

**COS Faculty Meeting  
Minutes**  
Wednesday May 11, 11:00-12:30pm  
Zoom and EXPL 3301

Meeting recording information distributed via email.

Attendees listed on page 7

1. Call to order – 11:04am
2. Approval of minutes from April 7, 2022
  - 2.1. Motion to approve: Ron Mahabir; Second: Suzanne Slayden
  - 2.2. Group approval confirmed by voice and emoji
3. End of Year Remarks from COS Faculty Chair Rebecca Jones (Appendix A)
  - 3.1. COVID updates – regional transmission and campus positivity rates
  - 3.2. Supreme Court Events surrounding draft opinion to overturn abortion rights
  - 3.3. Words to faculty
    - To female colleagues
      - You are a valuable, precious, and unique individual.
      - You have a right to make decisions about your body.
      - Your life is just as important as a man's.
      - You are allowed to feel how ever you do and your feelings are valid.
    - To male colleagues
      - Listen to the women in your life; do not dismiss their words or feelings. Do not tell them how to feel or to “not feel betrayed”.
      - Speak words of support to the women in your life; tell them directly you love and support them.
      - Make intentional daily choices to **advocate** for the women in your life.
    - To everyone
      - Take time away from Mason this summer.
      - Take steps to recover from this academic year.
      - Ignore your email.
      - Enjoy your hobbies.
      - Eat good food.
      - Be with people you love and who love you.
4. End of Year Remarks from Dean Fernando Miralles-Wilhelm
  - 4.1. Fully endorse Rebecca's messages
  - 4.2. Finances and investments we plan to make in the college.
    - Faculty (and staff) compensation: making progress on the problem, and start to advance on the problem more aggressively across the board. Market analysis completed by central HR.
    - 5% last time for staff, 4% across the board for faculty + 1% discretionary. Expecting a similar number this summer
    - Planning to roll out a more comprehensive package of salary adjustments for faculty and staff over the coming months.
    - We are really hurting on staff compensation issues – 2-3 cases/week across the college. We can't afford to lose people, and thus this is a big priority.

- A lot of our resources this coming year will be devoted to compensation

4.3. The other big area we will invest in will be student advising.

- He did not learn of this issue until he joined. The College has an advising problem overall. It is limitation in humanpower devoted to advising. It does vary across academic units.
- Aim for 1:250 ratio of advisor to undergrad students. We are not even close to the 1:300 ratio, and need to close that gap and invest in advising with more bodies and professionalize and standardize advising across the college this coming year.
- Enrollments from last fiscal year to this fiscal year went down, and due to the 1 year lag, our spending authority will be down compared to last year.
- For fall 2022, we look much better than fall 2021, and thus a year from now if everything holds up, we will be in better shape.
- We need to take some bets and risks with a longer-term view. He is erring on the side of caution and risk during the time of risk from COVID.
- Even with the decrease in budget from last year's drop in enrollment, our finances still look solid and strong, and if the increase next year holds, we'll be in great shape. We will invest meaningfully in compensation for faculty and staff. Don't have any numbers to share today.

4.4. Annual budget cycle process starting this week – all LAU requests in, and we will figure out what we can spend, and will be transparent and communicate decisions immediately so college faculty and staff are well-informed with rationale. The gut sense is that the numbers are very positive. We will work together to navigate these external issues from COVID. Help each other – as long as we have each other's backs.

5. Announcement of spring election results – Nirmal Ghimire

5.1. COS Faculty Chair: Rebecca Jones

5.2. COS Faculty Chair Pro Tem: Peter Plavchan

5.3. COS Faculty Secretary: Patrali Banerjee

5.4. Grievance: Peter Becker and Ancha Baranova

5.5. Nominations Committee: Natalie .... Missed rest

5.6. Faculty Senate (3 open positions): David Wong, Alexandra Masterson and Jie Zhang

5.7. Undecided COS P&T, at-large, will be announced later.

6. Q/A with Chief Business Officer, Meghan St. George

6.1. Working through LAU budget requests through end of the month or into early June, and we will communicate budget decisions.

6.2. One other topic: Chart of accounts: For those of you have research grants and expense charges, the numbers we use will be changing as of July 1<sup>st</sup>, and your finance representative will work with you on the new numbers.

