Friday, November 5, 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.

QUESTION FROM FACULTY

Q: I’m confident I uploaded my vaccine card. Do I really need to check?

A: Yes! Even if you’re fairly certain that you uploaded your vaccine card to Salesforce, please check to be sure by visiting Salesforce Health Cloud. If you do not have a vaccine card uploaded into Salesforce, you will be considered out of compliance with the vaccine mandate.

LATEST NEWS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACULTY

- Penn State has determined that the COVID-19 vaccination mandate already in place at seven campuses must be extended to the Berks and Schuylkill campuses and to the College of Medicine because of work being conducted under federal contracts and agreements. Proof of vaccination must be uploaded into the University’s Salesforce Health Cloud, a secure online platform for collecting health data. Faculty and instructors can also check to see if they have uploaded proof of vaccination using Salesforce Health Cloud.

- Penn State Health will comply with President Joe Biden’s COVID-19 Action Plan mandating vaccination as a condition of employment for federal contractors.

- Strategically increasing testing capacity, either by making diagnostic tests faster or more available, can reduce reliance on costly preventative interventions, such as distancing and shutdowns, according to a team of researchers led by Penn State.

- More than 80% of the white-tailed deer sampled in different parts of Iowa between December 2020 and January 2021 tested positive for SARS-CoV-2.

- Penn State’s COVID-19 Dashboard will be updated twice weekly, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, during the fall semester.
VACCINATION MANDATE RESOURCES

Employees who perform work at or with the following campuses must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and share proof of their vaccination with the University by December 8: Altoona, Behrend, Berks, Brandywine, DuBois, Fayette, Harrisburg, Schuylkill, the College of Medicine, all Penn State Extension employees across the commonwealth, and University Park. Information about the vaccination requirement is available [here](#) and [here](#).

Apply for a religious accommodation at [https://affirmativeaction.psu.edu/covid-19-information/](https://affirmativeaction.psu.edu/covid-19-information/). More information is available [here](#).

Apply for a medical/disability-based accommodation at [https://hr.psu.edu/sites/hr/files/COVID19MedicalDisabilityAccommodationRequestForm.pdf](https://hr.psu.edu/sites/hr/files/COVID19MedicalDisabilityAccommodationRequestForm.pdf). More information is available [here](#).

Information on where to find a vaccine provider can be found [here](#).

KEY REMINDERS FOR FACULTY

- The **2021 December break is extended** in appreciation of employee contributions during the past two years to safeguard the health of the Penn State community, advance the University’s strategic goals, and serve the community with excellence.

- **COVID-19 testing at White Building** is available from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sundays through Fridays for students living on or near the University Park campus, and faculty and staff who are working on campus.

- **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