

Friday, July 24, 2020

News for Faculty: Penn State's Preparations for Fall 2020

This twice-weekly email is designed to provide faculty with Penn State's pandemic-related news and updates as the University prepares for the Fall 2020 semester. Watch for these emails on Tuesdays and Fridays, with additional "special editions" delivered periodically. Previous faculty news digests are [archived here](#).

QUESTIONS FROM FACULTY

Q: What are the University's recommendations regarding faculty's use of personal protective equipment (PPE) on campus this fall?

The first round of recommendations is now available on the [Keep Teaching website](#) (requires WebAccess authentication) for Penn State instructors teaching in-person classes this fall. Several common faculty FAQs on this topic have been addressed, as well, including:

Q: Who decided the appropriate PPE to use?

A: At least 50 faculty and staff members from many Penn State campuses and disciplines contributed to the initial phase of researching and testing various masks and other PPE in classroom, laboratory, and other campus settings.

Q: Will there be enough PPE available for all individuals planning to return to Penn State campuses this fall?

A: The University has purchased 1.5 million procedure masks (adding to the 500,000 cloth masks previously purchased) for instructor use in general purpose classrooms, more than 14,000 face shields, and 8,000 clear masks to meet specific teaching and learning needs for University Park and all campuses. For each instructor teaching in-person classes, 50 procedure masks will be provided before the fall semester begins, and masks will be replenished as needed.

Q: What about areas where typical PPE won't work?

A: Testing is ongoing through the summer, and the recommendations will continue to be updated. Multiple sub-groups are evaluating additional pedagogical learning environments before the fall semester, including performance settings (music/vocal/theater), close contact settings (nursing/physical therapy/allied health), and many more.

For the unabridged responses to these and other FAQs, [read the story on this topic in Penn State News](#). Also, for related information, [watch this recent video from Bill Sitzabee, Penn State's chief facilities officer](#), who explains the thorough cleaning and disinfecting regimens being instituted for campus buildings and spaces.

Q: What do I do if a student in my class refuses to wear a mask or follow other health and safety guidelines?

A: An updated [Classroom Guidance for Instructors document](#) (as of July 22) is posted on the website for the [Office of Student Conduct](#). The evolving content describes the steps that faculty can take to provide a positive learning environment and manage COVID-related concerns in the classroom. The guidance includes a sample statement for faculty to include in their course syllabi and a series of steps that faculty can take if a student fails to adhere to health and safety requirements. Students who fail to comply with requirements will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and will not be allowed to return until the matter is addressed through Penn State's conduct process. Learn more about preparing to manage classrooms this fall in this [video featuring Danny Shaha](#), assistant vice president for Student Affairs.

You can read the [full FAQ on this topic](#) and several others related to Fall 2020 instruction on the [Keep Teaching website's FAQ page](#).

LATEST NEWS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACULTY

- **SEEKING YOUR FEEDBACK:** The University-wide task force focusing on Campus Classroom Technology needs your input on a critical decision point about the use of chalk/whiteboards in classrooms and their integration into Zoom and other online sessions. **By Friday, July 31, please complete this short, five-minute [Classroom Technology Survey](#)** about your interest in using digital alternatives to supplement chalk/whiteboard use while teaching mixed-mode instruction (face-to-face/remote synchronous) this fall. This survey is not anonymous. Instructor names will be used to deploy touchscreen monitors to the learning spaces where they are most needed.
- In an [open letter yesterday to Penn State faculty and staff](#), President Barron discussed how the confluence of a pandemic, extraordinary financial stress, and a social justice crisis have caused unprecedented challenges to our University.
- A [new resource now available to all Penn State faculty](#) (requires WebAccess authentication) provides a suggested timeline for communication to students regarding Fall instruction, as well as templates to streamline this process and ensure consistency with key information, and technical information to support faculty in using Canvas as a communications platform. Faculty can use and adapt this resource to suit their specific needs.
- On July 22, President Barron joined the presidents of the University of Pittsburgh and Temple University to [voice support for mask-wearing and mitigation efforts put in place by Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf's administration](#) to stop the recent rise in cases of COVID-19 and keep Pennsylvanians safe.

- To promote the safety of students, families, and community members during the off-campus move-in process, [Penn State and State College Borough leaders sent a letter to off-campus students and local landlords](#) highlighting tips for travel, move-in, and arrival.
- The [new “Countdown to Fall: Student Support and Engagement Series” kicks off Monday, July 27](#), with a series of hourlong Zoom sessions for instructors and staff at all Penn State campuses. Preregistration is not required. Upcoming sessions (all to be held from Noon to 1 p.m. EDT) include:
 - Monday, July 27: [Preparing for Fall: Building Your College or Campus First-year Engagement Plan](#)
 - Tuesday, July 28: [Preparing for Fall: Lessons Learned From Summer](#)
 - Wednesday, July 29: [Preparing for Fall: Supporting Campus Diversity and Inclusivity](#)

If you have questions about this new webinar series or any scheduled sessions, [read the Penn State News story](#) or contact [Penny Carlson](#) , [Kelly Griffith](#), or [Tonya Peeples](#).

- [Educators and instructional and learning designers at Penn State](#) have been key elements of the pivot to remote instruction as the University works to overcome the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- [A recording is now available of the July 20 webinar](#) focused on Start at Home and Continue at Home learning options for students. Send questions about the webinar to [Penny Carlson](#) or [Jeff Smith](#).

KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- In addition to the aforementioned “Countdown to Fall” series, copious development and training opportunities are available to faculty in preparation for the Fall 2020 semester. [Upcoming webinars for instructors](#) at all Penn State campuses include:
 - **Monday, July 27, Noon-1 p.m. EDT: Strategies for Remote Synchronous Instruction** – This 30-minute presentation followed by 30-minute Q&A will focus on designing your remote synchronous course to foster student engagement, support group projects, and include flexibility while teaching in Zoom.

- **Tuesday, July 28, Noon-1 p.m. EDT: University Guidance: Syllabus Statements, Student Conduct, and Classroom Safety** – Panelists will discuss and answer questions about university guidance on syllabus statements, student conduct, and safety measures for classrooms.
- **Tuesday, July 28, 1-3 p.m. EDT: [Engaging Students in Flexible Course Delivery and Multi-Audience Synchronous Courses](#)**
- **Wednesday, July 29, 1-3 p.m. EDT: [Engaging Students Synchronously](#)**

Find information about many more faculty development and training opportunities on the [“Keep Teaching” website’s dedicated webinar page](#).

- Penn State [faculty are encouraged to continue submitting questions](#) via [this online form](#) so leadership can respond to them in upcoming communication, such as this news digest for faculty.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To obtain comprehensive, updated information at any time, please review:

- The University’s comprehensive resources on its [“Back to State” page](#) and [updated FAQs](#) regarding plans to resume on-campus work and learning this fall
- Penn State’s [“Keep Teaching”](#) and [“Keep Learning”](#) websites, including many [Fall 2020 instruction-related FAQs](#) and [new webinars](#)
- The online archive of [video messages](#) from Penn State leaders and experts, previous [news digests](#), and pandemic-related University [news stories](#)
- The [Office of Human Resources COVID-19 information site](#) and [“Return to Work on Campus”](#) resource site
- The [“University Measures” webpage](#), which summarizes steps Penn State is taking in response to COVID-19
- The University’s [health information page focused on personal safety practices](#) for individuals at all campuses
- A robust, updated [list of contacts and resources](#) for the University community
- The Social Science Research Institute [website featuring pandemic-related insights from University experts](#) and other resources