

**Tuesday, September 15, 2020**

**News for Faculty and Instructors: Penn State and COVID-19**

This twice-weekly email is designed to provide faculty and instructors with Penn State's pandemic-related news and updates during 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](#). For current Fall 2020 faculty guidance, resources, FAQ documents, and more, visit the "[Back to State Info for Faculty](#)" webpage.

**QUESTION FROM FACULTY**

***Q: Who is eligible to be tested via Penn State's on-demand testing and random screening programs?***

**A:** University Health Services provides appointment-based, "on-demand" testing for students who have COVID-19 related health issues. The information for students is found at <https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/health/myuhs>.

For University Park students who self-identify as having COVID-19 exposure or who have been identified by the contact tracing process, a Vault Health testing site is available on the lower level of the HUB Parking Deck. This is a temporary test site to address current needs in the first two weeks of September 2020 and may be extended beyond mid-September if the need continues. By allowing students to be tested who feel that they may have been exposed rather than solely those who have been identified by the contact tracing process, these expanded testing efforts will supplement and hasten the University's existing contact tracing efforts and the deployment of quarantine and isolation.

Both students and employees may be selected by the University for random screening as part of the University's ongoing surveillance testing program. Students and employees will be provided with instructions via email about where to go for this testing when they are selected.

For Commonwealth Campus students and employees, random screening is being conducted by Vault Health. Individuals selected for random screening will receive an email that includes specific directions on next steps. It is important that selected individuals register for their test within 48 hours of receiving the email and then complete their test within 48 hours of having the test kit in hand. On-demand testing for students of the Commonwealth Campuses is being conducted by Quest. Symptomatic students should contact their campus health center or testing contact to obtain directions on how to obtain a test kit.

## LATEST NEWS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACULTY

- Several new FAQs pertaining to promotion and tenure were added to the [2020-2021 Promotion and Tenure FAQ document](#) to provide guidance about processes in the midst of the pandemic. Please see FAQs #68, 70, and 71 for updated information about peer teaching reviews, an updated charge to the committee, and virtual meetings.
- Please check [Penn State's COVID-19 dashboard](#) for the latest on-demand testing and random screening results.
- The Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs is sponsoring a New Faculty Orientation seminar series, which kicks off Friday, September 18 with a session titled "Rethinking the Syllabus and Assessment," which will be held via Zoom from noon to 1:30 p.m. The seminar series is an extension of the half-day NFO held in August, and all series sessions will be held virtually. For more information about the series and Friday's session for new faculty, visit <https://www.vpfa.psu.edu/new-faculty-orientation/>.

## KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- Two contact tracing student [referral forms](#) are now available; one allows students to self-report concerns and the other allows individuals to refer students who have tested positive for COVID-19 or who may have been exposed.
- The [flexible instructional modes developed for the fall 2020 semester](#), along with limited classroom capacities, will remain in place at all Penn State campuses in spring 2021, provided that the public health landscape allows for some in-person instruction.
- Faculty and staff are encouraged to [report student progress in Starfish](#) to allow for a collaborative and proactive approach to assisting undergraduates. At a time when many students are learning remotely, Starfish is the central place for instructors to document and share the successes or challenges a student may be encountering in a course. It gives instructors the ability to note areas of concern, like whether they believe their students have reliable access to technology; and other important indicators of student progress, such as absences or inadequate class participation or completion of assignments.
- [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:
  - Wednesday, September 16, 12:00-1:30 p.m., [Assessment for Learning Impact Now](#)
  - Thursday, September 17, 2:00-4:00 p.m., [Hands-On Online Learning Opportunities](#)
  - Friday, September 18, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., [Engaging Students Synchronously](#)

## 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 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](#)
- Penn State's [COVID-19 dashboard](#)
- The online archive of [video messages](#) from Penn State leaders and experts
- 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