Tuesday, April 6, 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: *When am I eligible to get a vaccine?*

A: Pennsylvania is currently in Phase 1B of the vaccine rollout. Those in 1B include faculty and staff members who are in contact with students as a condition of their employment and both undergraduate and graduate students who are in contact with other students while providing instructional, health-related or other services (including residence life) on behalf of the University. Phase 1C, which opens April 12, includes essential workers in a variety of sectors, including transportation, food service, finance, IT, energy, and public health. On April 19, all individuals 16 and older will be eligible. More information is available on Penn State’s vaccine page and on the Pennsylvania Department of Health website.

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.

- A team including researchers from Penn State has found that approximately 40,000 children in the U.S. may have lost a parent to COVID-19 since February 2020.

- Information about the third and final Wellness Day is available at wellnessdays.psu.edu. Programming on April 7 will focus on physical and environmental wellness.

WEBINARS

- **Wellness through Zoom Games and Improv**: Wednesday, April 7, 9:00-10:00 a.m.

KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY
• **Penn State is strongly encouraging all students, faculty, and staff to sign up to get a vaccine as soon as they are eligible to receive one.** Phase 2, which extends vaccine eligibility to all Pennsylvanians age 16 or older, will begin on April 19.

• President Eric Barron and guests **answered an array of questions from Penn State faculty and staff during a livestream about the University’s response to the coronavirus, employees returning to work on campus, health and safety of the community, and others topics related to the pandemic.**

• Physicians at Penn State Health urge people to **continue to wear a mask and follow other COVID mitigation guidelines**, even if they have been vaccinated.

• **Spring 2021 Holiday/Special Events Testing Schedule**
  - Saturday, April 17: no testing at Pegula Ice Arena or Beaver Stadium (Hintz Family Alumni Center and 101 N. Atherton St. open as usual for walk-up and random testing, respectively); testing at the Commonwealth Campuses remains unchanged.
  - Friday, May 7: no random testing (all campuses); one walk-up testing site open (Pegula Ice Arena).
  - Saturday, May 8: no random testing (all campuses); no walk-up testing.

• Walk-up COVID-19 testing hours at the University Park campus will continue as follows:
  - Walk-up testing at the Hintz Family Alumni Center will be available Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
  - Testing availability will change on the dates listed above. More information is available [here](#).

This walk-up testing is available to employees who are in the Return to Work database at University Park. Employees in that database also continue to have the option to do the opt-in mail kit testing.

• **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