

Oppose the full reopening of New York University!

International Youth and Students for Social Equality at NYU
6 September 2021

The IYSSE at NYU urges students and faculty members at NYU and colleges across the New York area to join the New York City educators' rank-and-file committee meeting on Tuesday, September 7, at 8PM, to discuss a strategy to stop the school and college reopening, and put an end to the pandemic. You can register for the meeting [here](#).

September 2 marked the first day of classes of the 2021-2022 academic year at New York University (NYU). Tens of thousands of undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff are returning to the university's New York campus for in-person instruction and work.

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) at NYU calls on all students, faculty, and staff to oppose the dangerous reopening of NYU! Under conditions of a tremendous surge of the COVID-19 pandemic across the United States and internationally, the full reopening of NYU is endangering tens of thousands of lives within the broader New York City community.

Based on official figures, the coronavirus has killed over 4.5 million people and infected more than 220 million worldwide, but estimates of the true death toll are far higher. In every country, daily new cases and deaths are skyrocketing as a result of the Delta variant. In the US, over 164,000 new COVID-19 cases are reported and more than 1,000 people are dying every day. An ever-growing number of the sick and dying are young people and children.

In New York, the US state with the fourth highest number of coronavirus cases (over 2.3 million) and the third highest death toll (at least 54,933 people), the number of daily, new reported COVID cases is rapidly rising. The seven-day average of new COVID cases in New York is seven times higher today than it was three months ago. In New York City, thousands of new cases are being reported every day and hospitalizations have

more than doubled since the beginning of the summer. According to data from the Department of Health (DOH), the largest increase in positive cases in the city is among residents aged 18 to 34, approximately 70 percent of whom are fully vaccinated.

Under these conditions, NYU's decision to herd its over 40,000 students and workers back into classrooms and workplaces in downtown Manhattan is nothing less than criminal. It is driven not by careful adherence to the latest scientific research, but by the interests of private profit. The multi-millionaires and billionaires who run the university will not give up the hundreds of millions of dollars that NYU takes in annually.

The university's promotion of its reopening as "safe" and scientifically grounded is bogus. It relies entirely on vaccinations, and an indoor-mask mandate, measures that are insufficient to stop the spread of the pandemic.

At an online event hosted by the World Socialist Web Site (WSWS) in August, Dr. Malgorzata Gasperowicz, a developmental biologist and researcher at the University of Calgary and co-founder of the Zero Covid Canada group; demonstrated that vaccination, while critical, cannot stop the pandemic, because the virus can still be transmitted by vaccinated individuals. "Focusing on public health measures is much more important than focusing on vaccination alone," Dr. Gasperowicz said. "just by itself, it won't solve the pandemic." Gasperowicz also stressed that it will not be safe to reopen schools until there was zero transmission in the community.

Enforcement of social distancing measures inside and outside of NYU buildings have been abandoned. Students are packed into classrooms and allowed to gather in large, unmasked groups around campus.

The university has eliminated its mandatory testing program for the vast majority of students and staff. In an email to university faculty, the administration announced

that “due to privacy concerns,” faculty members would not be automatically notified if one of their students tested positive. It also noted, “In keeping with guidance from the City’s Dept. of Health, faculty members may not share information about an individual’s COVID-19 status if they become aware of it, and faculty members are not permitted to ask students about their COVID-19 status or their vaccination status.” The email also informed faculty that only those students and staff deemed by the university to have been exposed to the virus would be asked to isolate. The student body at large will not be promptly informed of outbreaks on campus.

In the same email, the administration admitted that, in the week before classes began, “70 positive cases were reported, which includes findings from NYU-administered testing and reports from tests that were obtained at community locations. Of the 1,560 tests administered by NYU, 15 were positive — 0.96%.” This is under conditions where, according to the university, over 93 percent of US-based students and full time employees and 95 percent of international students are fully vaccinated.

The result of NYU’s “safe reopening” during the 2020-2021 academic year was the infection of well over one thousand students, faculty, and staff while the university, which raised the price of 12 to 18 credits for undergraduate students by over \$700, filled its coffers. For the 2021-2022 academic year, the university has reportedly increased undergraduate tuition by 3 percent.

NYU’s actions are in no way unique. College campuses across the country are opening for in-person instruction, which has already resulted in widespread outbreaks.

Over the last week, Duke University, where 98 percent of students and 92 percent of faculty are vaccinated, reported 349 new cases among students and 15 among faculty and staff. Most of these were breakthrough infections. Similar outbreaks have occurred at numerous campuses, including the University of California Berkeley and the University of Michigan.

The full reopening of college campuses is part of the broader, homicidal back-to-work drive by the ruling class in the United States and internationally. Children and young people, the vast majority still unvaccinated, and their teachers are in the process of being herded into unsafe classrooms so that parents can be more easily forced back to work.

Spearheading the drive to fully open schools and workplaces is the Biden administration, backed to the hilt by the corporatist trade unions. In New York, Democratic

Governor Kathy Hochul and Mayor Bill de Blasio are pressing ahead with a full reopening of the largest school district in the country on September 13. Hundreds of thousands of unvaccinated schoolchildren and tens of thousands of teachers and school staff will be exposed to the virus.

Unions such as the American Federation of Teachers are fully complicit in this deadly campaign. At NYU, the graduate student union GSOC-UAW, which sold out the graduate student struggle in the spring semester, and other unions are not even offering nominal opposition to the reopening.

The only way to save lives and put an end to the pandemic is through the scientifically-guided strategy of “eradication.” Based on the policies advanced by the foremost epidemiologists, virologists and other scientists, the eradication strategy entails the universal deployment of every weapon at society’s disposal to combat COVID-19, coordinated on a global scale, to forever eliminate the virus.

However, as has been clearly demonstrated by the ruling class’s fervent opposition to the implementation of the most basic safety measures, the strategy necessary to eradicate the pandemic is incompatible with a social system based on private profit. An independent, working-class opposition must be developed in order to tackle the immense problems that face humanity. Already, opposition to the unsafe reopening of schools and colleges is growing, including among teachers, high school students in Bessemer, Alabama and academic workers at the University of Michigan and CUNY.

What is needed, however, are new organizations of mass struggle. The IYSSE, as part of the international Trotskyist movement, is fighting for the establishment of an international network of rank-and-file committees in factories, workplaces, schools, that are independent from the trade unions and the parties of big business. Most importantly, a new, revolutionary socialist leadership in the working class must be built. We invite students and faculty at NYU to register for the meeting of the New York Educators Rank-and-File Committee on Tuesday, September 7, at 8 p.m., to discuss this strategy and perspective.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact