

Friday, January 29, 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 a student has a positive test result on file with the University, do they have to complete pre-semester testing?

A: Students who have a positive test result on file in the "Know Your Status" portal from a University test do not need to complete pre-semester testing. However, undergraduate and graduate students who have completed walk-up testing on campus over the winter break or during the remote period still need to log in to the "Know Your Status" portal to make sure they have satisfied the testing requirement. Students can also upload a third-party positive test result from within the last 90 days for approval.

[Read the full FAQ here.](#)

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.
- Penn State has announced the [timetable and requirements for students to move into on-campus residences](#) ahead of the resumption of in-person classes on February 15. Before returning to campus, all students are required to participate in COVID-19 testing and have a negative result from a University-provided test on file prior to move-in.
- There are far fewer cases of influenza so far this season, but [people should still be vigilant](#).
- Matthew Ferrari, associate professor of biology, and Melissa Hicks, director and instructional designer for the Eberly College of Science Office of Digital Learning, have been honored with Dean's Special Awards for their [efforts to support the Eberly College of Science and the University](#) in response to COVID-19.

- As the University community continues to rely on Zoom as a platform for virtual meetings, Penn State students, faculty, and staff are reminded that [numerous tools are available to help avoid “Zoom bombing”](#).
- Penn State is [exploring options for potential in-person May commencement ceremonies](#) at University Park and the Commonwealth Campuses for spring 2021 graduates.

WEBINARS

- **Adapting Assessments to Promote Academic Integrity:** Monday, February 1, [12:30-1:30 p.m.](#) In this interactive webinar, you will encounter evidence-based, flexible, and equitable assessment strategies for remote learning environments that promote academic integrity, engage students, and reduce stressors that lead to cheating.

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

- Comprehensive information about the three spring semester wellness days is available at <https://wellnessdays.psu.edu/>.

- 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 and we'll set you up with a peer or learning designer!
- 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