

Friday, August 7, 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: *Do employees pay for pre-arrival testing and/or ongoing surveillance testing?*

A: No; employees who receive a test kit as part of pre-arrival testing, as well as employees who are identified for surveillance testing, will not pay anything for these tests. For more information about Penn State's testing and contact tracing plans, please see the [article in Penn State Today](#).

Q: *How can I connect with other faculty to discuss teaching and learning related to Fall 2020?*

A: According to responses to the Fall 2020 Instructor Needs Survey, many faculty want to engage with each other around fall teaching and learning. Penn State now has seed grants (\$200-\$400) to support connecting through communities of practice. To join, start, sustain, or fund your own community of practice, [visit this website](#).

You can read other FAQs related to Fall 2020 instruction on the [Keep Teaching website's FAQ page](#).

Q: *What does the University's contact tracing plan entail?*

A: The Penn State contact tracing program will leverage and up-scale existing contact tracing protocols in place at the University. The spoke-and-hub modeled program will be run by the Office of Student Affairs, with representation from the Commonwealth Campuses, and will include consistent oversight for all students, faculty and staff. [Read more](#).

LATEST NEWS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACULTY

- Students are [required to agree to the Penn State Coronavirus Compact](#), which is now available in LionPATH. The compact – which all undergraduate and graduate students at every campus location must confirm that they have read before returning to Penn State or beginning classes – outlines health and safety expectations and requirements for the upcoming semester.

- The State College Borough Council [passed a temporary ordinance](#), supported by Penn State, that mandates mask wearing and social distancing in most instances and limits the size of gatherings in the borough.
- A [faculty and staff COVID-19 symptom checker](#) is now part of a new employee-centered experience in the Penn State Go app. In addition to the symptom checker, the new Faculty and Staff Experience will feature access to Penn State email, Canvas Teacher, a link to Workday, and more.
- The Faculty Senate has posted [suggested syllabus language](#) for 2020-2021.
- An [interdisciplinary team of almost 400 Penn Staters](#) is helping healthcare workers at Penn State Health and local hospitals fight COVID-19 through the Manufacturing And Sterilization for COVID-19 (MASC) initiative.
- Renea Nichols, assistant teaching professor of advertising/public relations in the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, has [leveraged a range of strategies](#) to keep her students connected to her and one another despite the constraints of social distancing.
- Penn State will [receive more than \\$1.9 million](#) from the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund to help with the implementation of public health and safety plans as the University prepares to resume on-campus operations for the fall semester.

KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- This week, approximately 24,000 Penn State students from identified areas with a higher prevalence of coronavirus and employees who will be on the front lines to welcome and work with students [will be receiving at-home saliva COVID-19 testing kits](#) to be taken before arrival on Penn State campuses.
- The July 30 virtual Town Hall is now archived and available for viewing at <https://LiveEvents.psu.edu/>. The event addressed a range of topics, including plans for coronavirus testing, surveillance and contact tracing.
- The Return to Campus task group has [issued guidance](#) related to expectations for student behavior and safety compliance when visiting University offices.
- The University has announced student [move-in dates for all campuses](#) as well as information on the arrival process, what to pack, and other resources.

- The [new “Countdown to Fall: Student Support and Engagement Series”](#) includes 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, August 10: Welcome Week
 - Tuesday, August 11: Student Activities and Advocacy Units

The Zoom webinars can be accessed at <https://psu.zoom.us/j/99280363051>.

- 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, August 10: [Creating Community Online](#)
 - Monday, August 10: [Academic Integrity](#)
 - Tuesday, August 11: It All Adds Up: [Using EquatIO to Read and Write Math in a Digital Classroom](#)

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