet and exceed virtual numbers.”; “ Permanent Remote Work”; “My department has proven that we don't need to be on campus to be successful and

productive. We are not a student facing office and should continue to operate remotely -- our team is happier having flexible schedules and improved work-life balance without the stress of commuting. Thank you for considering.”

- Public transportation safety and lack of parking; “No late hours to increase safety of traveling home from work in the evenings”; “Concerns with public transportation”; “safety in the trains”; “Subway”; “Underlying health conditions have me very concerned about the catching it, and public transportation scares me.”.

Vaccination status by plans to return to campus

About two-third of the LaGuardia staff respondents indicated that they are either fully vaccinated, partially vaccinated or plan or getting vaccinated by August 2021 (65%). However, less than half of the staff (47.9%) indicated that felt they either somewhat (31.5) or very (16.4%) ready to return to campus in fall 2021

When vaccination status by readiness to return to campus are examined – 60% of the vaccinated staff compared to 25% of the non-vaccinated staff indicated the feel somewhat or very ready to return to campus.

Fully or practically vaccinated, or plan to	Feel ready to return to campus or the office in Fall 2021							
	Not sure.		Not at all ready		Somewhat ready		Very ready	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes	35	9.4%	113	30.4%	146	39.2%	78	21.0%
No	33	16.5%	117	58.5%	34	17.0%	16	8.0%

Conclusion

Only half of the students were fully vaccinated in June with additional 13% of the unvaccinated respondents willing to do so by August. Students are also very reluctant to take in-person or hybrid classes with only 36% of LaGuardia students compared to 50% of all CUNY students planning to do so in Fall 2021. Half of the students who do not plan to take in-person classes indicated that limited occupancy classes and common areas could make them want to return in-person. Other accommodations such as required masks and social distancing, and more guidance from CUNY were only selected by 36% to 39%. Additionally, a large proportion of the students who selected “Other”, specified that they would like to maintain remote learning.

The vast majority of faculty were fully vaccinated (86%), and over 70% of those vaccinated or plan to get vaccinated felt somewhat or very ready to return to campus in Fall 2021. Respondents who were not ready to return indicated that limited occupancy office, classrooms and common areas (65%), followed by requirement of masks and social distancing (less than 50%) will make them feel more ready to return. The vast majority of faculty who selected “Other” specified required vaccination followed by proper ventilation.

LaGuardia staff were fully vaccinated at a lower rate (61%) compared CUNY staff (67%) and faculty (86%). More reluctant to return to campus compared to faculty. Similarly to CUNY’s staff, about half of the LaGuardia staff felt somewhat or very ready to return to campus in Fall 2021. When responding to “Other”, staff specified required vaccination, followed by proper ventilation and working remotely. Additionally, 60% of those vaccinated or plan to do so felt somewhat or very ready to return to campus compared to 25% of those who were not vaccinated.