

Tuesday, March 16, 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

- Penn State experts share tips about the importance of [maintaining a "quarantine pod"](#) and complying with the contact tracing process.

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.

WEBINARS

- **Mentoring March – A Workshop Series for Faculty Mentoring Graduate Students.** Effective mentoring is an invaluable component of graduate students' success, and is even more important and challenging during the pandemic, which has introduced even more complexity into developing and maintaining strong mentoring relationships.
 - Supporting Graduate Students in Challenging Times, Wednesday, March 17, [12:00-1:00 p.m.](#)
 - Addressing Equity and Inclusion, Thursday, March 25, [12:30–1:30 p.m.](#)

KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- 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](#).
- [President Eric Barron will host webcasts this spring](#) to discuss important topics for the University community about the impact of the pandemic on Penn State, the University's ongoing response and plans as the University substantially

expands in-person courses this summer and plans for a full on-campus experience in the fall.

- A special topics class, [“Skills To Obstruct Pandemics.”](#) taught by Frank Ritter, Amanda Clase, and Ed Glantz, aims to help students gain a better understanding of how to avoid diseases and how knowledge is represented differently in various media.
- A model developed by Penn State and Emory scientists developed a model that shows that [SARS-CoV-2 may eventually join the ranks of mild cold-causing coronaviruses](#) that currently circulate in humans.
- Penn State urges University Park students to [take advantage of the walk-up COVID-19 testing on campus](#) if they are concerned that they may have been exposed to the coronavirus.
- 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