6.3. Q: Rebecca – how do individual LAUs results get communicated back to the college as a whole or the individual departments

- A: we will communicate directly to the chairs, and will consider a broader communication

6.4. Q: Ron Mahabir: Do we have updates on state budget timelines that are related to Faculty compensation?

- A: The board of visitors met last week and the proposed compensation increases in June is on point from Fernando. The board approved two proposals that both include the compensation increases based upon different state legislative proposals. The state budget has not been approved yet and is running later than expected.
7. Remarks from Interim Associate Dean Cody Edwards – virtual from SciTech
- 7.1. Four-fold work in the college: First, daily oversight of academic and student affairs with donna and colleagues doing all the work. Working with Meghan’s team on faculty affairs. This is much of what Padhu did before he stepped down and created a leadership void.
- 7.2. Second, working with Donna and Assad and recognizing we need more people working in advising
- 7.3. Third – working with Faculty and chairs to come up with a new annual evaluation system for tenure, term and adjunct faculty
- Feedback from faculty is that we need something new particularly for adjuncts and term faculty.
  - Assembled a working group.
  - The process is currently a mixed bag.
  - Divided into three subgroups – term, tenure and adjunct advising model and working together. It is a slow process, and it will take more than six months. Goal is to have something to share broadly across the college in the fall for all faculty to weigh in. It will need to be a faculty-driven process.
  - Everyone will have to agree on a central model with individual LAU tweaks, and integrate with the Faculty360 module in Kim Eby’s office, and reduce redundancy, and entering in the same information again and again.
  - Equitable and fair way of evaluating faculty.
- 7.4. Fourth – Working with the dean to help him assess new leadership model for the dean’s office.
- 7.5. Q: Suzanne Slayden – Faculty handbook says evaluations must occur annually, and has some minimal guidance. Gross violations in this college can no longer be sustained. Chairs and directors play a dual role – both faculty interacting with the administration, and administrators interacting with their faculty. Don’t have a formal away for faculty to evaluate chairs. How can a Dean evaluate a chair without a mechanism for faculty to evaluate chairs.
- 7.6. A: A terrific point. Into the overall evaluation system – I and the chairs agree with you. That is the hardest job and most thankless job at the University, made all the more difficulty because we don’t have a support structure in place for chairs. I will add that to my charge and update the faculty in the fall.
- 7.7. Rebecca: Suzanne, please don’t retire.
- 7.8. Q: Dan Sklarew – Thank you Rebecca. When you talk about advising, will it include grad students too?
- A: No, we will be focusing on undergrad advising for now; that doesn’t mean there needs to be grad advising work.
  - Dan: Maybe next year.
  - Chat: Estela Blaisten: To even have a “template” for the chairs faculty reviews will help moving forward Thanks Suzanne by the comment.

7.9. Q: Julia – About evaluations being done by chairs – do we have term faculty on the committee to decide how term faculty will be evaluated

- A: 16 or 17 members, and yes including term and adjunct faculty on this evaluations committee. The more the merrier if you want to join

7.10. Q: Monique: question for the Dean: Update on the graduate School?

- A: Fernando: On the question of the graduate school, there is not much to report. Solely, the information that I have received is that what is being discussed is a “graduate division” under the office of the Provost. I will seek more information and share it in our next meeting in the fall.

7.11. Q: Rebecca: will 9 month faculty be compensated for this summer work?

- A: For any formal work, yes. We’re not going to do much more than exchange ideas this summer. There won’t be meetings.

7.12. Q: Ron Mahabir in chat: It would be great if there was an update on the faculty workload reduction with respect to what Fall 2022 is expected to look like.

7.13. Q: Julia in the room: lucky to be on committees for grad students as term faculty. Some departments allow it; others don’t. Can we do a great job of being the main advisors for grad students at term faculty? That needs to be acknowledged. My annual evaluation depends on only my teaching, and not the advising I do and grants I bring in, and some of us have been successful in doing so. I graduated a masters student last year, for example.

- A: Cody: Yes, that will be part of the evaluation process. Frankly, people don’t get enough credit for mentoring grad students. There’s no compensation model for that. How do we incentivize them to be good mentors too and advise more students?
- Joel: each department should be aggressive in mentoring graduate students who don’t have research advisors yet.
- Rebecca: Mentoring happens in classrooms too. As someone who has studied it, we need to talk about it more.

## 8. Listening session with Director of Diversity, Paula Danquah-Brobby

8.1. Thank you, Rebecca, for sharing your thoughts re: COVID and abortion rights; these weigh on me as well. I hope as we continue to move forward and cultivate a culture we feel good about that we can continue to feel safe having these types of conversations openly. It’s very traumatizing right now in current events.

