Friday, May 1, 2020

News Digest: Penn State and the COVID-19 Crisis

This email provides a high-level overview of University news and updates during the past week. Please review and forward this weekly news digest to colleagues to keep them informed of recent developments.

- Three new task groups are working to establish the necessary infrastructure and processes to uphold health and inform a plan for Penn State students, faculty, and staff to return to campus. In line with the latest directives and guidelines from government and public health authorities, the University remains optimistic for a Fall 2020 return to on-campus learning, Penn State will keep people informed and provide updates and additional information by June 15, if not sooner.

- Penn State released instructions on how to use the GPA calculator tool in LionPATH to help undergraduates estimate how alternative grades will impact their GPAs.

- The Office for Summer Session published FAQs for students taking online courses this summer.

- By May 12, all Penn State students must enroll in and use two-factor authentication (2FA) to access more than 2,300 sites and services protected by WebAccess.

- Updated sabbatical leave FAQs were provided on the Faculty Affairs website.

- Reports released by Moody’s Investors Services and S&P Global Ratings gave Penn State’s credit rating a stable outlook.

- The Office of Global Programs provided clarifications about immigration policy for the University’s international population.

- The 2020 Symposium for Teaching and Learning with Technology (TLT) and Canvas Day will be held virtually, and the TLT Summer Series will have its first session on May 13. Ten additional sessions will be held on Wednesdays throughout the summer.

- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) will continue to offer vital student services during the summer, including same-day phone support, individual counseling, and daily virtual Life Hacks sessions.
• Beginning May 4, University Police and Public Safety will host four weekly Zoom sessions (registration required) for the Penn State community. Two sessions each week will cover the University’s Active Attacker Response Program; the other two will be open Q&A sessions.

• Penn State faculty now have access to Microsoft MyAnalytics, an Office 365 program that provides tools for personal productivity.

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

• The University’s official COVID-19 information site and FAQ page (Note: The most recent FAQ updates are provided here)
• The “University Measures” webpage, which summarizes steps Penn State is taking in response to COVID-19.
• The Office of Human Resources COVID-19 information site
• A robust list of contacts and resources for the University community
• The University websites dedicated to remote teaching and learning