Tuesday, June 30, 2020

News Digest: Penn State's Preparations for Fall 2020

This digest provides faculty with Penn State's pandemic-related news and updates as the University prepares for the Fall 2020 semester. Watch for these news digests in your email twice each week, typically on Tuesdays and Fridays, with additional editions as warranted. Previous news digests are archived here.

NEW VIDEO MESSAGES

- The COVID-19 Health Resources Task Group soon will provide a set of options to Penn State leadership for implementing a rigorous testing and contact tracing program this fall. A brief video update from co-leads Stephen Tracey, professor and executive director of the Center for Supply Chain Research and Penn State Executive Programs, and Kevin Black, interim dean of the College of Medicine, summarizes the members' progress as they prepare their recommendations.

- As Penn State continues its Fall 2020 preparations, the University is implementing many new protocols and policies to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 spread. In two new videos (see details below), William Sitzabee, Penn State's chief facilities officer, describes the multi-pronged approach that the Office of Physical Plant, along with the University's Environmental Health and Safety office, is implementing with the health and safety of community members in mind.

    - In the first video, Sitzabee explains Penn State's thorough cleaning and disinfecting regimens for campus facilities.

    - In the second video, Sitzabee shares what Penn State is doing beyond cleaning to address the risk of COVID-19 spread in classrooms, labs, offices, and other campus spaces.

FACULTY FAQs

Q: *Where can I get more information about the instructional modes for Fall 2020?*

A: An overview of the four Flexible Instructional Modes is provided on keepteaching.psu.edu under the Fall 2020 tab. Each is designed to provide a rigorous and high-quality learning experience for students while also meeting health and safety guidelines. The modes reflect a continuum from in-person to remote asynchronous instruction, supporting faculty's need for pedagogical flexibility and the widest variation of options to help students achieve learning outcomes. Additional resources and training opportunities will be added to this site during the next several weeks.

Q: *What are the four Flexible Instructional Modes I can choose from for course delivery in Fall 2020?*

A: Below is a brief description of each of the instructional modes. More information about place and time expectations for each and why they work are provided at https://keepteaching.psu.edu/fall-2020/flexible-instructional-modes/.

- **In-Person**: This mode includes traditional residential instruction through November 20 and remote instruction after that date.

- **Mixed-Mode**: In this mode, a mix of in-person and remote instruction is achieved through classroom space rotation, reducing in-person class time by including either remote synchronous or remote asynchronous instruction, using in-person class time for experiential learning elements, or some combination of these.

- **Remote Synchronous**: In this mode, using communication and collaboration tools, students and faculty meet virtually and simultaneously during the scheduled meeting times as indicated in the LionPATH schedule of courses.

- **Remote Asynchronous**: In this mode, students and faculty use communication and collaboration tools at no scheduled meeting time.

Q: *How will students know the mode of my course?*

A: After you determine the instructional mode for your course and convey that information to your academic unit leader (e.g., department head, director of academic affairs, school director), that information will be provided to the Office of the University Registrar, so that it will show up on students' course schedules in LionPATH. Schedules will be updated daily. While some Penn State course selections are being displayed in LionPATH at this time, those courses and their delivery methods may change in the coming weeks as schedules are updated based on new information and University analysis of it.

More answers to faculty FAQs will be spotlighted in future news digests.

You can read answers to nearly 50 new and updated "Back to State" FAQs at https://virusinfo.psu.edu/faq/topic/back-to-state.

LATEST NEWS

- In preparation for a phased return to campus, a collection of consistent COVID-19 signage is now available for units to display in buildings and spaces across Penn State's campuses.

- The University's "Keep Teaching" and "Keep Learning" websites are being updated regularly with resources for faculty and students to prepare for the fall semester. The latest updates include:

  - Return to Resident Instruction guidance (information on this page will be updated as needed)

  - Flexible Instructional Modes summary and details (see the new "Faculty FAQs" section above for more details and hyperlinks to additional information online)

Additional updates to the "Keep Teaching" site will be spotlighted in future news digests.

REMINDERS

- All University employees who are currently working remotely should plan to do so until further notice unless otherwise instructed.

- Penn State is augmenting outreach to all faculty via multiple platforms to share key information. To support this effort, faculty are encouraged to submit questions via this online form so leadership can respond to them in upcoming communications.

- On June 26, Executive Vice President and Provost Nick Jones and Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs Kathy Bieschke shared a video message for University faculty regarding preparations for on-campus instruction in Fall 2020.

- Faculty are encouraged to complete this confidential survey to provide feedback on the Town Hall held June 22 about Penn State's plans for Fall 2020. A recording of the event is archived at livevents.psu.edu.

- Penn State has updated guidance effective July 1, 2020, for University-related travel and meetings and events (revised on June 30, 2020).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To obtain comprehensive, updated information at any time, please review:

- The University's comprehensive "Back to State" page and updated FAQs regarding plans to resume on-campus work and learning this fall
- The "University Measures" webpage, which summarizes steps Penn State is taking in response to COVID-19
- Penn State's guidance for University-related travel and meetings and events
- 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 Fall 2020 [teaching](#) and [learning](#)
- The Social Science Research Institute [website featuring pandemic-related insights from University experts](#) and other resources
- An online [archive of previous news digests](#)