

Friday, March 26, 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 VIDEO

Elizabeth McGraw, professor and Huck Scholar in entomology, discusses whether [people who have already had COVID-19 should get vaccinated](#).

QUESTION FROM FACULTY

Q: *How can I respond to students who are in need of support while also attending to my own needs?*

A: The [Red Folder initiative](#) is a guide to help faculty, staff, and others who interact with students to recognize, respond effectively to, and refer distressed students at Penn State. The Red Folder is designed to provide a supportive framework and clear set of steps for referrals. Units within the university can request a training from CAPS on the Red Folder via the [CAPS outreach request form](#).

As a faculty member, advising and supporting students who are overwhelmed with the stress of the pandemic and other stressful situations can be emotionally draining. A [document, developed by Health Advocate, provides tips for handling emotional fatigue and practicing good self-care](#). More information about the services Health Advocate provides is available [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 and local leaders today appealed to students and local residents to [redouble their safety efforts to curb the spread of the coronavirus](#).
- Penn State held a [livestream event for accepted students](#) and their families considering applying to Penn State, "[Class of 2025: A Virtual 'Welcome to the Penn State Community'](#)," on March 25.

- In support of the “Mask Up or Pack Up” campaign, [frontline healthcare workers share advice on staying vigilant](#) and how everyone can do their part to help protect the Penn State community.
- University Park students are urged to [take advantage of walk-up COVID-19 testing on campus](#) if they are concerned that they may have been exposed.
- An interdisciplinary team of Penn State College of Engineering and College of Agricultural Sciences researchers worked to [optimize the Building and Grounds’ hand sanitizer management and maintenance operation](#), managed by the Office of Physical Plant, by designing and developing a wireless sensor system.

WEBINARS

- **Re-Writing Study Guides Using Depth of Knowledge Framework:** Tuesday, March 30, [12:05-1:05 p.m.](#)

KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- Penn State has [updated its guidelines for employees](#) concerning [when to invite visitors to campuses](#) during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.
- April 1 is the deadline for tenure-line faculty in the penultimate year of their probationary period to accept a one-year extension to their probationary period due to COVID-19. By completing the online form “[Confirmation of Extension of the Probationary Period Due to COVID-19](#),” the faculty member’s probationary period will be extended by one year. Detailed information is available [here](#).
- 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.

- [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