8.2. We are going to start the listening session portion – the purpose is to have an opportunity to come together and share feedback with leadership team online and in person about what is and isn’t working. We also have some polling questions to prioritize these concerns for the community to focus on what we want to address first. These questions were asked to the staff. We will compile everything and share it with you all. This is the start of the main conversation that will go on – Dean’s administration, chairs – please just listen, and don’t take anything personally.

8.3. In raising your concerns, propose solutions if you have them. It’s ok if you don’t have one. Let’s stay on the solution side of things rather than going into a negative space. Let’s stay civil and compassionate. Ask questions and don’t assume the worst. You can send me a private email later.

8.4. This is a safe space. If I start to hear any lack of civility, I will shut that down.

8.5. Q1: What is working well in your unit or area of specialization?

- A: Thank you to COS for being so supportive; my mom had a strike in England; I was able to go back to being online, the flexibility was there. Two brothers had to take unpaid leave and paid leave. It was good that the University was supportive.
- A: Saleet Jafri: Things are more discussion oriented with the new COS administration, and their input is more valued. That's a very positive thing. COS leadership IS listening.
- A: Dann Sklarew: in last year's academic assessment 95+% of recent ESP Graduate felt it academic programs were inclusive
- A: Estela Blaisten: The advising to part-time PhD students with e-conferences has helped tremendously
- A: Rebecca Jones: teaching in horizon hall is fun and awesome, with active learning engagements. Joanna Jauchen: Seconded! Catherine Sausville: Agreed! Jennifer Salerno: Agreed
- A: Audience: On Monday – we have developed how make an impact on research in lab courses. Reaching a larger number of research students. Standard format research project helps with scaling research.
- A: Meghan S: Welcoming community in the college, dedicated and passionate people. The changes I'm hearing about in the college. The change can be uncomfortable for some, but others are embracing it as positives. Appreciating everyone's ability to be uncomfortable.
- A: Ron Mahabir: The Undergraduate Research Colloquium is working. Our undergrads are doing amazing things, thank you Rebecca.
- A: Audience: Been here for a few years and attended faculty meetings; the past few years I have seen we are heard, which helps us be a part of the community.
- A: Paula DB: As someone new to the community, I've been blown away by how amazing all of you are.

8.6. Q2: What isn't working? What can we be doing to work better as a community? Adapt, tweak, whatever it may be to move your concern in a positive direction (Q3 is on leadership)

- A: Catherine: In my LAU, we have seen students are struggling a lot this semester this particular, way more than the fall or other COVID semesters; they are falling apart at the seams. I teach math classes.
- A: Audience: mental health piggyback. Try to make it a safe space for them; I've only been here a year and a half to two years.
- A: Alexandra Masterson: I felt I've been alone, and glad to hear the others have the same concerns. What is going on with our students? We are working with students who have really not been in school for two years. They are not prepared for many of our classes. How do we work with students who have missed a year? The rewards of working with the students are worth it, but I'm worried about how they'll do next year and the year after that. They have NOT had a good start that is NOT on them.
- A: Paula: students are suicidal at my last place; mental health crises one after another. In addition to understanding Mason mental health support, put that all together for us. We don't want to become or be perceived as their therapist. If it leads to something catastrophic you are liable. It's a stick situation to support your student to know them and their personal issues, but not to go into the role of therapist. I am putting together a toolkit. The amount of students and magnitude of the unraveling is unprecedented.

