Resolution in support of waiving in-person attendance requirement and replacing COVID-19 Academic Flexibility Request Form

*Submitted by Profs. Bret Schulte, Christian Goering, John Pijanowski, and Michael Pierce of the University of Arkansas Faculty Senate.*

WHEREAS, the rate of COVID-19 cases is accelerating, infecting more than 12 million Americans while killing 256,000 and counting *(Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center*);

WHEREAS, COVID-19 has killed at least 2,337 and infected 143,821 Arkansans (*Arkansascovid.com operated by UA School of Journalism and Strategic Media*);

WHEREAS, the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences released a predictive model on Nov. 6, 2020 that the pandemic will peak in Arkansas in March or April 2021 with as many as 63,000 active infections;

WHEREAS, the University of Arkansas responded to and reduced the number of cases from the beginning of the fall 2020 semester;

WHEREAS, the evolving and expanding nature of the virus presents additional risk to those traveling over the Thanksgiving and Winter breaks, thus returning that risk to the University of Arkansas campus and broader community;

WHEREAS, the health and safety of UA employees and students are at higher risk following travel from breaks;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the University of Arkansas Faculty Senate endorses ASG Senate Resolution No. 6 (attached) that passed unanimously on Nov. 17, 2020 to waive mandatory in-person requirements and to replace the COVID-19 Academic Flexibility Request Form with the individualized process requested by students;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if faculty provide asynchronous forms of the class, that no such flexibility form be required;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that students may opt out of in-person attendance solely based on personal safety concerns;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that students may choose in-person attendance or remote delivery based on their comfort levels with class size, room size, and accommodations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that students can opt out of in-person classes at any point in the semester and communicate this option to their instructor;

FURTHERMORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the University of Arkansas Faculty Senate believes these measures best help to safeguard the health of students entrusted to their care.