

VOL.37 | NOVEMBER 2024

THE LION'S ROAR

The monthly newsletter for Penn State Berks

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Vice Chancellor Insights

Hello, Penn State Berks Students. We are over halfway through the semester and I know you have a lot going on. This is especially true as you begin to prepare for finals...sorry to be the wake-up call for those of you who have not even thought about it.

Just know, we are here to help you be successful. And to do my part, I am going to offer you some suggestions, beyond the proverbial, and important items, such as to staying caught up with the material, completing your assignments, avoiding procrastination...you get the point. Beyond that, I would like to share some other thoughts:

- 1. <u>Don't believe you have to do this alone</u>...use the resources here at Berks. They were created because college is a new, and sometimes overwhelming experience. We have a Writing Center, a Learning Center, a Counseling Center, as well as peer tutors and peer mentors in various courses. You can start small by visiting a faculty member's office hours to check in about the course, their own educational journey, or career ideas. College, no matter what anyone may say, is a collective learning experience.
- 2. <u>It will be hard.</u> That is the process of learning. If it was easy all of the time, what would there be to learn? All of it will be worthwhile in the end as you work through it. That includes general education classes, which teach you how to apply your critical thinking skills beyond your major, helping your overall future success, no matter your career.
- 3. Make sure you give yourself space to re-energize. Use the gym. Go to events on campus. Play video games. Take time to relax! Find some balance, before going back to your schoolwork. Our Student Affairs office has a host of opportunities. We just had Homecoming and then Fall Fest. Look around for events and participate! No matter if you live on campus or not, those activities are for you to engage and take time away from academic work.
- 4. Find your people. It will be key for all. There are people with whom to engage, academically and socially. Find opportunities to connect with motivated peers who may be similar to you or completely different from you. Just enjoy your time with people. Be open to connecting with faculty and staff who can support your academic and career aspirations. That includes me! As Vice Chancellor, I am around campus and hold public office hours. Find days and times on my directory page or in Starfish. I promise you, I cannot help you with your Physics homework, but I can talk about your plans, answer questions you may have, or talk about pets (I have four dogs).
- 5. Explore a wide range of co-curricular experiences. Here at Berks, we offer a host of these co-curricular opportunities, and more important, greater access to faculty in doing these because of the size of our campus. Engage with undergraduate research. Start here https://berks.psu.edu/academics/research/undergraduate-research and connect with faculty about their research interests. Do an internship, even if your program does not require it! Personally, internships helped me learn that I did not want to teach middle school students, work at a radio station (yes, I was briefly an on-air personality), nor work at a Public Relations firm. There are also service-learning as well as community engagement opportunities. Check in with our Office of Community Engagement, as developing a civic identity is becoming more important in our society. Travel Abroad if you are able. We even have a small grant available to help student travel. These co-curricular opportunities will bolster your success on campus and after you graduate. The key is to look outside of your classes and be involved.

Doing all of this requires some work and a lot of stepping outside of your comfort zone. That is part of the college experience. Throughout it, remember, you are part of Penn State Berks. WE ARE!!!

See you around campus.

Dr. Todd Migliaccio

Vice Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer



CAMPUS NEWS & RESOURCES

BERKS BURSAR CHANGES: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



As part of ongoing improvements across Penn State, the Bursar's Office services are now centralized at University Park. For any Bursar related inquiries, please use the "Contact Us" button at the bottom of the Bursar's website. These changes might feel like a shift, but they're here to streamline and enhance the support available to you!

Below is a quick reference guide with updated links and contact information to help you stay on track:

- Payment Plan Dates & Options: visit https://bursar.psu.edu/payment-options. Pro Tip: Be sure to include your student ID# on any check payments for fast processing).
- e-Refund: visit https://bursar.psu.edu/refund-policy. Pro
 Tip: Ensure your account is set up to receive refunds smoothly.
- · Pennsylvania Residency
 - Policy: visit https://bursar.psu.edu/residency-policy
 - Request a Review: visit https://bursar.psu.edu/residency-review
- Authorize Payer Access: visit https://bursar.psu.edu/authorized-payer-access. Pro Tip: keep loved ones in the loop for payments if needed.
- External Awards: visit https://www.bursar.psu.edu/external-awards. If you receive scholarships from an external source, be sure to include your student ID# on all scholarship checks and mail them to:

Penn State

Office of the Bursar

Attn: External Awards

109 Shields Building

664 Curtin Road

University Park, PA 16802

Important: Forms via attachments can be sent to the team email address:

<u>L-ExternalAwardsTeam@LISTS.psu.edu</u> Otherwise, all other requests can be done through 'Contact Us' on the Bursar webpage.

