

From Campus Access to Testing and Vaccination: What to Expect for Penn's COVID-Era Spring Semester

Virtual Town Hall

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

4:00-5:30 p.m. EST

<https://provost.upenn.edu/senate/what-expect-penns-covid-era-spring-semester>

TOWN HALL VIDEO TIMELINE

2:30 – Answers to Vaccine FAQs

16:00 – Public Health Approaches for Spring Semester

26:00 – Testing

35:00 – Compliance for Faculty, Staff, and Postdocs

42:00 – Addressing questions

QUESTIONS ADDRESSED DURING TOWN HALL

43:15 – Will vaccination be mandatory?

44:45 – Will vaccines be provided at no cost?

45:00 – Who else is in “Tier 1” for receiving the vaccine?

47:00 – What is Penn’s recommendation for participating in the COVID Alert PA tracking app?

48:30 – What conditions result in a “red PennOpen Pass?”

50:15 – Will we need to wear masks in our personal offices? How do we eat with masks on?

52:15 – How have COVID-19 transmissions occurred within HUP and on the academic campus?

54:00 – What type of testing will be required for occasional campus visitors?

57:00 – What are the expectations for testing prior to one’s return to campus in the spring semester?

58:45 – Will testing be offered to contract staff, cleaning staff, Allied Security guards, etc.?

1:00:00 – What are the best- and worst-case scenarios that you can envision for the spring semester?

1:03:15 – If I can fulfill my duties fully remotely, and I am at high risk, will I be mandated to return to campus in the spring?

1:04:45 – What policies will be in place regarding the holding of events on campus?

1:06:30 – What assurances can Penn give to its surrounding West Philadelphia community and neighbors, who share space in apartment buildings, stores, etc., that Penn cares about our neighbors and want to keep them safe?

1:10:15 – See:

<https://provost.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/users/user131/testing%20cadence%20density%20and%20college%20infection%20rates%2012.2020.pdf>

1:11:00 – What are the plans for ongoing, long-term support for faculty who have lost productivity due to the pandemic?

1:12:15 – Will flexible work-from-home be the “new normal?”

1:14:00 – Can off-campus students opt-in to the on-campus testing protocol to allow them access to spaces and services that are now only accessible to students who reside in on-campus housing?

1:17:00 – How do you enroll in the on-campus screening and testing program?

1:18:45 – Should we complete a PennOpen Pass self-attestation on weekends?

1:19:45 – What lessons have been learned from other universities?

WRITTEN RESPONSES TO REMAINING QUESTIONS

VACCINES

- Is there any data at present on vaccination for breastfeeding mothers?
 - There is not enough yet to make any recommendations. Breastfeeding mothers and pregnant women should consult with their health care provider regarding the vaccine.
- How do we address anti-vax sentiment within our communities and families?
 - Appeal to the science. Remind those hesitant to take the vaccine that 1) the approval process has been transparent, 2) oversight has been by independent and highly regarded scientists, 3) it is important for the country to get “back to normal,” and 4) economic recovery depends on uptake of the vaccine. It is important to exhibit leadership by example, especially for individuals who are leaders in their communities: Sharing why you will get or have already gotten the vaccine may be helpful to encourage others to do so.
- Are those with side effects/symptoms following the vaccine expected to quarantine, and how does that impact capacity on the health care system if the first phase is for health workers?
 - The vaccine will not provide protection immediately. There is evidence that there will be some protection after the first shot, but it still takes a week or two to develop these protective antibodies. The fuller protection comes after the booster shot 3 weeks later. So, if a person receives the COVID-19 vaccination and has an exposure a few days prior to the shot or shortly thereafter, the person should still quarantine. The health system has been taking these exposures in stride; we will still keep high levels of precautions.
- Will students employed by the university for jobs be considered staff and given vaccination priority?
 - Prioritization for vaccine administration is being determined at the federal, state, and local levels.
- How do we know if the vaccines have been maintained properly? For example, if the vaccine needs to be kept at a given temperature how do we know that?
 - All vaccine shipping containers are outfitted with remote temperature monitors (RTMs). The information from these monitors are fed into a dashboard that is tracked 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (https://www.pfizer.com/news/hot-topics/covid_19_vaccine_u_s_distribution_fact_sheet). Nevertheless, maintaining the cold chain for vaccines has been a challenge for many years, especially in low and middle income countries (<https://www.gavi.org/covid19>).
- What if you've already had Bell's palsy: should you take the vaccine?
 - Facial palsy is a more general term that includes Bell's palsy. The cause(s) of Bell's palsy has not been unequivocally determined although it has been linked to a number of infectious agents and is associated with a number of risk factors. Bell's palsy can recur although it is

