



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** MEMBERS OF THE FACULTY SENATE

**FROM:** Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Chair of the Faculty Senate  
William Braham, Chair-Elect of the Faculty Senate  
Steven Kimbrough, Immediate Past Chair of the Faculty Senate  
Jennifer Pinto-Martin, Chair of Senate Select Committee on Planning for Post-Pandemic Penn (P4)

**SUBJECT:** **Spring Letter to Faculty**

**DATE:** FEBRUARY 1, 2021

We are writing to update you on the activities of the [Senate Executive Committee](#) (SEC) and to consolidate into one space some of the links to campus resources and policies designed to protect our community during the pandemic.

### **FOR THOSE TEACHING THIS SEMESTER**

#### **Guidance on Recording Classes**

In response to a request from Senate leadership, the University issued [Guidance on Recording Classes](#) and rights in materials created for courses, published Sept. 15, 2020. A sample statement is available for use in syllabi and in class lectures to protect the faculty member's right to the material developed for the course: <https://provost.upenn.edu/senate/sample-syllabus-notification>.

#### **Virtual Backgrounds and Wellness Breaks**

Several Schools and Penn entities, including Athletics, have made photos for use as Zoom backgrounds, some of which have been pre-loaded into Canvas to make it easier for students (or any Penn Zoom user) to select. Other examples include [photos from Annenberg](#), and Wharton has created [a page with directions](#) on how to make this process work.

In addition, Penn Athletics has created "[Wellness Breaks](#)" for use during breaks in classes. They model forms of exercise in which students and faculty can engage during breaks in lengthy classes.

### **TO KEEP OUR CAMPUS SAFE AND HEALTHY**

We encourage you to read the [message on vaccinations sent January 28](#), which includes links to [FAQs from Penn Medicine on vaccine safety](#) and a [vaccine interest form for City of Philadelphia residents](#). We also encourage you to visit Penn's [COVID-19 Dashboard](#), which is updated on Tuesdays, and to keep these key points in mind:

#### **Campus Policies on Facial Covering, Physical Distancing, and Use of PennOpen Pass**

Penn's [Return to Campus Guide](#) addresses policies on facial covering, physical distancing and use of the PennOpen Pass. Whether you are coming to campus regularly, intermittently, or working only from home, we encourage everyone to use [PennOpen Pass](#) daily to complete a symptom check.

#### **Screening Testing Program**

Faculty who will be on campus regularly for four or more hours each week are asked to begin participating in the University's weekly screening [testing protocol](#) by clicking on the "[schedule a test](#)" button.

### **Contact Tracing**

If you or someone in your immediate family is diagnosed with COVID-19, Penn's [contact tracing program](#) plays an [essential role in mitigating the spread](#) of COVID-19. The information you provide is used to determine whether you and others may be at risk of COVID-19 due to exposure. The information you share is kept highly confidential, and your identity will not be shared with anyone.

### **Travel Quarantine**

The University has a [14-day travel quarantine policy](#) in place if you travel out of the area and then plan to be on campus. While Penn-affiliated travel is suspended, we ask that you take great care with personal travel.

### **COVID-19 VACCINATION**

As soon as vaccine doses are received by Penn Medicine, the University will mobilize to make them available to those who meet risk exposure criteria in Phases 1b, infrastructure essential workers, and 1c, essential workers with lower risk of exposure such as University faculty and staff. The situation is fluid and will evolve quickly, but you will receive information as soon as a vaccination program is in place.

Those faculty members who meet other risk factor criteria, such as being over 65 years of age or with medical conditions (e.g., heart disease, cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) may qualify for programs through state or local agencies. We encourage you to consult your primary care physician about whether you should participate in those local vaccination events if they are available to you and you are eligible, as they may occur before the University's vaccination program begins.

These websites provide localized information for the county in which you reside:

[Delaware](#)

[New Jersey](#)

**Pennsylvania**

[Berks County](#)

[Bucks County](#)

[Chester County](#)

[Delaware County](#)

[Montgomery County](#)

[Philadelphia County](#)

Information on the University's public health measures are available on the [Penn COVID-19 Response](#) website.

### **FOR DISCUSSION IN YOUR SCHOOL, DEPARTMENT, OR CENTER**

#### **How can we improve the process of course evaluation?**

The Faculty Senate has begun a multi-year review on course and instructional evaluation. Two committees have been charged with:

- Reviewing and commenting on Instructor and Course Evaluation Reports with a focus on their uses in student course selection, improvement of the quality of courses, and hiring, tenure, promotion, as well as in merit-based salary increase decisions.
- Reviewing and commenting on existing methods for eliciting student feedback, including, without limit, mid-course or ongoing feedback mechanisms available to the instructor to aid in course correction and in the identification of students who may need assistance.
- Identifying ways to improve these processes.

We hope the departments, schools, and centers that have teaching responsibilities will undertake a parallel review and hope to work with the Office of the Provost to ensure that SEC and school efforts are complementary.

### **Resolution on Engaged Scholarship**

We invite you to write the Senate Office ([senate@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:senate@pobox.upenn.edu)) to share with us how your school, department, or center is addressing the [Resolution on Engaged Scholarship](#) endorsed by SEC on October 14, 2020.

### **Supporting Our Junior Faculty**

We also urge schools, departments, and centers to memorialize their understandings about the trade-offs involved in prioritizing teaching over some other activities during the pandemic, especially as they pertain to faculty who are working toward promotion or tenure. Please share these understandings with the Senate Office ([senate@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:senate@pobox.upenn.edu)). More information can be found in the SEC Actions from [September 2, 2020](#).

**Please join us for a Full Faculty Senate Meeting on Wednesday, March 17, 2021, 3:00pm EDT, to review and vote on updating the Faculty Senate's bylaws.** Proposed amendments to the Faculty Senate Rules will soon be shared with you. In accordance with the Rules, a Full (virtual) Faculty Senate meeting will be held at 3 p.m. EDT on Wednesday, March 17, 2021, to vote on the amendments. All Standing Faculty are invited to attend this meeting.

### **ADDRESSING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY**

[SEC passed a resolution in May 2020](#) acknowledge the scientific reality that a climate emergency threatens our University, our city, our state, our nation, our civilization, and humanity and the natural world as a whole. The resolution asks us to act in our individual capacities as faculty members and citizens to address the global climate emergency by taking specific actions to reduce our climate footprint. [You can add your signature to the resolution here](#). To complement the resolution, the Senate released [Bring It Home: Practical Steps for Faculty & Staff to Respond to the Climate Emergency](#) in August 2020.

### **KEEP IN TOUCH**

You can find links to recordings of Faculty Senate Seminars from June 2020 to present on the [Faculty Senate website](#), along with a [list of all elected members of the Senate Executive Committee](#). Please reach out to your representative if you wish to bring any matter to the attention of SEC.

Thank you for all that you have done to help your department, school, or center, and our Penn community, to navigate these challenging times. We look forward to seeing you at our Full Faculty Senate Meeting on March 17 at which the full faculty will have the opportunity to vote on proposed revisions to the Faculty Senate Rules.

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The Faculty Senate Tri-Chairs

Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Chair  
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