**Friday, April 10, 2020**

**Weekly News Digest: Penn State and the COVID-19 Crisis**

This email summarizes updates involving Penn State and the COVID-19 pandemic. Please review each weekly news digest on receipt and forward it to colleagues to keep them informed of recent developments.

* [STEM faculty now can borrow tech tools such as iPads and Apple Pencils](https://remoteteaching.psu.edu/ufaqs/i-am-a-stem-instructor-who-needs-help-to-deliver-equation-course-work-remotely-what-is-available-to-me/)to enhance remote delivery of their course content.
* New information explains [how alternative grading will affect entrance to major (ETM) requirements](https://remoteteaching.psu.edu/alternative-grading/#ETM) in administratively controlled majors at University Park.
* The [Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence (SITE) has new webpages](http://www.schreyerinstitute.psu.edu/RTandA)for faculty focused on strategies for remote instruction and learning assessment. SITE also is collaborating with Teaching and Learning with Technology (TLT) to offer [virtual office hours to support faculty](https://tlt.psu.edu/2020/04/07/the-schreyer-institute-for-teaching-excellence-site-and-tlt-team-up-to-offer-virtual-office-hours/), and TLT is providing access to a [database of peer-reviewed questions developed for large, entry-level courses](https://tlt.psu.edu/2020/03/30/peer-reviewed-questions-available-for-some-large-entry-level-courses/).
* For all faculty in their pre-tenure probationary period (as defined in University policy [AC23](https://policy.psu.edu/policies/ac23)), [updated University guidance](https://www.vpfa.psu.edu/files/2020/04/Guidance-for-Extension-of-Probationary-Period-Due-to-COVID-19-Updated-04.10.20.pdf) and [FAQs](https://www.vpfa.psu.edu/files/2020/04/FAQs-Extension-of-Probationary-Period-Due-To-COVID-19-04.10.20.pdf) are available regarding the extension of the probationary period due to COVID-19, starting with the 2020-2021 academic year.
* [Remote access to Penn State lab computers](https://news.psu.edu/story/614559/2020/04/08/academics/remote-access-penn-state-lab-computers-now-available) is now available to students and faculty at most campuses through the new [Penn State WebLabs website](https://weblabs.psu.edu/).
* The Graduate School launched a [COVID-19 webpage with information specifically for Penn State graduate students](http://gradschool.psu.edu/covid19/).
* Students can connect with organizations virtually on Tuesday, April 14, during the [Hire Big10+ Virtual Career Fair](https://news.psu.edu/story/613575/2020/03/30/academics/hire-big10-institutions-offer-virtual-career-fair-students-april).
* An email to Penn State seniors Wednesday, April 8, provided [details about the Spring 2020 virtual commencement ceremony](https://sites.psu.edu/virusinfo/faqs/#latest) to be held Saturday, May 9. Students who want to participate were instructed to provide phonetic spellings and pronunciations of their names by noon Tuesday, April 14. More commencement-related information is available in [updated FAQs online](https://sites.psu.edu/virusinfo/faqs/#latest).
* The [Schreyer Honors College will hold a virtual, pre-recorded medals ceremony](https://www.shc.psu.edu/events/item.cfm?id=7680) for its Spring 2020 graduates from 4:30-6 p.m. Friday, May 8.
* In partnership with the Schreyer Honors College, the University Libraries is moving forward with the annual [Outstanding Undergraduate Thesis Award](https://drupalauth.libraries.psu.edu/about/student-awards/outstanding-undergraduate-thesis-award) competition, which will be held virtually. The submission deadline was extended to Tuesday, April 21.
* Prospective **undergraduate** students can apply to the University Park campus through Monday, May 1, and to Commonwealth Campuses through Friday, July 31. Applications are being processed on a rolling basis as usual. [Penn State World Campus](https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/about-us/news-and-features/updates-regarding-coronavirus) applicants have different deadlines.

* New **undergraduate** students are being encouraged to [accept their admission offers by Monday, May 1](https://admissions.psu.edu/coronavirus/), and to begin their transition activities. However, students needing additional time can go to their MyPennState portals by May 1 to request an extension to Monday, June 1.
* In coordination with University Health Services and Human Resources, Penn State Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) has developed [new protocols to help protect the health of employees](https://news.psu.edu/story/614188/2020/04/05/administration/penn-state-develops-processes-help-protect-employees-during) who are performing mission-critical functions on campus. Among them are [employee guidance for working on campus](https://ehs.psu.edu/sites/ehs/files/employee_hs_guidance_final.pdf) and [instructions for supervisors](https://ehs.psu.edu/sites/ehs/files/covid19-supervisorinstructions.pdf) responding to reported COVID-19 cases in their work units.

* Penn State University Press is partnering with EBSCO Information Services to provide [unlimited access to Press e-books](https://news.psu.edu/story/614264/2020/04/06/arts-and-entertainment/penn-state-university-press-makes-e-titles-available) for library clients through June 30.
* The [Penn State Alumni Trustee Election](https://news.psu.edu/story/613880/2020/04/01/administration/penn-state-alumni-trustee-election-begin-april-10)began today and concludes Thursday, May 7.

**To obtain comprehensive, updated information at any time, visit:**

* The University’s official [COVID-19 information site](https://sites.psu.edu/virusinfo)and [FAQ page](https://sites.psu.edu/virusinfo/faqs/)   
  (Note: The most recent FAQ updates are provided [here](https://sites.psu.edu/virusinfo/faqs/#latest))
* The [Office of Human Resources COVID-19 information site](https://hr.psu.edu/covid-19-coronavirus)
* A robust [list of contacts and resources](https://sites.psu.edu/virusinfo/contacts-and-resources-for-penn-staters/)for the University community
* The University websites dedicated to remote [teaching](http://remoteteaching.psu.edu/) and [learning](http://remotelearning.psu.edu/)