not common. The occurrence of facial palsy will be monitored closely as the vaccine is rolled out. People who have had facial palsy should discuss the vaccine risks/benefits with their physician.

- I am a grad student who has stayed where I was, outside Pennsylvania, since March to protect myself and others. Is it likely I will have to return to Philadelphia to get a vaccine?
 - The details of the roll-out at Penn are still under development. More information will be forthcoming. If the vaccine is available at your local health care facility and they offer it to you given your position on the priority list, it would make sense to get the vaccine when it is offered. Before receiving the vaccine locally, you should clarify what costs you will incur from doing so, if any.
- What tier are spouses of medical staff?
 - At this time, priority on the list is assigned according to individual risk, but this should be clarified with your health care provider.
- When do you think there will be data available about whether those vaccinated are still able to pass on the virus (i.e., carried in the nasal cavity)?
 - This data should start to emerge within the coming months.

TESTING

- Is COVID-19 testing available to staff who are working remotely?
 - Only those staff who meet the criteria for enrolling in the spring Penn Cares testing program will be able to access screening tests. Staff who have a red PennOpen Pass due to symptoms or close contact can travel to campus for a diagnostic test in Irvine Hall if they choose to do so.
- What if we do not know if our position will resume on campus by January 18?
 - Your school/center leadership should inform you whether you should be coming to campus regularly prior to testing enrollment end date of January 18. Once notified and if you meet the testing criteria you should enroll as soon as possible
- Does the saliva test have false negatives and/or false positives? What is the sensitivity and specificity of the saliva test?
 - The accuracy of the saliva test is comparable to the nasal test. They are both PCR tests and have approximately 97% sensitivity and 99% specificity.
- Is testing available by Penn in suburban areas where many faculty live and where HUP facilities exist?
 - The Penn Cares testing program is only available at the 8 testing sites on campus. University employees under by Penn insurance plans have access to tests through other providers. See <https://www.hr.upenn.edu/PennHR/benefits-pay/health-life-and-fsa/penn-health-insurance-and-covid-19/> for more information.

- What are the responsibilities of a supervisor regarding at risk staff that they supervise? Can they insist that the at-risk staff person go to the office, when the work can be mostly performed remotely? If there is problem, where does the at-risk staff person go?
 - If a staff member is required to be in the office to perform their duties but consider themselves at risk, they should request a reasonable accommodation from the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Programs (<https://www.upenn.edu/affirm-action/>).
- If we have multiple roles at the university (e.g., staff and grad student) how do we figure out which testing requirement apply to us?
 - If you qualify for enrollment in screening under either role you should enroll. Both require once a week testing.
- If I have a three-hour time period on campus for a doctor's appointment, and then work on campus for 5 hours that same week, and have a green PennOpen Pass every day that week, what are the rules for testing?
 - If you are not on campus regularly for 4 or more hours per week then they do not meet criteria for screening.
- Do you report positive test results (with our names) anywhere? Will a positive test automatically become part of our health records at Penn Medicine?
 - No, but names are sometimes used in contact tracing efforts.
- What if someone tested positive 9 months ago and has been fine ever since and received a negative test a month after testing positive? Are they required to get tested weekly, and are they at risk of getting COVID-19 again?
 - Following CDC guidelines, we ask those who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past to enroll in screening 90 days following their last positive test. There is some data to suggest a small chance of re-infection.
- Regarding screening, my staff are University employees but also support the Health System and CHOP. Are University employees who work in the hospitals considered “on campus” and required to participate in screening if they meet the criteria?
 - All university staff who are regularly on campus 4 hours or more per week, including in the hospitals, must participate in the testing screening program.
- I'm in the COVID Safe clinical trial. If I'm doing that, do I also need to do the campus testing?
 - No.
- Will staff working from home have to participate in testing?
 - Only those who meet the on-campus criteria are required to participate in testing.
- For staff who live far from campus, is there an alternate testing strategy, for example, for staff who live in Delaware?

