

Tuesday, November 10, 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: *What is the status of walk-up virus testing?*

A: For employees, voluntary asymptomatic COVID-19 testing is available as follows:

University Park: For faculty, instructors, and staff who have been working on campus at University Park, asymptomatic walk-up COVID-19 testing will close at the end of the day on November 11. Beginning immediately and continuing through the month of November, all faculty and staff employees who are in the 'Return to Work' database may take advantage of a new process for voluntary asymptomatic COVID-19 testing. Employees wishing to initiate this process should visit <https://vaulthealth.formstack.com/forms/psuemployee>. Test kits will be mailed to home addresses and the test will be completed under virtual observation with Vault Health to complete the process.

University Park in-person testing options will resume after Thanksgiving week. Those details are being planned for December and will be announced soon.

Commonwealth Campuses: For faculty, instructors or staff at Commonwealth Campuses who work on campus and wish to take part in asymptomatic COVID-19 testing prior to the November 20 departure, opt-in voluntary testing via a Vault mail-in kit is available. This program will continue through January 11, 2021. Testing will continue to be available only to employees who are listed in the University's 'Return to Work' database. Employees who wish to participate in the voluntary testing program may do so by visiting <https://vaulthealth.formstack.com/forms/psuemployee>. Test kits will be mailed to your home address and you will participate in a virtual appointment with Vault Health to complete the process.

Q: *What testing will be available for students who remain on campuses past November 20, especially during the week of Thanksgiving?*

A: The University's testing protocols for students and employees, which include walk-up testing and random surveillance testing, will continue through November 20. Due to the holiday, there will be no surveillance or walk-up testing from November 21-29. However,

the University will be prepared to support students with health services for those who remain on campuses over the Thanksgiving week. More specifics for each campus will follow.

All random surveillance testing will resume on campuses on November 30 and continue through the remainder of the fall semester for employees working on site and students who may continue to live on or near Penn State campuses.

LATEST NEWS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACULTY

- Penn State's [COVID-19 dashboard](#) has been updated today with the [results of on-demand and random tests](#) administered during the period of November 6 to 8, as well as new University testing results from the prior week.
- The Penn State Board of Trustees will hold its next public meeting November 12-13. Due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the board will meet virtually. Public committee meetings and the full board meeting will be livestreamed at <https://wpsu.org/trustees>.
- Dr. Glenn Buchberger, an internist and pediatrician at Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, provides [advice about how to gather safely](#) during the holiday season in this article.

WEBINARS

- Upcoming webinars for instructors at all Penn State campuses include:
 - Thursday, November 12, 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., [Academic Integrity Panel Discussion](#)
 - Friday, November 13, 10:00-11:00 a.m., [Exam Strategies for Remote Delivery](#)
- 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 16, 12:00-1:00 p.m., [Trends and Updates from Penn State Career Services](#)

KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- Uncertainties across the world related to the ongoing pandemic – which have made travel difficult in many regions – have led Penn State leaders to [suspend all University-affiliated international travel until further notice](#), and to also strongly discourage personal travel abroad by Penn Staters.

- While Penn State gears up for the end of in-person instruction on November 20, instructors have been planning since the beginning of the fall semester for this ‘pivotal’ moment. [This article](#) provides information about how to assist students with the transition, testing for employees, and more.
- In preparation for 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. More details about the plan can be found [here](#).
- Penn State IT is asking the University community for [help growing its pool of available laptops](#) to loan out to students in need. Only Penn State-owned laptops are eligible for donation.
- After weeks of rehearsals in parking garages, open-sided tents, lecture rooms, Schwab Auditorium and the Pasquerilla Spiritual Center, Penn State choirs will share the results of their work in 30-minute, socially distanced and masked performances from the School of Music Recital Hall and Pasquerilla Spiritual Center. All concerts can be viewed at the School of Music Livestream link: <https://musicmedia.psu.edu>. Five choirs featuring more than 200 students from all colleges at University Park will be featured as follows:

Sunday, November 15
 - 2:00-2:30 p.m., Oriana Singers (upper voices), directed by Dr. Kathryn Hylton
 - 2:40-3:10 p.m., University Choir (mixed voices), directed by Dr. Bryan Nichols
- 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