Tuesday, September 1, 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: Will “classroom recordings” (as defined by University policy AD40) created by faculty and staff during the Spring 2020 semester and 2020-2021 Academic Year be reused by the University beyond the semester in which they were created?

A: Penn State revised policy AD40, Recording of Classroom Activities and Note-Taking Services, to reflect the extraordinary conditions presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional language has been added to the policy that specifies that “classroom recordings” (as defined by University policy AD40), created by faculty and staff during the Spring 2020 semester and 2020-2021 Academic Year, will not be reused by the University beyond the semester in which they were created without the prior written authorization of the recorded faculty or staff.

LATEST NEWS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACULTY

- Initial testing results released August 28 on Penn State’s public COVID-19 dashboard consisted of 14 positive cases from symptomatic testing and 13 positive cases from surveillance testing, for a total of 27 positive test results at the University Park campus for the period from August 21 to 27. In addition, test results from the weekend as well as new results from the prior week have been reported. The dashboard is available here.

- University Health Services has completed upgrades and renovations that will allow Penn State to more quickly and effectively diagnose students with coronavirus symptoms. One major element is the Abbott testing equipment, which the University recently installed and validated, now available for use.

- Classes will be held on Labor Day, Monday, September 7. More information about expectations regarding employees’ work schedules for that day is available here.

- Operating hours of the Pattee and Paterno Library will expand to 9 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays.
KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- To support the health and well-being of the University community this fall, Penn State is implementing a contact tracing process in coordination with the Pennsylvania Department of Health as part of a layered tracing and testing approach for students and employees across all campuses.

- Faculty, staff, and students will be contacted by email and text message if they are selected to participate in Penn State’s randomized COVID-19 surveillance testing program to identify asymptomatic carriers of the virus and monitor the prevalence of COVID-19 across all campuses. Participation is required for those who have returned to campus.

- Penn State Learning staff and tutors will provide in-person and remote tutoring as well as Guided Study Groups to support students in the fall 2020 semester.

- Faculty can still submit questions related to Penn State’s plans for a return to classrooms in the fall. Questions may be submitted here.

- Professional 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:
  
  o Thursday, September 3, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Ask the Experts: Virtual Office Hours

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