- A: Alexandra: CAPS and student advocacy office has been helpful. We need to stay in our lane. Thank you.
- A: Joanna Jauchen: I have also been told by students that CAPS was not that helpful when they went over there. I can only assume this is because CAPS is overwhelmed by students and needs resources to deal with the increased need for help.
- A: Rebecca: I've heard too that CAPS is overwhelmed. I love the idea of a toolkit for mental health. The University is not going to help us. How do we keep going if this year is how things are going to be like this every year? When many of us feel like we're drowning.
- A: Paula: We need to support each other.
- A: Joanna Jauchen: It would help us to have a template of advice to give to students when they tell us university resources aren't working.
- A: Kelly Knight: Yes I feel like I am struggling because I care for my students as if they were my children. Their struggles keep me up at night.
- A: Rob Mahabir: An AA group: Academics Anonymous. Rebecca: Great idea Ron, lol.
- A: Dann Sklarew: Burnout is an issue. Calling out a specific group – disabled students. Mason has a system with technical solutions. We don't treat them as a whole person, and we need to think about how we provide services to disabled students that are not just technical solutions.
- A: Alexandra Masterson: The push seems to be get back to normal, but normal wasn't that great to begin with. We haven't had time to reflect on what worked. It would be nice to have time to reflect or talk as groups and how we maneuvered, what we should keep. We are all struggling on our own to do that. It's nice to hear others have these same issues.
- A: Ron Mahabir: More regular anonymous surveys to reach the COS level.
- A: Rebecca: We had a reflection survey last summer, should we send it out a new one for 2022?
- A: Audience: In math we've had equity and diversity conversations in our classes; good to have a college wide teaching seminar. Jennifer Salerno: That sounds amazing! Yes, please.
- A: Ron Mahabir: We really to bring back faculty retreats
- A: Paula: It can't all be solved in faculty meetings, but we can determine action items on how to address them.
- A: Ziheng Sun: I personally found regular voluntary group meditation meetings (online) really helps improve mindfulness :)
  - Joanna Hauchen: were these part of Mason or outside? I would be interested in that.
- A: Tracy Mason: We just had two faculty surveys in a row. What type of survey frequency would helpful on an ongoing basis?
- A: Dan Sklarew: by a culture of whole person support for those with disabilities, 1 example of if the absence of captioning on this zoom. if we had regularly had that, those of us who are managing hearing or cognitive challenges would have to ask for it to feel welcome here. (would NOT have to ask for it – close captioning) Rebecca: great point.
- A: Ron Mahabir: I was thought about the academic drop in box – for suggestions.
  - Rebecca: I would rather have resources on how to reflect, how to have conversations, case studies on how examples have been managed.

- Peter P: Professional development opportunities
- Ron: about what to do when things come up. For example, when students report themselves as being suicidal
- Dan Sklarew: right on, Rebecca! survey should be instrumental to, not surrogate for, such problem solving ...

8.7. Poll now: [pollev.com/meghanstgeorge797](https://pollev.com/meghanstgeorge797)

8.8. Q3: What isn't working for your leadership?

- Please send confidential feedback to Paula or Rebecca, so we can move this needle and improve your voice – [pdanquah@gmu.edu](mailto:pdanquah@gmu.edu) or [rjones23@gmu.edu](mailto:rjones23@gmu.edu)

8.9. Live polling questions of faculty.

9. Deferred: Recognition of committee members for their service

10. Deferred: Remarks from COS Faculty Fellow Phil Yang – via video recording

11. Deferred: New Business

12. Adjournment: 12:39pm

#### **Participants via Zoom**

Aarthi Narayanan  
Aman Ullah  
Andrea Cobb  
Andrea Nikoi  
Arie Croitoru  
Barney Bishop  
Ben Dreyfus  
Benoit Van Aken  
Bill Kennedy  
Brett Froelich  
Catherine Sausville  
Chi Yang  
Chip Petricoin  
Chris Lockhart  
Cindy Smith  
Cody W. Edwards  
Cristiana Stan  
Dale Pokorski  
Dale Scott Rothman  
Daniel Hanley  
Dann Sklarew  
David Wong  
Dhafer Marzougui  
Diego Valderrama  
Ernest Barreto

Estela Blaisten  
Esther Peters  
Fadi  
Fatah Kashanchi  
FMW  
Gerald Weatherspoon  
Hamdi Kavak  
Iosif Vaisman  
Jennifer Salerno  
Jie Zhang\_  
Joanna Jauchen  
Joel Schnur  
Jules M Goldspiel  
Kelly Knight  
Kenneth W Foreman  
Konrad J Wessels  
Lance A Liotta  
Megan Erb  
Michael Summers  
Monique  
Monique van Hoek  
Neil Epstein (he#etc.)  
Nirmal Ghimire  
Olga Gkountouna  
Patrali Banerjee  
Patrick Gillevet

Paul So  
Paula Danquah-Brobby  
Peter Plavchan  
Rebecca M Jones  
Ron S Mahabir  
Saleet Jafri  
Sarah Ward  
Sharmin Abdullah  
Suzanne Slayden  
Tim Leslie  
Tracy Mason (She/Her)  
William Hahn  
Xiaoyan Tan  
Ziheng Sun

#### **Participants in person**

Pritha Roy  
Georgia Williams  
Meghan St. George  
Tracy Mason  
Catherine Sausville  
Julia Nord  
Alexandra Masterson  
Fernando Miralles-Wilhelm  
Paula Danquah-Brobby

