

Friday, July 17, 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: How is the University working with the Borough of State College and officials in other campus communities to encourage adherence to the Governor's order to wear face coverings when six feet of social distance cannot be maintained?

A: Several cooperative initiatives are underway. The Office of Government and Community Relations, Student Affairs, and Strategic Communications are actively working with local government leaders, businesses, landlords, and community leaders to collaborate on communications and enforcement. We understand that the Borough of State College is in the process of drafting a new ordinance that would give them more tools to enforce the Governor's mask-wearing order, which they are targeting for passage in early August.

At the Commonwealth Campuses, Chancellors and their staffs have been reaching out to their local government and community leaders on a regular basis since March to share news and receive feedback. In addition, the University's social marketing campaign to promote responsible behavior is being developed so it can be shared with local partners in government and business, and local leaders have been involved in the development of the campaign.

We fully understand that the University and the community must work together to address the many challenges ahead, and we have been committed to doing so since the start of this pandemic. For more on these efforts, see: <https://news.psu.edu/story/625925/2020/07/16/administration/penn-state-continues-partnering-local-communities-pandemic>.

Q: Will the Nittany Lion Inn in University Park be utilized for classroom space?

A: The University had previously announced that the Nittany Lion Inn would provide isolation space as needed during the pandemic. However, due to the need for additional classroom space this fall, only students in need of single-occupancy housing will be assigned to the Nittany Lion Inn. Isolation space instead will be provided at the Eastview Terrace residence hall complex, enabling the University to utilize the Nittany Lion Inn for much-needed additional instructional space.

Q: What are the “Start from Home” and “Continue from Home” flexible options that have been announced for students?

Students will be enrolled but will not be required to be on campus. Start from Home is for first-year students, while Continue from Home is for upperclass students. Learn more about [Start from Home and Continue from Home](#). Also, you are invited to attend a special webinar on this topic from 9:30-10:30 a.m. Monday, July 20. Contact [Judy Wills](#) for Zoom log-in information.

Answers to more Fall 2020 FAQs geared toward Penn State faculty are available on the [“Keep Teaching” website](#).

LATEST NEWS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACULTY

- The University is working with the Wolf administration on its Back to State plans and has confirmed with the Pennsylvania Department of Education that the [July 15 order](#) limiting indoor gatherings to fewer than 25 people does not apply to classrooms. Other indoor gatherings, however, cannot exceed 25 individuals and must adhere to masking and social distancing requirements. [Read Penn State’s meeting and events guidance, updated July 16](#).
- The new [Fall 2020 Faculty Lunch & Learn webinar series](#) is designed to provide critical information for Penn State faculty as they prepare their courses in one of the Fall 2020 instructional modes. Each webinar will address specific considerations for course design and teaching effectively both in-person with social distancing and remotely. [Webinars next week \(all from Noon – 1p.m. EDT\) include:](#)
 - Monday, July 20: [Overview of the Flexible Instructional Modes](#)
 - Tuesday, July 21: [Strategies for Mixed-Mode Instruction for Commonwealth Campus Faculty](#)
 - Wednesday, July 22: [Strategies for Mixed-Mode Instruction for All Campus Faculty](#)
 - Thursday, July 23: [Active Learning in Socially Distanced Classrooms](#)
- **UPDATE:** [Penn State will utilize the Nittany Lion Inn on the University Park campus for additional classroom space](#) and [single-occupancy housing](#) for on-campus resident students. The University had [previously announced](#) the Nittany Lion Inn would provide isolation space, as needed, during the pandemic. Instead, the Eastview Terrace residence hall complex will be used for this purpose.
- The [University is developing plans to support the health and safety of faculty and staff members during the transition back to in-person work functions](#). Work adjustments are an option for immunocompromised and other vulnerable employees.

- [Penn State anticipates that about half of its classes across all campuses will have an in-person component this fall](#) structured in a way that allows for social distancing in classes.
- In preparation for a return to campuses this fall, [Kelly Wolgast of the College of Nursing has been named the director of the Penn State COVID Operations Control Center](#).
- **UPDATE:** The Trump administration said it would [no longer require foreign students to attend in-person classes during the pandemic in order to remain in the United States](#). Along with 58 other U.S. colleges and universities, [Penn State had filed an amicus brief in support of a lawsuit](#) to block a policy prohibiting international students from remaining in the U.S. while enrolling exclusively in online courses.

KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- Penn State faculty at all campuses are strongly encouraged to complete this [brief survey about the kinds of instructional development that will best support their teaching](#) in Fall 2020. Faculty guidance will drive the development of future programming.
- The “Keep Teaching” website has [updated Return to Resident Instruction guidance](#), a [new webinar series for faculty](#), and many new and updated [Fall 2020 FAQs](#).
- Presented by Penn State Teaching and Learning with Technology, [Engaging Students Series virtual workshops](#) are designed to help faculty make course revisions to support student success in synchronous and asynchronous remote learning environments. [Several workshops are scheduled in July and August](#).
- Penn State [faculty are encouraged to continue submitting questions](#) via [this online form](#) so leadership can respond to them in upcoming communications.

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”](#) 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