- If you are not meeting on-campus criteria you do not need to enroll in the testing program.
- But for IT personnel who are on campus on a regular basis, but who live out of state, are there resources that Penn is working with/sharing data with, in Delaware and New Jersey, that we can use for testing off-campus?
 - In that case, you would want to schedule your test for days you are on campus. The scheduling system allows for irregular days and hours - you are not forced into a specific day every week.
- Can staff (or faculty or students) who do not fit the eligibility criteria because they are working fully remotely AND who do not have any symptoms and do not have any known exposure get tested as preventative measure?
 - Only those who meet screening testing criteria can schedule for testing.
- Will the students be tested before leaving home?
 - No, we will be conducting "gateway" testing the day of student arrival for every student coming into the area.
- If we (staff) start working 4+ weekly hours after January 18 can we enroll later in semester?
 - Yes.
- What if you do not meet the criteria for the screening in January but later do meet the criteria for the screening? (For example, if you need to access a lab for experimental research) Is there a way to enroll later?
 - You can enroll at any time during the semester.
- If we're teaching remotely and do not expect to be on campus regularly do, we need to be in the testing program?
 - No.
- How do we get screening tests if we are not on campus?
 - Visit <https://coronavirus.upenn.edu/content/faculty-postdocs-and-staff-spring-2020-2021-covid-19-testing-approach> for more information.
- How does staff enroll in testing?
 - We will be rolling out the enrollment/scheduling soon. Information will come from multiple sources, including the Penn COVID website and email.
- If a staff member misses their required weekly test and gets a red pass, how should we get clearance to get back to campus to get the test and then get a green PennOpen Pass?
 - You will be prompted to schedule your next test and once you do, the pass will be turned green within 24 hours of scheduling.
- I come to campus to work in computer server rooms for about 4 hours every 5th week or so (the schedule is not quite regular). I am considered essential personnel for that reason. I don't seem

to meet the criteria to be tested since I'm not campus every week. Should I be tested the week I come in?

- No, use PennOpen Pass to obtain clearance to enter the appropriate campus buildings.
- I'm adjunct faculty and am scheduled to be on campus to teach an in-person workshop in February. That is the only date I plan to be on campus. Do I need to be tested before coming on campus?
 - No, use PennOpen Pass to obtain clearance to enter the appropriate campus buildings.
- I work remotely, but I live a couple of blocks from campus. I take daily walks in the neighborhood. Should I sign up for the testing program?
 - Not if you do not meet the on-campus criteria and walking through campus does not satisfy the criteria.

COMPLIANCE

- If you have been remote for the majority of the COVID lockdown as staff and haven't used PennOpen Pass due to being fully remote, do we have to complete PennOpen Pass daily even if we're still remote?
 - You do not. We encourage everyone to complete it in order to help us keep accurate information about the spread of the disease, but completing it is not required if you are not coming to campus.
- What if you are working remotely but need to go to your office to pick up something? Will you be allowed without testing?
 - PennOpen Pass must be used before coming to campus. Please complete it before coming on campus and show it at the building entry. If PennOpen Pass is not used, building access will be denied.
- Do we think ALL people are telling the truth on the PennOpen Pass App?
 - There is an attestation at the end of the questionnaire where the person submitting it certifies that the information they are providing is true and accurate to the best of their knowledge according to the Principles of Responsible Conduct (<https://almanac.upenn.edu/articles/principles-of-responsible-conduct-a-reminder-to-the-penn-community>). We depend on the integrity of Penn's employees.
- How are we preventing people from doctoring "green" PennOpen Passes?
 - Trust is an important part of our approach. There is no way to eliminate all workarounds. We will be monitoring PennOpen Pass and test scheduling for anomalies and follow up directly as necessary.
- As a staff member, if you take PTO for a full week, should you notify someone you will not be on campus for testing or should you still try to make it to campus to get tested that week?
 - If you are away or on PTO, you should not come in for your regular test. Your PennOpen Pass will go red (due to non-compliance), but once you schedule your next week's testing, within 24 hours it should return to green.

