

Friday, April 2, 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

Leslie Parent, vice dean for research and graduate studies in the Penn State College of Medicine, discusses [why some people develop fever, fatigue, headache, and muscle aches after getting the COVID-19 vaccine](#), while others have no symptoms at all.

QUESTIONS FROM FACULTY

Q: *When is the next wellness day?*

Wednesday, April 7 is Penn State's third and final wellness day of the spring semester. More information is available [here](#). On wellness days, no class meetings will happen (unless the faculty member has received an exemption) and no assignments are due.

Q: *Can visitors still come to campus?*

A: Units are strongly encouraged to [continue to engage with visitors remotely whenever possible](#). Full guidance on bringing visitors to campus 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 is strongly encouraging all students, faculty, and staff to sign up to get a vaccine as soon as they are eligible to receive one](#). Phase 2, which extends vaccine eligibility to all Pennsylvanians age 16 or older, will begin on April 19.
- President Eric Barron and guests [answered an array of questions from Penn State faculty and staff during a livestream about the University's response to the coronavirus](#), employees returning to work on campus, health and safety of the community, and others topics related to the pandemic.

- Physicians at Penn State Health urge people to [continue to wear a mask and follow other COVID mitigation guidelines](#), even if they have been vaccinated.
- Penn State students are serving as data collectors and data managers in a [nationwide research study to understand mask usage](#) on college campuses.
- Researchers in the College of Medicine found an [increase in the number of cigarettes smoked per day during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic](#) by nearly a third of surveyed Pennsylvania smokers.
- Penn State Health, with the assistance of community organizations and local government officials, has [provided pop-up vaccination clinics](#) at locations in Berks, Dauphin, Lancaster, and Lebanon counties, specifically targeted to underserved communities.

WEBINARS

- **Plans to Support Residential Students Who Cannot Return in Fall 2021:** Tuesday, April 6, [12:00-1:00 p.m.](#) and [3:00-4:00 p.m.](#) Read the news article [here](#).

KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- [Students who completed quarantine and isolation at University Park are being surveyed](#) to collect feedback about their experiences.
- Over the past year, the [Manufacturing and Sterilization to Address COVID-10 \(MASC\) Initiative](#) has mobilized to protect health care providers and communities across Pennsylvania.
- [Spring 2021 Holiday/Special Events Testing Schedule](#)
 - Friday, April 2: no random testing (all campuses); one walk-up testing site open (Pegula Ice Arena).
 - Saturday, April 3: no random testing (all campuses); no walk-up testing.
 - Saturday, April 17: no testing at Pegula Ice Arena or Beaver Stadium (Hintz Family Alumni Center and 101 N. Atherton St. open as usual for walk-up and random testing, respectively); testing at the Commonwealth Campuses remains unchanged.
 - Friday, May 7: no random testing (all campuses); one walk-up testing site open (Pegula Ice Arena).
 - Saturday, May 8: no random testing (all campuses); no walk-up testing.
- Walk-up COVID-19 testing hours at the University Park campus will continue as follows:
 - Walk-up testing at the Hintz Family Alumni Center will be available Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

- Testing availability will change on the dates listed above. More information is available [here](#).

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