

**Friday, November 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.

### **IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT THE DIGEST**

The Digest will not be published next week, November 24 or 27, during the Thanksgiving Break. The Digest will resume publication on Tuesday, December 1.

### **QUESTIONS FROM FACULTY**

**Q: *How does the November 17 Pennsylvania Department of Health order impact my travel?***

**A:** The [Pennsylvania Department of Health on Tuesday \(Nov. 17\) identified new mitigation strategies](#) the state is taking to slow the spread of COVID-19, including heightened masking and travel requirements.

Complete information about how the order impacts travel is available [here](#).

**Q: *Where can employees go for COVID-19 testing?***

**A:** University Park: Through the month of November, all faculty and staff employees who are in the University's "Return to Work" database may take advantage of a new process for voluntary asymptomatic COVID-19 testing. Employees can [initiate this testing process online through Vault Health](#). Test kits will be mailed to home addresses and the test will be completed under virtual observation with Vault Health to complete the process. Starting Nov. 30 through Jan. 18, walk-up testing will be available from noon to 5 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at the Hintz Family Alumni Center for University Park employees listed in the Return to Work database.

Other Penn State locations: For faculty and staff at other Penn State locations who work on site, opt-in asymptomatic testing via a Vault Health mail-in kit is available. This program will continue through Jan. 11, 2021. Testing will continue to be available only to employees who are listed in the University's "Return to Work" database. Employees can [initiate this testing process online through Vault Health](#). Test kits will be mailed to home addresses and the test will be completed under virtual observation with Vault Health to complete the process.

Employees who are not in the Return to Work database or who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 should stay home and call their health care provider to arrange for a symptomatic test, or schedule an appointment at a [publicly available COVID-19 testing site](#).

**Q: Will classrooms at Commonwealth Campuses be available for students for remote learning and studying?**

**A:** Classrooms will be available at Commonwealth Campuses after the shift to remote learning on November 20, but hours and availability will differ from campus to campus. Campuses will be communicating directly to their students and faculty about classroom availability. Students can also use the Penn State Go mobile app to find available classrooms or visit a campus' website for more information.

## LATEST NEWS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACULTY

- Penn State's [COVID-19 dashboard](#) has been updated today with the [preliminary results of on-demand and random testing for the period of November 13 to 19](#).
- With Penn State's courses transitioning to remote delivery and students living on campuses departing their residences by Nov. 20, the University is reminding its community of available [resources and guidance — including testing — for the remainder of the fall semester and calendar year](#). These include testing, remote learning and teaching resources, health and wellness services, and campus facilities and services.
- Penn State is directing [all employees who have been working from home during the fall semester to continue doing so](#) following the transition to remote learning on November 20 and throughout the upcoming spring semester, if not notified by their supervisors of the need to return to onsite work.
- There are a variety of academic, technology, housing, and other [resources available to help students prepare for the shift to remote learning](#), as well as virtual wellness, exercise, and mental health resources that will be available for all students during the remote learning period and beyond.
- Penn State students who must relocate to COVID-19 quarantine or isolation at University Park can take advantage of a [safe and socially distanced shuttle service](#), which will continue in the spring. The service uses Penn State Blue Buses to pick up students from designated locations around campus and transport them to temporary isolation housing at Eastview Terrace.
- The ways the coronavirus pandemic has changed the traditional brick-and-mortar learning experience will be discussed during the next episode of [WPSU's "Digging Deeper" on Sunday, November 22](#). Paul Morgan, professor of education and director of the Center for Educational Disparities Research, and Kelly

Rosinger, assistant professor of education, will join President Eric Barron for the discussion.

- According to a series of reports compiled by researchers in Penn State's Center for Economic and Community Development, job losses resulting from the coronavirus pandemic have affected wide swaths of the population, but [workers in some demographic groups and industry sectors have been hit harder than others](#).

## WEBINARS

- Upcoming webinars for instructors at all Penn State campuses include:
  - Monday, December 30, 3:00-5:00 p.m., [Ask the Experts: Virtual Office Hours](#)

## KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- In preparation for the departure from campuses after in-person instruction ends on November 20, [Penn State has announced an aggressive fall departure plan](#) offering all students COVID-19 testing, at no cost to students.
- In a presentation to the Board of Trustees at its Friday (Nov. 13) virtual meeting, President Eric Barron revisited [University actions related to the pandemic](#) that have been taken in key institutional areas, as well as new strategies for moving forward in response to the pandemic.
- To accommodate vehicle loading near student residence areas for fall semester departure, a [number of parking, traffic, and transit adjustments](#) will be in place beginning Friday, November 20 through Sunday, November 22.
- A [resource has been developed for instructors who are teaching asynchronously](#), such as World Campus or COVID-Web courses, to incorporate Wellness Days into these modes for Spring 2021. The resource provides practical ideas for addressing wellness with students.
- [Students who are studying outside of the U.S. may encounter problems obtaining instructional materials](#) such as textbooks, lab kits, and technology necessary to be successful in their courses. A cross-university team has developed a set of solutions for instructors to help ensure students have access to these materials in a timely manner.
- 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