Friday, July 23, 2021

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

This weekly email is designed to provide faculty and instructors with Penn State’s pandemic-related news and updates. Watch for these emails on 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 2021 Resources” webpage.

QUESTIONS FROM FACULTY

Q: Are the COVID-19 vaccines associated with fertility issues?

A: The COVID-19 vaccines do not cause fertility issues, according to Catharine Paules, infectious diseases physician, Penn State Health Milton S. Hershey Medical Center. Read the full FAQ here.

Q: Will COVID-19 variants continue to emerge if vaccination rates don’t rise?

A: Andrew Read, director of the Huck Institutes of the Life Sciences, explains that viruses experience frequent changes in their genetic code, and sometimes these mutations could make a virus more dangerous. Read the full FAQ here.

LATEST NEWS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACULTY

- University Health Services will host a second COVID-19 vaccine clinic for all students at the end of July.

- Cara Exten, assistant nursing professor, was recruited by the University to lead in the formation and execution of the COVID-19 testing and contact tracing initiatives.

- 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.

KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- During the pandemic, Tech TAs helped faculty and instructors manage the technology associated with their newly remote courses.

- Students are being asked to complete a short and anonymous survey about their current COVID-19 vaccination status or plans to get vaccinated before the start of the fall semester.
• Penn State is continuing to encourage students and employees to share their coronavirus vaccination status to help inform the University’s decision-making and its COVID-19 management plan. Employees can provide their vaccination status using Salesforce Health Cloud, a secure online platform.

• 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 “University Status” page and updated FAQs regarding on-campus work and learning
• Penn State’s “Keep Teaching” and “Keep Learning” websites, including many instruction-related FAQs
• Penn State’s COVID-19 dashboard
• Previous issues of this Digest
• The Office of Human Resources COVID-19 information site and “Return to Work on Campus” resource site
• 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