

Friday, June 19, 2020

News Digest: Penn State and the COVID-19 Crisis

This email provides a high-level overview of University pandemic-related news and updates during the past week. Please review and forward it to colleagues in your units.

- **Penn State announced its plans to resume on-campus work and learning in the Fall 2020 semester.** The University's [official "Back to State" plans](#) call for a flexible, adaptable schedule, with campus-based instruction August 24 through November 20. The remainder of the semester — including final examinations — will be administered online beginning November 30 (after Thanksgiving break). [Read the full announcement here.](#)
- In conjunction with the Fall 2020 announcement, Penn State launched a webpage featuring answers to a [new, extensive list of FAQs](#) for University faculty, students, and staff.
- The University will offer a robust portfolio of remote learning options and experiences through [Penn State Start at Home and Continue at Home](#), so students who must remain home this fall can begin or continue to make progress toward their degrees. More details will be announced at [keeplearning.psu.edu](#).
- [Two virtual town halls will be held Monday, June 22](#) — one for faculty and staff from 2-3 p.m. and one for students and families from 3:30-4:30 p.m. — focused on returning to on-campus work and learning. Questions for the town halls, to be live-streamed at <https://liveevents.psu.edu>, can be submitted anonymously via separate online Google forms for [faculty and staff](#) and [students and families](#).
- New ["Keep Teaching"](#) and ["Keep Learning"](#) websites provide resources for faculty and students to prepare for Fall 2020.
- Penn State faculty and the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence are creating a [video series focused on best practices for remote instruction](#).
- [Applications for the second round of CARES Act student emergency grants](#) are now being accepted.
- Due to pandemic-related restrictions, [incoming Penn State students are experiencing orientation virtually](#) this summer.
- [Virtual office hours with Penn State Student Affairs](#) resumed June 18. Students can connect via Zoom to speak with a Student Affairs director on weekdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

- Penn State announced that [Spring 2020 and future graduates can purchase a Certified Electronic Diploma](#), or CeDiploma, in addition to receiving a traditional paper diploma issued after degree conferral.
- **REMINDERS:**
 - All University employees who are currently working remotely should plan to do so until further notice.
 - Penn State is canceling, rescheduling, or moving to virtual delivery all nonessential events and meetings [through at least June 30](#) at all university campuses. Any essential in-person meetings or events must have fewer than 10 attendees and maintain good social distancing practices, with all participants wearing face masks.

To obtain comprehensive, updated information at any time, visit:

- The University's comprehensive ["Back to State" page](#) and [updated FAQs](#).
- The ["University Measures" webpage](#), which summarizes steps Penn State is taking in response to COVID-19.
- The [Office of Human Resources COVID-19 information site](#) and ["Return to Work"](#) resource site
- The University's [health information page focused on personal safety practices](#) for Penn Staters at all campuses
- A robust, updated [list of contacts and resources](#) for the University community
- The Penn State websites dedicated to remote [teaching](#) and [learning](#)
- The Social Science Research Institute [website featuring pandemic-related insights from University experts](#) and other resources