Appendix A



1

Why I'm (still) wearing a mask on campus

WEDNESDAY APRIL 13 ->

WEDNESDAY MAY 11 ->

[https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#/county-view?list\\_select\\_state=Virginia&data-type=CommunityLevels&null=CommunityLevels&list\\_select\\_county=51059](https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#/county-view?list_select_state=Virginia&data-type=CommunityLevels&null=CommunityLevels&list_select_county=51059)

Fairfax County, Virginia  
Community Level: Low

Fairfax County, Virginia  
Transmission Level: Substantial

Fairfax County, Virginia  
Community Level: Medium

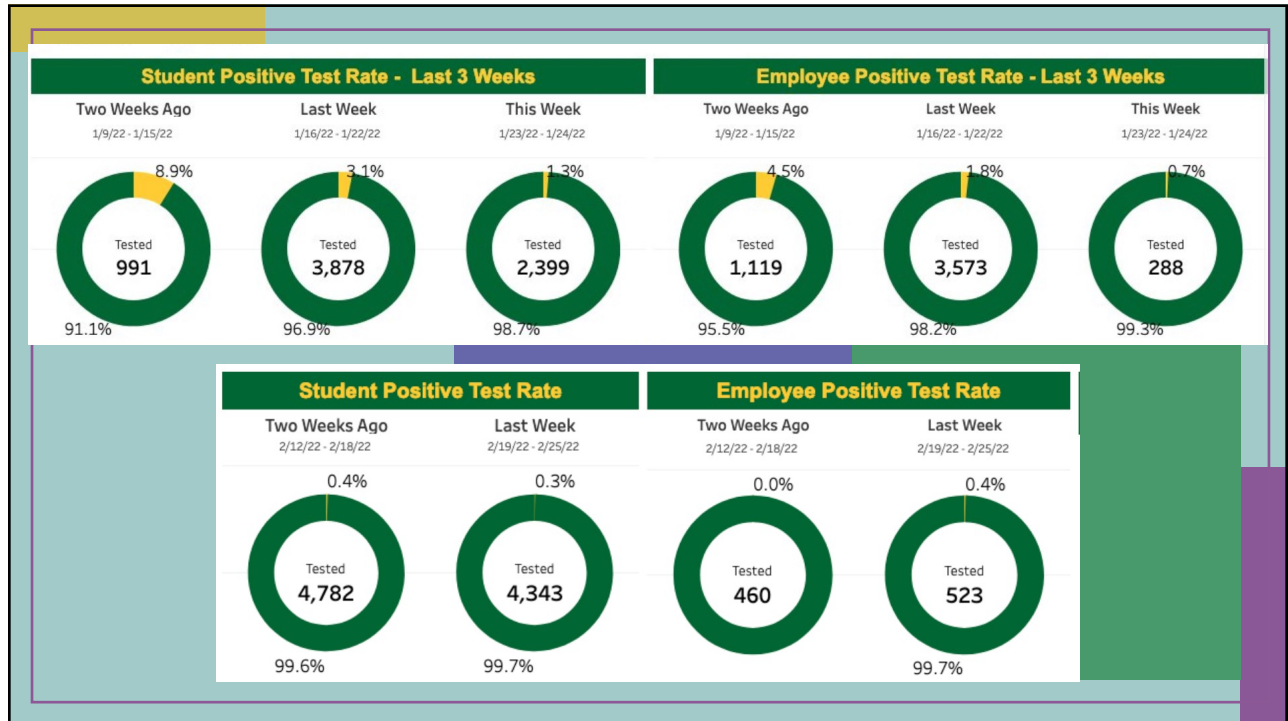
Fairfax County, Virginia  
Transmission Level: High

Low Medium High  
No Data

High Substantial  
Moderate Low

2





3

## Why I'm wearing a mask on campus

- Positivity rates are up >6% since mask mandates lifted in classrooms on April 5, 2022
- Testing is down 77% since mid-semester
- President Washington said on April 20, "We had to run the experiment, see what would happen."

| Student Positive Test Rate |                  | Employee Positive Test Rate |                  |
|----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Two Weeks Ago              | Last Week        | Two Weeks Ago               | Last Week        |
| 4/23/22 - 4/29/22          | 4/30/22 - 5/6/22 | 4/23/22 - 4/29/22           | 4/30/22 - 5/6/22 |
| 2.9%                       | 6.4%             | 2.3%                        | 3.7%             |
| Tested 884                 | Tested 975       | Tested 342                  | Tested 353       |
| 97.1%                      | 93.6%            | 97.1%                       | 93.6%            |

4

*People are still getting sick, going to hospitals, & dying.*

— Epidemiologist Saskia Popescu

Quote source: <https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2022-04-19/covid-emergency-declaration-end>