- Do we need to complete PennOpen Pass on weekends and holidays?
 - We recommend doing PennOpen Pass every day, so we can monitor overall health and maintain the good habit of doing so.
- Is there a PennOpen Pass app or do we have to use the website?
 - <https://pennopen.med.upenn.edu/>. This can be used on phone via web browser. It is not an "app" but accessible through the web.
- Why does Penn not encourage its population to use the COVID Safe PA app?
 - We worked closely with the State and the City on development of the COVID Safe PA app. The app does not provide the data Penn needs to maintain a safe campus. In addition, we are concerned about confusion with PennOpen Pass, which is our priority for campus. Employees are welcomed to use the COVID Safe PA app in addition to PennOpen Pass.

SPRING SEMESTER / PENN COMPACT

- Has the university administration considered postponing the opening of spring semester to February or March with ending in summer?
 - At the present time we plan to re-open in January. The COVID Response Team continues to monitor the prevalence, and should we need to reconsider this decision we will inform the community accordingly.
- Does university policy technically prohibit non-distanced, large indoor gatherings of students off-campus?
 - The Student Campus Compact explicitly states the need to follow public health guidelines about indoor gatherings (<https://coronavirus.upenn.edu/content/student-campus-compact>).
- What about club related gatherings during the spring term? Would gatherings be discouraged?
 - Club gatherings must be primarily remote or outdoors with masks and appropriate social distance.
- Are there plans in place to move back to entirely remote and send students home again if there is a spike on campus? What would that process look like?
 - Plans for closing campus have been established should the need arise, and it may involve shelter-in-place as opposed to sending students home if that is the safer option.
- What is the turnaround time for Student Campus Compact violation complaints that are reported?
 - It depends on how long the investigation takes and whether the violation is referred to a school or to the Office of Student Conduct.

- Will students have designated social pods like some other universities implemented?
 - Social pods will emerge organically based on living situations, and students will be encouraged to remain within their pods.
- Does the review panel tell the reported students to get tested or quarantine?
 - If that is appropriate, then yes.
- Why is Penn focused on student penalization of compact violations? It has been well documented (even by Penn researchers) that policing behavior is harmful and ineffective, so why is that the current stance? Shouldn't the focus be on education and health services?
 - Yes, and that is the focus to the greatest extent possible.
- Why should the focus be on penalization of students? We shouldn't be relying on "holding students accountable," but instead should be bolstering the Penn administrations health response. A culture of policing is not good for anyone.
 - Our focus is not on penalization, but on creating a climate of compliance. We trust our students to do the right thing, but for the safety of all on campus, we need to communicate to them that compliance is important and that we take it seriously.
- How will students who live off-campus be held to bi-weekly testing?
 - We will be tracking and reporting on student compliance weekly. Those not in compliance will have their PennOpen Pass turned red and they will not be able to access Penn buildings.

FACILITIES, ACCESS, REMOTE WORK

- What University office is responsible for Assessing ventilations systems and conditions in campus buildings?
 - Facilities & Real Estate Services (FRES) and Environmental Health and Radiation Safety (EHRS)
 - All students living on campus will be in single rooms. Density in indoor spaces will be strictly enforced.
 - Penn faculty and staff who are able to work remotely are expected to continue to do so. School/Center leadership continues to determine what work must occur on campus.
- Can the university provide heated outdoor areas for eating lunch during the winter?
 - We understand that outdoor enclosed areas with heating do not provide adequate ventilation and may also be a fire hazard.
- Has there been any conversation about planning for Commencement? Should we expect those large events to be virtual in 2021?
 - Planning for Commencement 2021 is premature at this point.
- Do or will we have guidelines for contractors, or other professionals not directly employed by Penn, who may need or want to work on campus in very limited situations?
 - Yes, Penn will work with the employers of these individuals to direct them to testing services should they choose to use them. Penn is also working with the third-party

providers regarding appropriate PPE. PennPath is also a useful tool for these situations: <https://www.isc.upenn.edu/pennpath>.

