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To: ALL-STAFF-EMAIL@LISTS.UPENN.EDU

Subject: An Update on Penn's Plans for the Fall Semester



An Update on Penn's Plans for the Fall Semester

from

Amy Gutmann, President

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The widespread distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine now taking place and the many safeguards we have established across campus reinforce our expectation to return to an in-person teaching, research and residential environment for the fall of 2021, as we indicated in our March 16 message. We write today to provide an update and to share new information on what will be involved in our return to a more normal campus experience.

Vaccination Requirement for Students

With the safety and effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccines now well-established, and with the importance of mass vaccination so central to our commitment to having a safe campus environment, the most significant new element of our plans for the fall is a requirement that all students be vaccinated. Exceptions will only be provided for medical or religious reasons. Students should plan on being fully vaccinated (i.e., two weeks after the last dose of the vaccine) before they return to campus for the fall semester. For any students who have not been vaccinated by the time they return to campus, the University will provide vaccination clinics, however students will need to quarantine for two weeks after receiving their first dose. Further guidance will be forthcoming for international students who received vaccines not currently approved in the United States. In addition to COVID-19 vaccines, flu vaccines will also be mandatory, beginning later in the fall. Information regarding current student immunization requirements can be found [here](#).

Specific details regarding vaccination expectations for faculty and staff are under consideration and will be provided in the near future. With increasing availability of highly effective vaccines, at this time the University strongly encourages faculty and staff to become vaccinated for your safety and for the long-term safety of our community.

Additional Safety Requirements

Even with increasing numbers of people being vaccinated, we still expect that masks will be required in many campus settings, testing and contact tracing for COVID-19 may still be necessary, and large gatherings may still be limited or modified. Everyone on campus will need to be mindful of social distancing, hand washing and completing their daily [PennOpen Pass](#). The [Student Campus Compact](#) will

be updated with any changes in expectations for student conduct early in the fall. All students should remain familiar with the standards for behavior that it outlines.

The Academic Year

Barring any significant new developments in the course of the pandemic, we expect to begin the fall semester on time, with move-in beginning on August 25 and New Student Orientation occurring August 25-30. In recognition that our returning sophomores did not have an in-person orientation this past fall, we also will have an orientation program for them along with the Second Year Experience programming. More information about NSO will be shared in the near future. Convocation for the first-year students will take place on August 30, and the first day of classes will be August 31.

We expect that undergraduate class instruction will be primarily delivered in-person, although online and hybrid delivery is expected in some cases for large classes. Our academic policies regarding grading will return to their regular, pre-COVID standards. Graduate and professional students will be contacted directly by their schools and programs with information relating to their classroom and research experience.

Housing and Dining

Residence halls will return to their normal occupancy in the fall, and dining options will be expanded and should resemble pre-pandemic configurations, although some social distancing and other health considerations will still be in place. We will continue to follow established health guidelines and best practices in our College Houses and dining facilities and will update our policies as needed. Extra cleaning and ventilation checks will continue in all Penn facilities.

Campus Visitors

As we begin this summer to repopulate the campus, schools, centers, and departments can again consider bringing in scholars and visitors to campus in accordance with social distancing and facility planning guidelines. Visitors must comply with all Penn health guidelines and policies and participate in [PennOpen Pass](#). All Penn identification holders will have access to testing and vaccination opportunities in accordance with University and municipal and state health policy guidelines.

Domestic and International Travel

Beginning May 18, 2021, Penn will move from suspended to restricted travel. All domestic and some international travel will no longer require a petition if the travelers are fully vaccinated. International travel will still require registration in [MyTrips](#) but will not require petitions if it is to a CDC Level 1 or 2 country. Non-vaccinated travelers and travelers to CDC Level 3 or 4 countries will continue to require a petition. Group travel (defined as 5 people or more traveling on the same itinerary) cannot commence before July 1, 2021. All travelers are expected to follow local and state guidelines regarding quarantine, testing, masking, etc., and should be prepared for changes and modifications. As government restrictions and guidelines pertaining to domestic and international travel continue to evolve, we encourage anyone planning to travel to consult the [Penn Global Travel Guidance website](#) for the most up-to-date information.

Research

Academic research will return to full operations in the fall semester, in alignment with University policies on general space use, gathering, and travel. New practices that evolved to support safe engagement in the internal and external research community will continue to inform the expansion of research activity in the fall. We look forward to welcoming more faculty, undergraduate students, graduate students, post docs and research staff to in-person research on campus in the fall.

Returning to On-Campus Work

For more than a year, most faculty and staff have been working remotely. This was necessary to ensure health and safety on campus as the pandemic continued to spread. With vaccines now plentiful and the possibility of safe campus workplaces ahead of us, we expect to begin to repopulate campus with most faculty and staff returning to their pre-COVID work schedules on campus beginning in July. This will continue to be based on guidance from the city and Commonwealth health officials. The University continues to evaluate hybrid work options and will provide more information as we begin to phase-in the return to campus plans this summer. Penn's Division of Human Resources has developed a [comprehensive guide](#) for the return to in-person work, which will be updated as the guidance continues to evolve.

Conclusion

We remain enormously grateful to everyone in the Penn community for the resilience you have demonstrated as we have managed our way through the many challenges presented by the pandemic. This has been a huge undertaking. The conscientiousness of students, faculty, and staff in complying with our COVID-19 safety procedures has been inspiring, as have been your creativity and determination in together getting through this past year. As we look ahead to the fall, we see the opportunity for a return to campus activities and interactions that are much more in keeping with what we have always known at Penn. We await that with great anticipation.

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