

## **Penn's Plans for the Fall Semester**

### **A Message to the Penn Community**

From

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The events of the past four months have shown us, more than ever before, the profound importance of our shared communities. In March, our on-campus community became a virtual community, dispersed across the world. We began to live literally apart, our faces covered. Then we were powerfully reminded of the fragility of our human community, of the bonds that can both bring us together and tear us apart, in relation to the most significant issues of social equity and racial justice.

In this context, we are writing to you today about our plans for the fall semester. We are one Penn community and we look forward to coming together on campus as soon as we can. In the meantime, we have a communal responsibility to preserve our shared health and safety, all the while sustaining our commitments to teaching, learning, research, and service. We are asking every member of our community to do your part, as we will too, to uphold these ever more essential missions.

To develop our plans for the fall, the University convened a Recovery Planning Group (RPG), made up of representatives across all the major areas of our campus. Their planning has been guided by the latest medical information and governmental directives, and we want to thank the RPG members and all who supported them for their tireless work in addressing the myriad details involved in bringing students back to campus and in restarting our research enterprise.

Based on the meticulous recommendations of the RPG, we are announcing today a fall semester that will be a hybrid model. It will allow many students to return in a limited and careful way by incorporating online and virtual learning with on-campus classroom instruction where it can be provided safely and when it is essential to the academic needs of the course curriculum.

Campus life under this new model will need to be different for the fall semester. Large lectures will all be online, as will some graduate and professional programs. Gatherings will be limited in size. Housing accommodations will be at lower density. Everyone on campus will need to practice physical distancing, wear face coverings, and agree to testing and contact tracing. Administrative and academic support functions that can do so will continue to operate remotely. We are confident that we can provide our students with both a world-class education and also a campus experience that will be rewarding and meaningful. With everyone on campus affirming their willingness and doing their part to help themselves and others stay safe, we can provide a robust and meaningful Penn education in a manner that is as safe as possible for all involved.

There will be more specific details and communications to come before the start of the semester. It is possible that some plans could change, depending upon the progression of the virus and/or applicable state and local government guidance, but here is the current summary of steps we are implementing to enable as many people who wish to come back in the fall as possible, while also minimizing person-to-person transmission and making the campus work well during this pandemic:

### Campus Life

- A **Student Campus Compact** has been developed so that together we can maintain a safe, educational, and vibrant learning environment for all members of our Penn community. The Compact outlines specific behaviors expected of all who are on campus, including:
  - Wearing a face covering at all times when in public places.
  - Maintaining physical distancing (6 feet or more) at all times and avoiding crowds greater than 25.
  - Frequent washing of hands.
  - Participating in student clubs, performances and recreational activities in accordance with physical distancing guidelines and safety protocols.
- **On-Campus Student Residences.** To ensure as safe a housing environment as possible, all students (including those in Greek housing) will be housed in private bedrooms with a maximum ratio of 6 students per shared bathroom. The College House system will make housing available for all first-year undergraduates, transfer undergraduates and second-year undergraduate students who applied for housing. We anticipate being able to accommodate a percentage of third- and fourth-year students and have developed a priority process for assignment. The University is also leasing additional space off campus to make housing available to third- and fourth-year undergraduate students who applied for on-campus housing but are unable to be accommodated. For those returning graduate students who already have confirmed placements in University housing in Sansom Place East, existing placements will be honored. Additional specific information about housing assignments will be forthcoming.
- **Campus Dining.** Self-serve options such as salad bars will not be offered in campus dining facilities during the pandemic. Students will be offered take-out and pre-packaged meals, which can be pre-ordered. Consistent with government guidelines, we anticipate limited indoor and outdoor seating at dining facilities, and meals can be eaten in students' rooms, designated small gathering spaces in College Houses, and other locations around campus.
- **Penn Athletics.** A final decision on fall athletic competition has not yet been announced by the Ivy League. That announcement is expected in July. The Athletic Department will communicate directly to student athletes when more information is available.

