

**Tuesday, September 29, 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.

**FEATURED NEWS – WALK-UP TESTING FOR UNIVERSITY PARK EMPLOYEES**

Penn State is offering walk-up COVID-19 testing for University Park employees who are working on campus and those who are working in classroom/lab environments with direct interactions with students. This walk-up testing is voluntary and does not replace mandatory surveillance testing. Registration is not required. This week, testing will be held at the HUB Deck, which is a short-term solution while a more sustained solution is developed. Employees who want to utilize walk-up testing must be in the Return to Work database. Please bring your ID and smart phone and refrain from eating, drinking, chewing, or smoking 30 minutes before arriving for your test.

**Dates:** September 29-October 2, 2020

**Hours:** 9:00-10:00 a.m. Employees Only, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Employees and Students

**Location:** Basement level, HUB Deck, University Park Campus

**QUESTIONS FROM FACULTY**

**Q: *What if a student refuses to wear a mask or follow other health and safety guidelines in class?***

**A:** [Classroom Guidance for Instructors](#) is posted on the website for the [Office of Student Conduct](#). This document describes the steps that faculty can take to provide a positive learning environment and manage COVID-related concerns in the classroom. The guidance includes a sample statement for faculty to include in their course syllabi as well as a series of steps that faculty can take if a student fails to adhere to health and safety requirements. Students who fail to comply with requirements will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and will not be allowed to return until the matter is addressed through Penn State's conduct process. For more information on how to prepare to manage classrooms this fall, [watch this video featuring Danny Shaha](#), assistant vice president for Student Affairs.

**Q: *Can faculty require students to turn on their webcam during remote learning?***

**A:** No. Faculty should adopt a camera-optional practice for teaching through Zoom. A camera-optional approach respects student issues such as access and equity (some

may not have cameras on their devices), safety and security (some may be deployed military or in need of safety or privacy), and religious strictures. Faculty members who previously did not take attendance in their in-person classrooms should continue to respect that their students will attend remotely. Faculty who took attendance previously should explore manual and automatic options for taking attendance through Zoom. For help with these options, visit [keepteaching.psu.edu/training](https://keepteaching.psu.edu/training). If a faculty member chooses to record a Zoom session, student participation during the session should not be required. Students should be provided the choice to opt-out from identification in the recording by muting their audio, disabling video, and not typing into the chat window. In these cases, students should still be considered in attendance and should not be penalized in any way.

## LATEST NEWS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACULTY

- Penn State has updated its public [COVID-19 dashboard](#) with the University's on-demand testing and random testing results from tests administered [during the period of Sept. 25 to 27](#), as well as new University testing results from the prior week. These numbers are evolving as many test results are still pending, which will then be validated and uploaded.
- Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf and Secretary of Health Rachel Levine are encouraging Pennsylvanians to download [COVID Alert PA](#), a [COVID-19 exposure notification app](#) designed to help fight the spread of the virus.
- Penn State leaders will host a [virtual Town Hall event](#) on Sunday, October 4 at 2 p.m., during Parents & Families Weekend, to answer questions from students and their families about Penn State's return to campus and the University's ongoing response to the coronavirus.
- Gathering feedback from students at an early point in the semester helps gauge students' learning and provides instructors with valuable data for making course adjustments. Students appreciate being asked for feedback, especially when instructors respond with changes to improve learning. Surveying students is one method for gathering feedback. PSU learning surveys specific to the four COVID instructional modes have been created for you to download into your Canvas course to collect student feedback on the learning modes. Click [here](#) for instructions on how to download them into your course. For information about other options for collecting midsemester feedback, see the Schreyer Institute's Midsemester Feedback [page](#).
- Penn State IT has finalized an enterprise-wide service agreement with Top Hat, in September 2020. [Top Hat, currently available for an early adoption program](#), allows instructors and students to communicate and collaborate, create assignments on the fly, and check for knowledge. Instructors can learn how to

integrate this tool into their courses for this fall or next spring. More in-depth resources and live training will be available for broader adoption before spring 2021.

- Share a story about your successes in the Fall 2020 semester, in-person, mixed, or remote! We're looking for stories from instructors, students, and staff. Your experiences can help motivate and inspire others and generate new ideas that benefit the Penn State community. You may also recognize someone who you think is doing great work. You can find the form [here](#), which we encourage you to distribute within your department.
- The [September 23 virtual Town Hall event](#) hosted by President Eric Barron and University leadership to discuss Penn State's ongoing response to the coronavirus is now available to view online at <https://LiveEvents.psu.edu>. Individuals who watched the event are encouraged to fill out this anonymous [survey](#).

## KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- Violations of the University's expectations or local or state laws related to COVID-19 will typically [result in a referral to the Office of Student Conduct](#). Any large gathering off campus in violation of local ordinances will be considered a serious violation and will likely result in suspension.
- As part of the University's multi-pronged testing program, random and risk-stratified samples of students are [selected and tested daily](#) for COVID-19 during the semester.
- The [IM Building on the University Park campus has been reopened](#). All visitors are required to wear masks, practice social distancing, and follow enhanced health, safety and scheduling procedures.
- Please check [Penn State's COVID-19 dashboard](#) for the latest on-demand testing and random screening results.
- Penn State Human Resources, in partnership with Health Advocate, has announced a [three-pronged approach for the 2020 flu vaccine clinics](#) throughout the commonwealth. Employees can choose one of three options to get a flu shot.
- [Faculty can still submit questions](#) related to Penn State's return to classrooms this fall. Questions may be submitted [here](#).
- Professional development and training opportunities are available to faculty. [Upcoming webinars for instructors](#) at all Penn State campuses include:

- Thursday, October 1, 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., [Faculty Forum: Designing Online Discussions to Promote Engagement](#)

## 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