

**Friday, January 22, 2021**

## **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 Spring 2021 semester. Watch for these emails on Tuesdays and Fridays, with additional "special editions" delivered periodically. Previous faculty news digests are [archived here](#). For current faculty guidance, resources, FAQ documents, and more visit the ["Back to State Info for Faculty"](#) webpage.

### **QUESTION FROM FACULTY**

**Q: If I have received a COVID-19 vaccine, do I have to wear a mask?**

**A:** Yes; all COVID health and safety guidelines remain in place for all members of the Penn State community, including students, faculty, and staff. All members of the Penn State community are required to wear a face mask at all times in campus buildings, and outdoors when physical distancing is not possible; to practice physical distancing; to avoid large gatherings; and to comply with all testing and contact tracing requests.

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

- Penn State's [COVID-19 Dashboard](#) shows ongoing results for all COVID-19 tests administered on campus since December 19, 2020, for faculty, staff, and students.
- A new tool that will help students plan for Summer 2021 has been launched on the [University Registrar's website](#). This tool allows students and advisers to complete a university-wide class search for courses that were offered in the previous summer sessions and gives students and advisers a sense of the wide range of summer courses that typically are available to them through Penn State. It is important to note that no decisions about the delivery modes for Summer 2021 have been made; this information and the publication of the Summer 2021 Schedule of Courses should be available in the coming weeks.
- Engaging students in asynchronous courses: Interested in ensuring that your students feel engaged with you, the content, and each other in your asynchronous course? Check out TLT's [Engaging Students Series Resources](#) for resources regarding [engaging students asynchronously!](#)
- Design reviews available: You've been able to check out the technology for your COVID course, but what about the design of the course itself? Even at this point in the semester, a design review can help you make small tweaks to your course that can make it more engaging and effective. To reach out for a design review,

just email the LD Clearinghouse at [LDClearinghouse@psu.edu](mailto:LDClearinghouse@psu.edu) and we'll set you up with a peer or learning designer!

- The Penn State Center Philadelphia, a service of Penn State Outreach, and the Food Decisions Research Lab in the College of Health and Human Development are partnering with several other organizations to [support the People's Kitchen](#), a community-driven program that was co-created during the pandemic as a response to food insecurity, unemployment, and other issues.
- A team led by Penn State faculty and students, along with expert collaborators, has [co-authored a guide](#) that teaches the essential knowledge and skills to help interrupt the transmission of COVID-19 and other infections.

## WEBINARS

- **Top Hat: Building Engagement Opportunities into Your Course:** Tuesday, January 26, [12:45-2:30 p.m.](#) Bring another level of engagement to your courses using Top Hat, Penn State's new student response system and comprehensive teaching platform.
- **Trauma-Informed Pedagogy:** Thursday, January 28, [12:00-12:30 p.m.](#) and [2:00-2:30 p.m.](#) This session addresses effectively teaching students in times of high stress that impact the learning environment.

View the full list of webinars at <https://keepteaching.psu.edu/webinars/>. You can find additional self-paced materials to assist you with your courses on the Keep Teaching Spring 2021 Planning [page](#). If you want to speak with a teaching consultant or a local learning designer about your course, consult the Keep Teaching Contacts and Support [page](#).

- **Addressing Intersectionality to Transform Leadership at Penn State:** Friday, February 19, 2:00-5:00 pm and Friday, February 26, 2:00-5:00 p.m, via Zoom. Interested parties can register via this [Zoom Meeting Registration form](#).

**Who should attend:** All academic leaders and faculty interested in academic leadership who seek to broaden and deepen their understanding of intersectionality and its relationships to leadership within academia.

Symposium Topic: We will engage in interdisciplinary dialogue within our Penn State community in order to build understanding of the effects of intersectionality on success and leadership in academia with the goal of identifying pathways for transformational action and informing future initiatives.

**Who we are:** LEAADS@PSU is a network of women faculty committed to **LE**ading **A**dvocacy and **A**ction for **D**iverse **L**eaders**S**hip at Penn State. We are

exploring and acting on issues that impact willingness and preparedness of faculty to engage in leadership.

## KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- Penn State has developed a comprehensive [spring 2021 COVID-19 testing strategy for all campuses](#) that includes both required and voluntary testing during the remote learning period and the in-person portion of the spring semester.
- As part of the University's comprehensive testing strategy for the spring semester, [all Penn State students must meet requirements for COVID-19 testing prior to their return](#) or if they are already living in their campus community.
- A [new document](#) describes a process by which faculty who submit their Annual Report via Activity Insight can contextualize their annual review. Specifically, faculty members are encouraged (but not required) to describe the negative impact the pandemic and other challenges (e.g., societal/racial tension) have had on their work. In addition, faculty are encouraged to describe the innovative or creative ways obstacles were surmounted.
- Penn State has released a [redesigned version of its COVID-19 dashboard](#) for the spring 2021 semester that provides additional information to help students, faculty, staff, and community members better understand COVID-19 testing results, virus prevalence, and quarantine and isolation capacity on each of the University's campuses.
- As the new semester begins, students, families, faculty, and staff are advised to [visit the University's official virus information website \(https://virusinfo.psu.edu/\)](https://virusinfo.psu.edu/) for the latest coronavirus-related information from Penn State.
- For instructors looking to build community and increase engagement in their classes, here are a few easy-to-implement ideas: [https://pennstateoffice365-my.sharepoint.com/:w/g/personal/jlw63\\_psu\\_edu/EZZmptYMX5FBhXgk07HEP7MBBJV51I\\_p6IDET54nEkZv\\_w?e=kh0hFS](https://pennstateoffice365-my.sharepoint.com/:w/g/personal/jlw63_psu_edu/EZZmptYMX5FBhXgk07HEP7MBBJV51I_p6IDET54nEkZv_w?e=kh0hFS).
- In Pennsylvania, the state Department of Health and county health departments are responsible for [COVID-19 vaccine distribution](#), which is being done in a phased approach with health care workers and those in long-term care facilities in the initial phase (Phase 1A). At this time, Penn State has not been named a distribution site for the vaccine and faculty, staff, and students should visit [Pennsylvania's vaccine website](#) for information on when they may be eligible to receive a vaccine and where those vaccines may be available in their communities.

- The Pennsylvania Department of Health has an [informational website](#) about the COVID-19 vaccine, which includes a [COVID-19 Interim Vaccination Plan](#). The plan provides information about the distribution of vaccines when available and describes the phases for vaccine administration.
- [Faculty can still submit questions](#) related to Penn State's COVID response. 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
- Penn State's ["Keep Teaching"](#) and ["Keep Learning"](#) websites, including many [Spring 2021 instruction-related FAQs](#).
- Penn State's [COVID-19 dashboard](#)
- Previous issues of this [Digest](#).
- 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