## Measures to Promote and Sustain Campus Health and Hygiene

- **Testing and Contact Tracing.** All students will be tested for COVID-19 when they first arrive on campus. Additional testing will be available throughout the year for students, faculty and staff in the Hall of Flags at Houston Hall. We also ask that, if at all possible, students get tested before they depart home for campus and stay home if they test positive. To lower the risk of COVID-19 spread on campus, we are developing a digital approach that includes:
  - Daily symptom checking for everyone on campus using texting or a mobile app as a condition for entry into buildings.
  - Contact tracing efforts facilitated by a digital platform that stores GPS location data in users' smartphones to serve as a memory aid when they are speaking to contact tracers. Information collected will remain the property of the phone owner.
  - Quarantine space in Sansom West for students testing positive while on campus.
- **Classroom Reconfiguration.** All large lectures will be delivered online. In-class instruction will involve greater physical spacing of students, as well as plexiglass separators at lecterns where appropriate.
- **Enhanced Cleaning Protocols.** In addition to normal cleaning procedures, enhanced cleaning and disinfection protocols will be employed in all campus buildings.

## Fall Semester Calendar

- **Start and End of On-Campus Undergraduate Instruction.** The academic semester will start as scheduled on Tuesday, September 1. Due to the inherent disease transmission risks associated with travel to and from campus, there will be no Fall Break and the last day of instruction on campus for undergraduates will be Friday, November 20. Classes will only be offered online on Monday, November 23 and remain online through the end of the semester, including final exams which conclude on Tuesday, December 22. To be clear, undergraduate students will leave campus and not return to campus after the Thanksgiving break. On-campus housing fees for the fall will be prorated consistent with the shortened on-campus schedule.
- **Move-in, Orientation and Other Dates.** To ensure less density during move-in, student arrival will be staggered. Exact move-in dates for the College Houses and other University residences will be sent to students in the coming weeks. New Student Orientation will be predominantly delivered online and program content will become available Monday, August 24, with activities continuing until Monday, August 31 with Convocation held later that day.

## Academics and Instruction

- **Hybrid Instruction.** Our hybrid model of instruction will allow students the maximum flexibility in meeting their academic requirements and will ensure that students who choose not to return to campus are afforded the same high quality education from our world-renowned faculty. For those students who are unable to return to campus (for example, international students who cannot travel, or students with health conditions) or others who prefer, for personal reasons, to remain off campus, fall course offerings will be accessible remotely, with predominantly online delivery. In-person academic experiences will be offered for some courses across those curricula that demand them, but accommodations will be provided for those students who cannot participate in person.
- **Enhanced Online Experience.** Since moving classes online for the end of the spring semester, Penn has undertaken extensive work through its Online Learning Initiative (OLI), Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), and several faculty working groups across campus to enhance online course delivery for the fall. Penn is a pioneer in online learning and new forms of teaching and learning, and OLI and CTL are working together with our schools and programs to actively support faculty needs and will continue to do so.
- **Academic Policies and Grading.** All regular academic policies in the four undergraduate schools will be unchanged from typical fall terms, including those that govern grading and deadlines. Graduate and professional programs may make policy changes depending on the specific needs of individual programs.
- **Libraries.** Penn Libraries will follow the University's guidelines for population density within each library. The library staff will be available to assist all faculty and students remotely, and the libraries will prioritize Faculty Express (with home delivery instead of office delivery); restart Books by Mail for all other members of the Penn community; and offer a new service, Pickup@Penn, for members of the Penn community to request books and pick them up outside Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center.
- **Graduate and Professional Programs.** Graduate and professional programs, while following all University, state, and city public health guidelines, will organize their fall semesters in ways specific to their disciplines and individual curricular needs. For example, unlike the University as a whole, some programs will operate completely online in the fall. Students will be provided with details directly by their programs.

### Faculty, Staff and Postdocs

- **Workforce Return to Campus.** In consultation with the relevant personnel, the schools and centers will determine which work must be conducted on campus and which can be done at home and develop a plan to make it possible for work to be done well in both environments. To ensure that their return to campus is as safe as possible, individuals whose work is being done remotely will only return to campus

when notified by their school or center leadership that it is appropriate to do so. Those who return to campus in any capacity must follow the Penn COVID-19 prevention guidelines outlined in the Penn Guide to Return to Work, which will be mailed to all employees' homes in early July, and also posted on the Human Resources [website](#). The current plan is to return staff to campus in three phases. Accommodations will be made for those with medical conditions who are unable to return to campus and need to continue working remotely.

