Campaign Brand Strategy
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Introduction

This document outlines the brand strategy for the American College Health Association's (ACHA) VaxForward campaign. The overarching goals of the VaxForward campaign are to:

• Promote COVID-19 vaccination
• Promote vaccine confidence

This campaign will support college health and higher education professionals at colleges across the United States in their efforts to achieve high levels of COVID-19 vaccination among their campus communities.

This guide outlines how to use and adapt:

• Content elements like the campaign name, messages, and voice and tone
• Visual elements like the logo, color palette, typography, and image style
Campaign Name and Strategy

**VaxForward** is a hopeful call to action for students, faculty, and staff to get vaccinated so they can be part of the campus communities and activities they love. The positive, optimistic framing aims to appeal to a wide range of audiences who may be undecided about getting the vaccine — including people who may not trust the health care system or who believe misinformation about vaccines.

In messaging around the campaign name, college health and higher education professionals can consider using “vax forward” as a verb in the spirit of “fast forward.” This approach frames vaccination as a way to accelerate toward the college experiences people have missed. For example:

- “Let’s **vax forward** to a better school year.”

Student ambassadors can use the name to talk about post-vaccination plans, like:

- “I’m ready to **vax forward** to a graduation with family and friends.”
- “Let’s **vax forward** to a real spring break.”
In addition, messaging can highlight reasons to get vaccinated using the phrase “vax for.” For example, “I vax for everyone who keeps our campus running.”

Social content can use #VaxForward, which is not currently in use on Twitter or Instagram.
Voice and Tone

The **voice** of the campaign needs to be consistent across all products. We envision the voice of this campaign sounding like a supportive friend or peer. It will be:

- **Youthful** but not immature
- **Encouraging** but not pushy
- **Empathetic** but not patronizing
- **Conversational** but not too chatty
- **Evidence-based** but not too jargony

To achieve a conversational, friendly voice, we recommend using everyday words, contractions, and second-person pronouns (you/your).

The **tone** can vary based on the context — including the specific topic you’re addressing and the likely emotional state of the audience. For example, messages about the ability to do fun campus activities might have a more playful or light-hearted tone, while messages about the risks of getting COVID will sound more serious.

Just be careful not to sound too harsh or negative. Even if you’re addressing a potentially stressful topic like vaccine side effects, plain language and a direct, straightforward tone can communicate the seriousness of the topic without shaming or distressing the audience — or minimizing their concerns.
Messaging Considerations

Here are some considerations to keep in mind when developing additional campaign messages and materials.

Instead of a call to “get back to normal” on campus, consider focusing on moving forward or enjoying specific moments and experiences people have missed over the past year.

- BIPOC, people with disabilities, and other audiences who’ve experienced discrimination and medical racism may not want to return to a pre-pandemic status quo.
- Incoming freshmen [and on some campuses, sophomores], may not have a clear vision of what college life was like before the pandemic.
- Commuter and community college students may be less focused on the physical campus environment.
- Some colleges didn’t significantly change their operations during the pandemic, and some students may have continued socializing “normally” over the past year.
Think about how messaging will work with a range of campus COVID policies — and keep an eye on how those policies are playing out.

- Consider how messaging and calls to action align with campus policies (e.g., schools that are requiring vaccination and those that are not requiring vaccination)
- Some campuses may still require masks in some settings, so framing vaccines as a way to immediately get rid of masks may not work
- Look for opportunities to build vaccine confidence beyond the immediate goal of COVID-19 vaccination — like explaining the vaccine trial process or how vaccines work

Be aware of potential negative connotations around certain terms.

- Phrase messages that use the word “shot” to avoid any potential confusion with guns or gun violence
- Avoid graphic language describing injections to prevent triggering people who have a fear of needles

Frame keeping the campus community healthy and safe as a group effort.

- Some campus community members may not be concerned about their own risk of getting COVID-19, but may be more motivated to protect others
- Emphasize that everyone must work together toward the common goal of a better school year
- Leverage campus mascots, colors, or taglines to add a sense of school spirit
Avoid directly stating misinformation about COVID-19 vaccines.

• Stating misinformation outright, even in a “myth vs. fact” format, can lead some readers to remember the myth rather than the fact
• Stating myths can also inadvertently introduce vaccine hesitancy for readers who haven’t heard the misinformation before
• When you need to debunk misinformation, use a “truth sandwich” approach — start with the fact, briefly mention the misinformation and explain how we know it’s false, and finish by restating the truth in more detail and offering sources to back it up
Campaign Messages

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, health communication researchers have conducted many studies to understand audience perceptions of the vaccine, drivers of vaccine hesitancy, and message strategies that build vaccine confidence.

Feel free to use and adapt the following sample messages to address information gaps, perceived barriers, and potential motivators for college audiences.

