

**Tuesday, December 1, 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.

### **QUESTION FROM FACULTY**

***Q: How will measures of teaching effectiveness be included in annual reviews and promotion and/or tenure reviews?***

**A:** A [new document](#) summarizes the University's approach to the assessment of teaching effectiveness for calendar year 2020. The guidance, which applies to faculty members, instructors, and graduate students serving as the instructor-of-record or as a graduate teaching assistant, outlines how faculty may include assessments of teaching effectiveness, including SRTEs and alternative assessments, in both annual reviews and promotion and/or tenure reviews.

### **LATEST NEWS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACULTY**

- Penn State's [COVID-19 dashboard](#) has been updated with results of on-demand and random testing.
- Penn State Go now supports a new feature that allows users to [opt-in to receive essential messages and updates relative to one's location](#) on Penn State campuses.
- Penn State University Libraries is [adjusting in-person service hours at most of its locations University-wide through the end of the fall semester](#). Virtual services, resources and assistance from subject-expert librarians remain available to assist all library users through several options.
- The Spring 2021 Tech TA Request Form will open on Wednesday, December 2. Tech TAs serve as Zoom gurus during the synchronous portion of an online class. Instructors can request Tech TA support for the Spring 2021 semester by visiting the [Tech Tutors website](#) and clicking the "Request Tech TA" button.
- Funding from the National Institutes of Health will enable Margherita Cantorna, distinguished professor of molecular immunology and nutrition, to [study whether vitamin D supplementation could help people ward off or reduce symptoms caused by COVID-19](#).

## WEBINARS

- Penn State IT Learning Development is offering [two Top Hat training sessions](#) for instructors on Building Engagement Opportunities into Your Course. [Register now for one of these sessions](#):
  - Thursday, December 17, 10:15 a.m.-noon
  - Tuesday, January 12, 10:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

## KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- 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.
- 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.
- [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](#).
- 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