**Dr. Saskia Popescu, Assistant Professor, Biodefense Program within the Schar School of Policy and Government  
PhD in Biodefense, Master's in Public Health**

**Hannah Lichtsinn, MD  
Internal Medicine,  
Minneapolis, MN  
<https://www.hennepinhealthcare.org/provider/hannah-lichtsinn-md/>**

**Dr. Saskia Popescu** @SaskiaPopescu · Apr 18, 2022  
Replying to @SaskiaPopescu  
For air travel - removing masking requirements is a great way to ensure you're spreading COVID (and any other respiratory infection in circulation) among a lot of people going to a lot of different regions. (5/n)

**Dr. Saskia Popescu** @SaskiaPopescu  
We may want to be done with COVID, but forcing our way through it is myopic & frankly ridiculous. People are still getting sick, going to hospitals, & dying. We need primary prevention, like masks +vaccines. Personally, I'll continue to wear a mask on airplanes & pubtranspo (6/6)

**Hannah Lichtsinn, MD** @DoctorLix  
Please don't wait for the CDC or your local health department to mandate masks or raise the "alarm" level before you restart taking COVID precautions. They are sadly politicized & not poised to protect public health.  
**WE ARE IN A SURGE & you should be wearing an n95 mask indoors.**  
5:25 PM · May 9, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

5

EXCLUSIVE

## Supreme Court has voted to overturn abortion rights, draft opinion shows

"We hold that Roe and Casey must be overruled," Justice Alito writes in an initial majority draft circulated inside the court.

By **JOSH GERSTEIN** and **ALEXANDER WARD**  
05/02/2022 08:32 PM EDT  
Updated: 05/03/2022 02:14 PM EDT

<https://www.politico.com/news/2022/05/02/supreme-court-abortion-draft-opinion-00029473>

## Supreme Court says leaked abortion draft is authentic; Roberts orders investigation into leak

PUBLISHED TUE, MAY 3 2022-11:25 AM EDT | UPDATED TUE, MAY 3 2022-2:40 PM EDT

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/05/03/supreme-court-says-leaked-abortion-draft-is-authentic-roberts-orders-investigation-into-leak.html>

6

## Louisiana Republicans advance bill that would charge abortion as homicide

Antiabortion advocates pointed to the leaked draft of a Supreme Court opinion proposing to overturn Roe v. Wade to justify the measure

 By Caroline Kitchener  
May 5, 2022 at 10:53 a.m. EDT

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/05/05/louisiana-republicans-advance-bill-that-would-charge-abortion-homicide/>

## Governor signs bill criminalizing mail-in abortion drugs

By Amanda Watts, CNN  
Published 1:32 PM EDT, Fri May 6, 2022

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/05/06/us/tennessee-abortion-pills-by-mail-bill/index.html>

7

LAW

## Overturing Roe v. Wade could restrict more than abortion, according to experts

May 9, 2022 · 4:31 PM ET  
Heard on [All Things Considered](#)

 SARAH MCCAMMON 

<https://www.npr.org/2022/05/09/1097673848/overturing-roe-v-wade-could-restrict-more-than-abortion-according-to-experts>


## Unsuspecting men don't yet know that overturning Roe v. Wade will also change their lives

*Supreme Court ruling could mean avoiding forced fatherhood may become far more difficult unless men agree to practice a lifetime of abstinence.*

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/columnists/2022/05/11/abortion-law-roe-supreme-court-men/9667205002/?qnt-cfr=1>


8

What I'm doing: donating to support reproductive rights




THE DC ABORTION FUND

<https://dcabortionfund.org>



Planned Parenthood®



Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington, DC, Inc.

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/planned-parenthood-metropolitan-washington-dc>

9


TO MY FEMALE COLLEAGUES

You are a valuable, precious, and unique individual.

You have a right to make decisions about your body.

Your life is just as important as a man's.

You are allowed to feel how ever you do and your feelings are valid.



10

## TO MY MALE COLLEAGUES

- Listen to the women in your life; do not dismiss their words or feelings. Do not tell them how to feel or to “not feel betrayed”.
- Speak words of support to the women in your life; tell them directly you love and support them.
- Make intentional daily choices to **advocate** for the women in your life.



11

## TO EVERYONE

- Take time away from Mason this summer.
- Take steps to recover from this academic year.
- Ignore your email.
- Enjoy your hobbies.
- Eat good food.
- Be with people you love and who love you.



12