Campus Community

Many students (particularly younger students) may not feel “at risk” for COVID infection, so focus on how getting vaccinated protects others.

Sample Messages

• Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is the best way to protect yourself, your family, and our whole campus community.

• COVID-19 could be very serious for people on campus with disabilities and chronic health problems. Get a COVID-19 vaccine to slow the spread and keep our whole campus community safe.

• It’s possible to get COVID-19 and never feel sick — but you could give the virus to a friend or family member who’s at high risk for serious health problems.
Vaccine safety and development process

Many people question the safety of vaccines that were developed on an expedited timeline. Emphasize the diversity of people involved in clinical trials, stress the safety of the process, and explain how scientists were able to work quickly.

Sample Messages

• People of many different races and ethnicities participated in clinical trials to make sure the COVID-19 vaccines are safe — and that they work. In fact, thousands of Americans volunteered to participate in the vaccine clinical trials to help make them available today.

• The COVID-19 vaccines were developed more quickly than previous vaccines. The process was fast because international researchers, scientists, and government agencies worked together in new ways to put an end to the pandemic. But they didn’t skip any safety steps.

• Experts have been working on the mRNA technology used in the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines for more than 20 years.
Concerns about “feeling sick” are a key barrier to vaccination, so set realistic expectations and reframe side effects as a signal that the vaccine is working.

**Sample Messages**

- It’s normal to have some side effects — like feeling tired and achy — for a day or 2 after getting vaccinated. These side effects are signs that your body is building up protection, and that means the vaccine is working.

- You can’t get COVID-19 from a vaccine. Side effects from the vaccine are a sign that it’s working — not symptoms of COVID-19.
Some audiences worry about long-term health effects from the new vaccines — and perceive the risk of vaccination as higher than the risk of getting COVID-19. Focus on stating what we know, debunking myths, and explaining that getting COVID-19 is riskier than vaccination.

**Sample Messages**

- Researchers haven’t found any long-term side effects from COVID-19 vaccines. But they have found long-term health problems from getting COVID-19 — even in people who didn’t have any symptoms when they were first infected. Experts agree that it’s much safer to get vaccinated than to risk getting sick with COVID-19.

- We know from decades of research on other types of vaccines that it’s very rare for them to cause long-term side effects. If you’re going to have side effects, they usually happen within 8 weeks after getting a vaccine.

- There’s no evidence that getting a COVID-19 vaccine can affect your ability to have kids. There’s been confusion about this because of a false report that spread on social media.
College audiences may value more in-depth explanations of vaccine science. So when appropriate, drill down into the science to support vaccine messages.

**Sample Messages**

- The COVID-19 vaccines are very effective at preventing people from getting very sick. Fully vaccinated people are less likely to get very sick, go to the hospital, or die from any type of COVID — including the variants.

- Vaccines work by training your immune system to recognize and fight off a specific germ before it has a chance to make you sick. Even if you already had COVID-19, getting vaccinated can help your immune system fight the virus better in the future.

- When more people get vaccinated, it's harder for new variants to form. That's because the COVID-19 virus needs to infect someone before it can change into a new variant, and vaccinated people are less likely to get infected.
Hesitant audiences can benefit from reminders that it’s okay to have concerns about vaccination. Acknowledge these concerns with empathy — and encourage them to find credible information sources so they can feel confident in their vaccine decisions.

**Sample Messages**

- If you have questions about COVID-19 vaccines, don’t be afraid to ask! The campus health center can help you make an informed decision for your health.
- It’s natural to have questions and concerns about vaccines. Talk with your doctor so you can get the answers you need to feel confident about getting vaccinated against COVID-19.
Visual Identity

The VaxForward campaign’s visual identity is vibrant, bold, artsy, diverse, and youthful. It has a forward-thinking and hopeful spirit, designed to inspire confidence and optimism that this year will be better than the last. It plays to a classroom vibe with style elements reminiscent of note-taking and highlighting, like a marker-inspired font and brushstrokes.

The primary colors are eye-catching and striking, with the secondary colors providing a contrast to let the primaries shine through. The colorful, semi-realistic icons look like they could have been sketched by a talented art student.

Finally, we’ve taken care to make sure that all visual identity elements are inclusive, both in terms of accessibility and representation. For example, the fonts are all sans serif for improved readability, and our recommended color contrasts comply with Section 508 accessibility guidelines (the government’s standard for ensuring digital content is accessible to all users).

The guidance for choosing photos aims to ensure that everyone will see themselves represented in VaxForward materials — photos will show a mix of races, ethnicities, body types, gender identities, and ages to reflect the diversity of college campuses across the country.
Logo and Logo Usage

**Fluid. Progressive.**
The driving concept of the VaxForward logo is a sense of forward motion into a better future. The fast-forward-button styling on the letter O and the yellow brushstroke highlight reinforce this concept. The VaxForward logo uses Permanent Marker font.

