

Tuesday, October 20, 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.

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 October 16 to 18, as well as new University testing results from the prior week.
- In appreciation of the efforts of faculty and instructors to support students' learning, all members of Penn State's instructional community, at any location, are invited to attend the virtual [ITLC Lilly Conference - Enhancing Online, Onsite, and Hybrid Teaching & Learning](#), Nov. 30 to Dec. 4, 2020. We welcome all full-time faculty, part-time instructors, graduate students, teaching assistants, learning designers, and post-docs, but space is limited! To reserve your spot go to: tinyurl.com/LillySignUp.

WEBINARS

- A group of faculty experts will join Penn State President Eric Barron for his [next webinar](#) at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 22, to discuss the University's coronavirus testing and efforts to mitigate the spread of the virus. Faculty and staff members are invited to view the conversation via Zoom at <https://psu.zoom.us/j/99560449389>.
- The "Keep Engaging" Fall Webinar Series will be delivered via Zoom from noon to 1 p.m. every Monday through November 16. Upcoming webinars include:
 - Monday, October 26, 12:00-1:00 p.m., [Cultivating the "Mindful Nittany Pause" in Our Everyday as Penn Staters](#)
- [Upcoming webinars for instructors](#) at all Penn State campuses include:
 - Thursday, October 22, 12:00-1:00 p.m., [Instructor Wellness – Practicing Self-Care](#)

A recent (summer 2020) Penn State instructor survey revealed that, among other things, faculty are concerned about their well-being. At this mid-point in the semester, it seems prudent to take stock.

A sense of well-being emerges from various factors: meaningful connections, a sense of purpose and balance, the ability to manage stress and emotions in different areas of life, and maintaining healthy habits and overall physical health. In this session, participants will explore multiple dimensions of well-being and assess their own balance of well-being. We will consider how we might go about implementing change in areas we value most, and we'll also sample mindfulness exercises as self-care and attention practices.

- Thursday, October 22, 1:00-3:00 p.m., [Finding What You Need: Engaging Students Using Online Resources](#)

KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- The [recorded October 15 Q&A session](#) with President Barron is now available to [view online](#).
- The University will hold a remote symposium to help instructors prepare for the planned pivot to remote instruction on November 20. The [Transition to Remote Symposium](#) will be held via Zoom on Friday, November 6 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. More than 25 experts, including faculty champions from six campuses, as well as experts from TLT, the Schreyer Institute, World Campus, Penn State Harrisburg Center for Teaching Excellence, academic advising and student success centers, Environmental Health and Safety, and multiple college-level offices will serve as co-facilitators/panelists during the event. Attendees are encouraged to bring their questions, challenges, and successful tips.
- The [health and safety of the entire community](#) remains a joint town/gown priority as University officials, municipal leaders, local public health authorities, law enforcement and more prepare for the start of the Nittany Lion football season, which will take place without fans in attendance.
- The Penn State Faculty Senate [passed a resolution](#) asking the University to consider sharing additional COVID-related information with the Senate and consider several suggestions for the University's testing and virus mitigation strategies.
- In order to encourage communication to students in preparation for the November 20th transition to remote teaching and learning, a series of templates has been created for instructors who are currently teaching In-Person or Mixed courses. This will assist in communicating key information to students to help

them to prepare to be successful in their studies as they make this transition. We recommend all instructors [review these templates](#) and begin communicating this information as soon as possible.

- During the pandemic, use of technology and electronic communication are more important than ever. During National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, Penn State's Office of Information Security urges the University community to [protect their devices, data, and Penn State Accounts against cyberattacks](#) such as [ransomware](#). Faculty and researchers who work with [intellectual property](#) are encouraged to be particularly vigilant.
- Penn State IT is working to assist instructors and students with preparations for the remote teaching period that will take place following the Thanksgiving break. Information on technology resources and the Technology Loaner Programs is available on Penn State's [Keep Teaching](#) and [Keep Learning](#) websites. For students, there is a limited supply of loaner laptops and mobile hotspots. For instructors who need assistance with digital annotation, there is a limited supply of loaner iPads. Instructors and students can [access the Mobile Technology Request Form](#) with their Access ID and password.
- 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](#).
- 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.
- 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](#).

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