- Why wouldn't we let staff who test positive work remotely if they are able? Some people have very minor symptoms.
 - Staff who test positive and are able to work remotely are expected to work remotely.
- Is the university going to renovate buildings/offices that have poor air circulation or the inability to socially distance?
 - This is already underway.
- What about offices that are open plan/cubicle that have many staff (~100)? Will we return to those spaces?
 - The appropriate social distancing guidelines remain the expectation.
- Can you give more details about what facilities and resources on-campus will be available to students?
 - These decisions have not been finalized yet and will be in part dependent on the local prevalence of COVID-19 in January.
- At any point will any college house be used as isolation housing for students who test positive while faculty, staff, and residents who test negative are also living in that house?
 - Students in isolation are moved to a separate, dedicated building.
- Will staff be encouraged to continue remote work or are we trying to ramp up staff on campus?
 - Staff who can work remotely are expected to continue to do so. School/Center leadership continues to determine what work must occur on campus.
- It was mentioned that people whose jobs can be done remotely should continue to do that, but do we have any idea how much longer that is going to be the case?
 - We want to continue to de-densify campus. Return for all depends on many factors. The University will continue to monitor the situation and continue to provide communication regarding operational status to faculty and staff.

DATA

- When panelists say, "when conditions shift," are there specific criteria set by the university for some of these changes? (# of testing sites, screening procedures, etc.)?
 - The COVID Response Team will be closely monitoring the positivity rate on campus as well as the prevalence in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania and the guidelines that emerge from the city and state health departments.
- Do we have data, based on all the COVID monitoring apps in circulation now, about whether these apps are effective in preventing community spread?
 - These data will be emerging over the next few months.

- Much of the data that's being cited about compliance is based on a very minimal and self-selecting population in the Fall. How confident are your extrapolations from this data to a bigger population in the Spring?
 - We are confident that most members of the Penn community will comply with public health and testing guidelines in order to keep their campus community safe.
- Where is this COVID-19 dashboard located?
 - <https://coronavirus.upenn.edu/>

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

- How can faculty/staff/students who rely on public transportation safely travel to campus? SEPTA buses/trolleys have been very inconsistent applying their rules. People have been let onto vehicles without masks or else take them off once seated.
 - SEPTA has rolled out a robust plan to minimize transmission for its riders (<http://www.septa.org/covid-19/septa-actions.html>). Penn employees who rely on public transportation are reminded to remain vigilant about masking, distancing, and handwashing during their journey.
- What happens if the new president issues a nationwide closure?
 - All University decisions are guided by public health agencies at the local, state, and federal levels. Should a national closure (lockdown) be mandated by the U.S. President, the University would comply, and further guidance would be offered to employees.
- When do you expect that campus will return to anything like "normal"?
 - Based on recent trends, we expect masking, distancing, and hand-washing to be part of our regular routine for the Spring and Summer semesters, and most likely the Fall semester as well. Loosening of restrictions will only be possible once we have achieved herd immunity, which we hope to do by the end of 2021. (All of this is speculation of course.)
- How is the university supporting staff? Much of the focus has been on student and faculty resources, but it is staff who are left responsible to implement, communicate, manage etc.?
 - Faculty and staff policy and protocol are identical in terms of this conversation. Staff who meet on-campus criteria have the same access to screening testing as students and faculty.
- Who is following up with people who are asked to quarantine to ensure that they are following protocol?
 - Our health services teams, including contact tracers, will be regularly following up.