There are stacked and horizontal variations of the logo, and versions for light and dark backgrounds.

**Logo Spacing**
The minimum clear space around the logo is defined as the height of the V. It’s important to maintain this clear space when proportionately resizing the logo.
Co-Branding

When using the VaxForward logo with partner logos, please follow these guidelines:

- Place partner logos below or to the left of the VaxForward logo and align them appropriately.
- When possible, use a grayscale version of the partner logo to minimize color conflicts.
Color Palette

**Primary Colors**

Vibrant. Bold.
Our primary colors — purple, cyan, green, yellow, and pink — are cheerful and vibrant.

- **Purple**
  - HEX: #5B448F
  - RGB: 91 / 68 / 143
  - CMYK: 77 / 87 / 9 / 1

- **Cyan**
  - HEX: #00ADEF
  - RGB: 0 / 173 / 239
  - CMYK: 69 / 15 / 0 / 0

- **Green**
  - HEX: #2BB397
  - RGB: 43 / 179 / 151
  - CMYK: 74 / 3 / 52 / 0

- **Yellow**
  - HEX: #FFCF00
  - RGB: 255 / 207 / 0
  - CMYK: 1 / 17 / 99 / 0

- **Magenta**
  - HEX: #DC2C76
  - RGB: 220 / 44 / 118
  - CMYK: 9 / 95 / 25 / 0

**Secondary Colors**

Chill. Supportive.
Our secondary colors — neutrals with classic, chill vibes — help the primary colors pop.

- **Black**
  - HEX: #090909
  - RGB: 9 / 9 / 9
  - CMYK: 74 / 68 / 66 / 86

- **Light Grey**
  - HEX: #E5E5E5
  - RGB: 229 / 229 / 229
  - CMYK: 9 / 6 / 7 / 0
## Color Contrast

It's important to have enough color contrast between content and background so that text and non-decorative images are easy for everyone to see — including people with low vision, colorblindness, and other vision-related conditions. To meet Section 508 accessibility standards, the minimum color contrast ratio is 4.5 to 1.

The guidance below shows how to use the colors in the VaxForward palette to meet color contrast standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use this font color</th>
<th>only on these background colors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black</strong></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Color Swatches" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Magenta</strong></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Color Swatches" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purple</strong></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Color Swatches" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White</strong></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Color Swatches" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grey</strong></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Color Swatches" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Typography

Below you’ll find typography guidance for the VaxForward campaign.

**Header 1:** Montserrat Black, Secondary Black

**Header 2:** Permanant Marker, Secondary Black, Yellow

Brushstroke background (wherever possible). All caps can be hard to read in large doses, so use this font for shorter headers.

**Header 3:** Montserrat ExtraBold, Secondary Black

**Body copy:** Montserrat Medium, Secondary Black

Body copy will be at least 12 pts for print, 16 pts for digital. It will have this style, line height, color, and weight.

**Bulleted list:** Montserrat Medium, Secondary Black, Primary purple bullet points using Permanent Marker bullet glyphs 9pts larger than bullet text

**Text Link:** Montserrat Medium, Primary Purple, underline

This is a text link.

**Visited Text Link:** Montserrat Medium, Primary Magenta, underline

This is a visited text link.

Download the fonts from Google Fonts

- Montserrat: https://fonts.google.com/specimen/Montserrat
- Permanent Marker: https://fonts.google.com/specimen/Permanent+Marker
Iconography

**Sketchy. Organic.**
The line-based icons combine a sketchy, hand-drawn feel with a colorful, organic shape. For icons of people, be sure to show a mix of races, ethnicities, body types, gender identities, etc. And lots of people don't like thinking about needles, so avoid vaccine-related icons that focus on needles.

Design Elements

**Artistic. Amorphous.**
Use brushstrokes to highlight key takeaways and main ideas. One side of the brushstroke typically runs off the edge of the page. Callout shapes may include an image (as shown to the right) or text only. The callout style works vertically or horizontally.
**Photography**

When choosing photos, look for vibrant and realistic images with a clear focus, strong lighting, and solid composition. Whenever possible, try to include 1 or more of the brand colors to create a cohesive look across materials.

**Photos with people**

- Choose images of people that are realistic and candid — avoid photos that look staged
- Choose photos that include people of diverse economic, ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds
- Show a wide variety of ages, gender identities, body sizes, and physical abilities so that everyone can see themselves represented in photos
- Consider including a mix of masked and unmasked people in photos to reflect what people are likely to see on campus
- Again, be mindful that some people are put off by needles — avoid showing people getting the actual injection (instead, consider a person with a bandaid on their arm)