

Tuesday, April 13, 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.

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 continuing its plans for a phased return of in-person learning over the summer semester and full on-campus learning environment for fall 2021. At University Park, [nearly 96% of course sections for fall are set to be delivered as in-person classes](#).
- A team of Penn State researchers [uncovered the first full structure of a tiny protein of SARS-CoV-2](#) and discovered how antibodies interact with that protein. Because the structure appears similar across many coronaviruses, it is an ideal target for advanced treatments and vaccines.
- Students who are experiencing [unavoidable circumstances that will prevent them from being on campus in the fall](#) are asked to self-identify their status by taking action in Starfish.
- Penn State faculty can learn how to [get access to a database of COVID-19 data](#) at a Data Science Community talk on Thursday, April 15 at 1 p.m. [Advance registration is required](#).

WEBINARS

[Registration for the all-virtual Invent Penn State Venture & IP Conference](#), happening April 15-16, is open to the public. The event includes several panels related to COVID:

- Life Science Ventures Addressing COVID-19: Thursday, April 15, 4:25-5:20 p.m.
- The State of Venture and Growth Capital in the COVID-19 Era: Thursday, April 15, 1:45-2:35 p.m.

KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- Researchers from the Penn State College of Medicine report that social distancing and lockdowns due to COVID-19 [may have affected clinical researchers' ability to finish trials](#).
- [Penn State will award cash grants to more than 23,000 students](#) under federal COVID-19 relief funding allocated to the University from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund II, part of the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA).
- In this article, Penn State faculty offer [tips for avoiding burnout](#) during the pandemic.
- [For a small group of people who have had COVID, symptoms can persist for months](#) and range from mild to incapacitating. Physicians at Penn State Health discuss the symptoms they see, who is susceptible to being a “long hauler,” and when people should call a doctor about ongoing symptoms.
- Four faculty and staff in the College of Information Sciences and Technology co-authored an article, published in EDUCAUSE Review, that examined technology-based teaching [practices that have emerged in higher education during the pandemic and have been shown to improve student engagement](#).
- [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, began on April 13.
- [Spring 2021 Holiday/Special Events Testing Schedule](#)
 - 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 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. 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](#).

- [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