

## **Faculty from at least 15 colleges and universities in Virginia sign petition surrounding reopening**

By Stephanie Penn | WHSV | July 3, 2020 at 9:22 PM EDT - Updated July 3 at 10:07 PM

HARRISONBURG, Va. (WHSV) - In only three days, more than 600 higher education employees from at least 15 different colleges and universities in Virginia have signed a petition highlighting requests for the fall.

The petition has three main points.

Educators say they want to be allowed to make their own decision about whether they feel comfortable teaching in-person or remotely this fall. Faculty also say they want to approve the instructional plans for the fall and want adequate safety measures for their return.

Doe Polanz is one of the three creators of the petition and an associate professor at James Madison University.

“We could not just say ‘vacation time, we off’ ‘No.’ No, there is no off time in this time of crisis,” Polanz said.

She said she and her co-founders would sometimes meet four times a day to put the work into the petition.

“Faculty are the core of the university, they are not employers and you know, if faculty are not willing to come back on campus then that’s going to create a much, much bigger problem and we don’t want this. We want to work together,” Polanz said.

Doe Polanz is one of the three creators of the petition and an associate professor at James Madison University.

JMU professor Hugo Moreira says she signed it for its unity.

“I have always believed that in the multitude of the counselors there is wisdom. And that is coming from Proverbs 15:22,” Moreira said.

Faculty say they hope the administration can hear the voices of those who want to get involved.

The petition had a closing date of July 4th, but Polanz said it will stay open, in the hopes of receiving more support.

*Copyright 2020 WHSV. All rights reserved.*