

Tuesday, April 20, 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.

A NOTE ABOUT THIS DIGEST

- Beginning the week of May 3, this Digest will be published once a week on Friday.

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 partnering with Walmart to offer a COVID-19 vaccination clinic](#) that is open to Penn State students, employees and dependents age 16 and older beginning Thursday, April 22 through Saturday, April 24 inside Pegula Ice Arena on the University Park campus.
- Researchers in the College of Information Sciences and Technology conducted a study in which they [augmented online symptom checkers](#) by offering explanations of how the system generated its probable diagnoses and suggestions — while also studying users' perceptions of those recommendations.

KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- Penn State researchers have found that people who trust television and Facebook to provide them with accurate information about the coronavirus pandemic are [less knowledgeable about COVID-19](#).
- A study led by Penn State researchers found that in the first months of the coronavirus pandemic, parents reported that they and their children were [experiencing higher levels of mental health concerns](#) such as depression and disruptive and aggressive behavior than before the pandemic.

- [Instructors, staff, and students are urged to remain vigilant in learning the steps to keep Zoom meetings secure](#) and understand why it is critical to refrain from posting links online publicly.
- [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](#)
 - 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