Tuesday, January 26, 2021

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 Spring 2021 semester. Watch for these emails on Tuesdays and Fridays, with additional “special editions” delivered periodically. Previous faculty news digests are archived here. For current faculty guidance, resources, FAQ documents, and more visit the “Back to State Info for Faculty” webpage.

QUESTION FROM FACULTY

Q: Do faculty and instructors need to have had a COVID-19 test before teaching in-person beginning February 15?

A: Faculty and instructors who are teaching in-person beginning February 15 do not have to have a COVID-19 test prior to returning to the classroom. Those who have travelled outside of Pennsylvania must follow Pennsylvania’s guidelines when returning to the Commonwealth; i.e., produce evidence of a negative COVID-19 test taken within 72 hours prior to returning or place themselves in quarantine for 10 days without testing or 7 days with a negative test on or after day 5 of quarantine. All employees who are working on campus will be subject to random surveillance testing during the spring semester.

LATEST NEWS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACULTY

- Penn State’s COVID-19 Dashboard shows ongoing results for all COVID-19 tests administered on campus since December 19, 2020, for faculty, staff, and students.

- Comprehensive information about the three spring semester wellness days is available at https://wellnessdays.psu.edu/.

WEBINARS

- Trauma-Informed Pedagogy: Thursday, January 28, 12:00-12:30 p.m. and 2:00-2:30 p.m. This session addresses effectively teaching students in times of high stress that impact the learning environment.

View the full list of webinars at https://keepteaching.psu.edu/webinars/. You can find additional self-paced materials to assist you with your courses on the Keep Teaching Spring 2021 Planning page. If you want to speak with a teaching consultant or a local learning designer about your course, consult the Keep Teaching Contacts and Support page.
• **Addressing Intersectionality to Transform Leadership at Penn State:** Friday, February 19, 2:00-5:00 pm and Friday, February 26, 2:00-5:00 p.m, via Zoom. Interested parties can register via this [Zoom Meeting Registration form](#).

**Who should attend:** All academic leaders and faculty interested in academic leadership who seek to broaden and deepen their understanding of intersectionality and its relationships to leadership within academia.

**Symposium Topic:** We will engage in interdisciplinary dialogue within our Penn State community in order to build understanding of the effects of intersectionality on success and leadership in academia with the goal of identifying pathways for transformational action and informing future initiatives.

**Who we are:** LEAADS@PSU is a network of women faculty committed to LEading Advocacy and Action for Diverse LeaderShip at Penn State. We are exploring and acting on issues that impact willingness and preparedness of faculty to engage in leadership.

**KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY**

• A new tool that will help students plan for Summer 2021 has been launched on the [University Registrar's website](#). This tool allows students and advisers to complete a university-wide class search for courses that were offered in the previous summer sessions and gives students and advisers a sense of the wide range of summer courses that typically are available to them through Penn State. It is important to note that no decisions about the delivery modes for Summer 2021 have been made; this information and the publication of the Summer 2021 Schedule of Courses should be available in the coming weeks.

• Engaging students in asynchronous courses: Interested in ensuring that your students feel engaged with you, the content, and each other in your asynchronous course? Check out TLT’s [Engaging Students Series Resources](#) for resources regarding engaging students asynchronously!

• Design reviews available: You’ve been able to check out the technology for your COVID course, but what about the design of the course itself? Even at this point in the semester, a design review can help you make small tweaks to your course that can make it more engaging and effective. To reach out for a design review, just email the LD Clearinghouse at LDClearinghouse@psu.edu and we'll set you up with a peer or learning designer!

• In Pennsylvania, the state Department of Health and county health departments are responsible for [COVID-19 vaccine distribution](#), which is being done in a phased approach with health care workers and those in long-term care facilities in the initial phase (Phase 1A). At this time, Penn State has not been named a distribution site for the vaccine and faculty, staff, and students should visit
Pennsylvania’s vaccine website for information on when they may be eligible to receive a vaccine and where those vaccines may be available in their communities.

- The Pennsylvania Department of Health has an informational website about the COVID-19 vaccine, which includes a COVID-19 Interim Vaccination Plan. The plan provides information about the distribution of vaccines when available and describes the phases for vaccine administration.

- Faculty can still submit questions related to Penn State’s COVID response. Questions may be submitted here.

**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
- Penn State’s “Keep Teaching” and “Keep Learning” websites, including many Spring 2021 instruction-related FAQs.
- Penn State’s COVID-19 dashboard
- Previous issues of this Digest.
- 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