- Phase 1: Those whose jobs can only be performed on campus.
  - They will be relatively few in number and will help test and refine procedures and practices to minimize the spread of COVID-19.
  - Population density restrictions will be enforced.
- Phase 2: Increase to the numbers of those reporting to campus.
  - More people will return to campus, in positions where they need to report to campus to complete certain tasks; other tasks can still be done remotely.
- Phase 3: Telework will continue to be utilized where possible.
  - Faculty and staff who do not need to be onsite to perform their job functions may be able to return to campus if they wish and their school or center leadership conclude it is safe and desirable to do so.
- **Travel.** Very limited business-related travel will be permitted and only as authorized. To be authorized, any University-related travel will need to be essential and to facilitate work that can be done in no other way. All travel will require pre-approval. Students will also commit to stay on or close to campus between the beginning of the semester and the Thanksgiving break.
- **Face Coverings.** Faculty and staff returning to campus will be required to wear a face covering. All faculty and staff members will receive a cloth face covering when they receive the Penn Guide to Return to Work.

### Restarting Research

- **Research.** We have already begun a phased implementation to open research labs at Penn. Presently the research resumption has successfully welcomed nearly 800 people back to campus who opted in and are working productively as part of Phase I. The goals of restarting research are to sustain the highest levels of research excellence and continue to prioritize research related to COVID-19, while mitigating risks to the health and safety of the Penn community and minimizing any adverse impacts on Penn's research enterprise, especially the most promising early-stage research. It will proceed in three phases:
  - **Phase I: Increase of prioritized research**, with enforced population density restrictions and telework.
  - **Phase II: Expanded scope of research operations**, increasing the population with social distancing enforced, telework.

- **Phase III: Return to full research operations**, with new awareness and hygiene practices as the norm and telework utilized where possible.

### Support for Students, Faculty, Postdocs and Staff

All support services will continue to be available for both students and Penn employees.

Two key programs to remember in challenging times are:

- **Counseling and Psychological Services.** CAPS can connect with students either via phone or video conference, as well as in person. If students have been receiving care through CAPS, their counselor will continue to communicate with them about their needs moving forward. For students who are looking to initiate care, CAPS remains committed to offering free and confidential support as the need determines. You can visit CAPS at: <https://caps.wellness.upenn.edu>
- **Employee Assistance Program.** Penn has a robust Employee Assistance Program available to help faculty, staff, postdocs and their loved ones with resources to help navigate situations that can be emotionally troubling.

### Updated Information, Questions and Future Communications

- **Information and Further Communications.** Updated information about the Fall Semester can be found at the [fall semester planning website](#) as it becomes available. Please refer to this site, which will have FAQs and links to other important information, as questions arise. We will also be sending further information about the fall semester to the entire Penn community, and individual schools, centers and programs will be communicating directly with those who are impacted by any changes in their operations.
- **Questions.** For questions that cannot be answered in the Penn Guide to Return to Work, the Campus Student Compact, fall semester web site and FAQs, department or school websites, or other University Communications, you can email: [Coronavirus@upenn.edu](mailto:Coronavirus@upenn.edu)

What makes this plan robust—and what will maximize its success in among the most trying of times—is nothing less than the resourcefulness, resilience and responsiveness of every member of the Penn community in carrying out our uplifting historic mission. We have grown and thrived for more than 250 years, and this is the way we will continue to do so in the months and years to come. This is the strength and power of the Penn community.

The most critical factor in this plan—for all its important details—is the most human one of all: that every member of the Penn community do our best to maximize its success. Keeping our beloved University and community healthy and educationally vibrant is a goal we all share.

We welcome your feedback and questions. We will monitor the pandemic and any impact it could have on our plans, and will continue to provide updated information in the weeks ahead.