

Tuesday, November 3, 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.

QUESTIONS FROM FACULTY

Q: Will instructors at University Park and the campuses be able to use their classrooms after the University moves to remote instruction after November 20?

A: At University Park, general purpose classrooms will be closed during the Thanksgiving Break, from November 21 to November 29. Classrooms will reopen on November 30 for instructor use until the conclusion of classes on Friday, December 11. Classrooms will not be open during Finals Week. At the Commonwealth Campuses, general purpose classrooms will remain open to instructors for use after November 20, but instructors should check with local campus officials regarding availability of specific facilities. If an instructor is alone in the classroom, then they do not need to wear a mask. Masks must be worn in the presence of others, and shared equipment such as microphones, keyboards, and other items should be wiped down in accordance with Environmental Health and Safety "[Guidelines for Cleaning Computer Products](#)".

Q: Will Penn State continue to offer quarantine and isolation for students who test positive and need to stay past November 20?

A: Yes. Penn State's quarantine and isolation space at University Park and the Commonwealth Campuses will continue to be available after Nov. 20 for students who need to [quarantine or isolate](#) over the Thanksgiving break or after courses resume remotely on Nov. 30.

Students who are identified as needing to isolate or quarantine on or before Nov. 20 are expected to complete their isolation or quarantine period on campus or in another suitable single occupancy space off campus before they leave for Thanksgiving break and remote learning.

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 Oct. 30 to Nov. 1, as well as new University testing results from the prior week. The few pending results will be validated and uploaded when

completed. As of Nov. 2 at University Park, there are 173 active student cases and 3,822 students have completed their isolation period and are no longer active cases. Today's news story can be found [here](#).

- After a special meeting on October 29, the Faculty Senate voted to endorse a resolution drafted by student senators requesting the [reinstatement of an optional alternative grading system](#) for undergraduate students for the fall semester. The Senate then also voted to reinstate [Senate Policy 49-70](#), which established the alternative grading system implemented during the spring 2020 semester.
- The Symbiotic Podcast teamed up with the hosts of Podward State – a Penn State student-produced podcast – to [interview researchers working on a profoundly collaborative project](#) designed to measure multiple impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on residents and students in Centre County.
- [Penn State's overall enrollment for fall 2020 saw only a modest decrease](#) in the past year, positioning the University well ahead of nationwide averages during the COVID-19 pandemic.

WEBINARS

- [Toward Racial Equity at Penn State](#) roundtable series: The Day After: Assessing the Post-Election State of the Nation
 - Wednesday, November 4, 6:00-8:00 p.m.
- The [Transition to Remote Symposium](#) will help instructors prepare for the planned pivot to remote instruction on November 20. 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, and more, will serve as co-facilitators/panelists during the event.
 - Friday, November 6, 10:00 a.m.-2:45 p.m.
- 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, November 9, 12:00-1:00 p.m., [Inspiring Social Responsibility through Continued Learning and Dialogue](#)

KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- [Penn State is urging all students, faculty and staff](#) to download and use the Pennsylvania Department of Health's [COVID Alert PA app](#) to assist with early detection of possible COVID-19 exposure. The app uses private and anonymous [Exposure Notification System](#) technology developed by Apple and

Google to detect if a user has been in close contact with another app user who later tested positive for COVID-19.

- [As students complete quarantine and isolation](#) as part of the University's layered approach to mitigate the spread of coronavirus on its campuses, they are being surveyed to collect feedback about their experiences and to inform ongoing improvements in services and processes.
- To support the mental health and well-being of students, faculty and staff during the spring 2021 semester, [Penn State will hold three wellness days on which no classes will be held](#). The wellness days will take place on Tuesday, Feb. 9, Thursday, March 11 and Wednesday, April 7.
- Penn State has announced procedures and [assistance available to students for the fall departure from campuses](#), as well as COVID-19 testing and quarantine and isolation procedures after in-person instruction ends on November 20.
- 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.
- 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