

**Friday, February 19, 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.

### **FEATURED VIDEOS**

- As in-person classes begin for the spring semester across the University, President Eric Barron sent video messages to both [students](#) and [faculty and staff](#).
- Damon Sims, vice president for Student Affairs, discusses [changes and enhancements to the University's COVID-19 quarantine and isolation plan](#) for the spring 2021 semester.
- Andrew Read, director of the Huck Institutes for the Life Sciences, explains that virus evolution is expected and data show that the [new vaccines are providing cross-protection](#) and are effective at protecting against severe disease, hospitalizations, and deaths.

### **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.
- This [article](#) provides an overview of COVID-19 resources for faculty.
- While Penn State has not been named a distribution site for COVID-19 vaccines, the [University has made comprehensive plans to assist quickly](#) if asked.
- Penn State has [launched a new platform, Salesforce Health Cloud](#), that increases the University's ability to manage coronavirus case investigations and helps speed up contact tracing processes for students and employees.
- In this edition of The Medical Minute, Penn State Health physicians discuss [what people can expect after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine](#).

- William P. Bahnfleth, professor of architectural engineering, [testified as an expert witness](#) during the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's hearing related to protecting transportation workers and passengers from COVID.
- Administrator from the Penn State Student Engagement Network and Student Affairs shared updates with the Board of Trustees Committee meeting on Outreach, Development and Community Relations on February 18. Topics discussed included [new virtual student engagement experiences](#).

## WEBINARS

- **Universal Design for Learning: It's Just Good Design.** Tuesday, February 23, [12:00-1:30 p.m.](#)
- **Addressing Intersectionality to Transform Leadership at Penn State:** Friday, February 26, 2:00-5:00 p.m., via Zoom. Interested parties can register via this [Zoom Meeting Registration form](#).

## KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- [White Building will be the site of universal re-testing](#) for students (Feb.15-26). The site was selected by a team of experts who looked at many factors and layered multiple precautionary measures to create an environment for testing that reduces risks as much as reasonably possible.
- Penn State will offer a [full slate of courses in summer 2021](#). Students will have the flexibility to take courses at any Penn State campus.
- The [2021 Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon \(THON\) will be held virtually](#) from 6 p.m. Friday, February 19, through 4 p.m. Sunday, February 21.
- The University has updated its guidance for students, faculty, and staff [in the event a campus ceases normal operations](#) due to weather, power outages, or other emergencies.
- Walk-up COVID-19 testing hours at the University Park campus will be extended in the coming weeks.
  - Week of Feb. 15 and onward: Walk-up testing at the Hintz Family Alumni Center will be available Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
  - Beginning Feb.15, employees and students will have separate entrances and separate queues.

This walk-up testing is available to employees who are in the Return to Work database at University Park. Employees in that database also continue to have the option to do the opt-in mail kit testing.

- 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 is not a point of distribution for the vaccine, but has a comprehensive plan developed for how the University could quickly activate should this change. In the meantime, those that are eligible are strongly urged to sign up as soon as possible. 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.
- [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