

**Friday, July 2, 2021**

## **News for Faculty and Instructors: Penn State and COVID-19**

This weekly email is designed to provide faculty and instructors with Penn State's pandemic-related news and updates. Watch for these emails on 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 2021 Resources](#)" webpage.

### **QUESTIONS FROM FACULTY**

***Q: What is the face mask policy on campus for technical service union employees and why is it different from the policy for the rest of the University community?***

**A:** For students, faculty and staff who are interacting with each other in classrooms, labs and offices, the University believes that continued masking by unvaccinated individuals will continue to help to minimize the spread of COVID-19. It's important to remember that research shows that all COVID-19 vaccines authorized for use in the United States provide protection against COVID-19 and the best way to protect yourself from contracting COVID-19 is to get vaccinated.

The masking policy for employees represented by the Teamsters union, by agreement with the University, is aligned with the commonwealth's masking requirements by the Pennsylvania Department of Health. According to the Department of Health, all individuals are able to resume normal activities without masking after June 28, except when working within a designated health care setting and when traveling on public transportation.

***Q: Should I be worried about the Delta variant?***

**A:** Because the Delta variant has been shown to be more contagious, people who are unvaccinated are not only putting their own health at risk but are also jeopardizing the safety of other unvaccinated people, including children. In addition, new outbreaks in communities with low vaccination coverage may further delay the relaxation of restrictions or trigger the return to restrictions. Read the full FAQ [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 has updated its guidance for employees embarking on University-affiliated domestic travel. [Effective July 1, employees may resume domestic travel without unit executive approvals.](#)

- Penn State has released [updated guidance and procedures for hosting events and large gatherings](#) both on and off campus.
- Penn State faculty and staff are being asked to [complete a short and important anonymous survey](#) about their current COVID-19 vaccination status or plans to get vaccinated before the start of the fall semester.
- A team of researchers including Steven Schiff, Brush Chair Professor of Engineering, developed a [surveillance modeling tool](#) that provides a weekly projection of expected COVID-19 cases in all African countries.
- Updated guidance for promotion and tenure that incorporates attention to the impact of the events of 2020/2021 has been posted to the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty affairs website. A summary of the changes can be found [here](#).

## KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- The deadline to submit a faculty work adjustment request for fall 2021 is July 15. A document and request form are available at <https://www.vpfa.psu.edu/back-to-state-spring-2021-resources/> under the “Instructional Guidance” header.
- Penn State is continuing to [encourage students and employees to share their coronavirus vaccination status](#) to help inform the University’s decision-making and its COVID-19 management plan. Employees can provide their vaccination status using [SalesForce Health Cloud](#), a secure online platform.
- Penn State has announced [plans to transition its masking and physical distancing requirements](#) to more closely align with changes recently announced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Current masking and distancing measures will remain in place through Summer Session I. Fully vaccinated individuals at Penn State are no longer be required to wear face masks indoors, and the physical distancing and outdoor masking requirements have been lifted for all individuals.
- [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 [“University Status” page](#) and [updated FAQs](#) regarding on-campus work and learning

- Penn State's ["Keep Teaching"](#) and ["Keep Learning"](#) websites, including many [instruction-related FAQs](#)
- Penn State's [COVID-19 dashboard](#)
- Previous issues of this [Digest](#)
- The [Office of Human Resources COVID-19 information site](#) and ["Return to Work on Campus"](#) resource site
- 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