IMPORTANT DATES

Nov. 1 - 30

- 2025-26 On-campus Housing Request Continues 1
- Spring 2025 Course Registration Continues ²

Nov. 15

- Late Drop Deadline at 11:59pm (for full semester courses)
- Deadline to Request Housing for Fall Break 4

Nov. 22 | Installment Payment Plan (IPP) Payment #4 Due ⁵

Nov. 23 | Residence Halls Close at 12pm (for residential students)

Nov. 25 - 29 | Fall Break (No Classes)

<u>Dec. 1</u> | Residence Halls Re-open at 11am (for residential students)

1 Learn more about the **on-campus housing request process** $\underline{\text{here}}$

2 Course registration dates vary by student. Dates are based on the total number of credits earned. **View the <u>Registration Timetable</u>** for more

information

- 3 Read more about the Late Drop Deadline on page 3
- 4 Break housing is not included in the residential housing contract. In order to request housing during fall break, log into <u>eLiving</u> and choose Contracts > Summer/Break Housing Request.
- 5 Read more on the **IPP**, here

EXPRESSING CARE & CONCERN

- Student Care and Advocacy is a university-wide resource for students experiencing challenges in their college careers. At Penn State Berks, student concerns are reported to and managed by the Care Team.
- · What does the Care Team at Berks do?
 - The Care Team assists students who encounter challenges or concerns in achieving success at Penn State by coordinating efforts with campus partners.
- What do CARE Services include?
 - Basic Needs
 - Food and Housing Insecurity
 - Academic Concerns
 - Health and Wellness Issues
 - Crisis and Support
 - Navigating Campus Resources



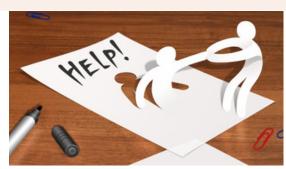
- To express concern for a student experiencing distress of an academic, health, safety, or financial nature, use the form found here.
- Learn more at https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/studentcare





GPA CONSIDERATIONS

I THINK I'M IN TROUBLE... IS ACADEMIC WARNING BAD?



How do I get placed on Academic Warning?

- Students must maintain a 2.0 Cumulative GPA (CGPA) or higher (a C average or better) to remain in *good academic* standing. At the end of the semester (when final grades are posted in LionPATH), if your CGPA falls below a 2.0, you will move into Academic Warning status.
 - Semester GPA: the average of the grades you have earned within a particular semester (e.g., all grades earned in Fall 2024).
 - Cumulative GPA: the average of all of your semesters at the university (e.g., all grades earned in Fall 2023, Spring 2024, and Fall 2024, if you were at PSU all 3 semesters).

What happens when I am on Academic Warning?

- In the next semester, while on Academic Warning, you must obtain a semester GPA of 2.0 or above to avoid Academic Suspension from the University. When your Cumulative GPA is back to a 2.0 or higher, you will return to good academic standing.
- Penn State Berks is here to support you while you are on Academic Warning. As a result, a hold will be placed on your LionPATH account to ensure that you meet with an advisor to discuss your academics. This is to ensure that you seek help in taking an active approach to improving your academics. During the meeting, your advisor and you may discuss:
 - The challenges that led to warning
 - Available campus resources
 - Planning a balanced schedule
 - GPA, grades, and policies
 - A plan for success
 - Any questions or concerns you may have
- With a solid plan, you can get back on track quickly!

For more information about Academic Warning, please reach out to the Academic Advising Center.

LOCATION: Franco 160 **EMAIL:** bkadvisingcenter@psu.edu PHONE: 610-396-6280

CAN I PROTECT MY GPA THIS SEMESTER?

As the semester is ending, some students may realize that their performance will not meet the minimum academic expectations of the university. If you are worried about being placed on Academic Warning or (if you are already on Academic Warning) about being placed on Academic Suspension, it will be especially important to discuss your options with your professors and with your academic advisor. In some cases, faculty and/or advisors may recommend either a LATE DROP or a WITHDRAWAL.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

• LATE DROP: Student action used to eliminate one or more courses from their currently enrolled course roster. Learn more here.

WITHDRAWAL Student action used to eliminate ALL courses from their currently enrolled course roster. This action will also cancel courses already scheduled for future semesters. Learn more here.

ARE THERE DEADLINES? 너

- LATE DROP: Friday, November 15, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. for full semester courses.
- WITHDRAWAL: Friday, December 13, 2024, at 5 p.m. Pro Tip: Do NOT wait until the deadline, just in case you run into any issues and/or need support.

WHAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED/DONE <u>BEFORE</u>?

- Check the **syllabi** to see how the final grade is calculated. ASSESS whether there are enough assignments remaining to improve the overall grade.
- Speak with your **professor(s)**. **DISCUSS** whether earning a passing grade is possible.



- Speak with an academic advisor. ASK about impacts to your major, upcoming semester, and graduation timeline. Speak with Financial Aid. ASK about impacts to financial aid now or in the future including potential loss of federal (e.g., loans), state (e.g., grants), and Penn State funding (e.g. scholarships).
- o International students in F-1 status, speak with your international student adviser to determine if your compliance with F-1 enrollment requirements will be impacted.

WHAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED/DONE AFTER?

- LATE DROP: • Pay the fee associated with dropping the course, which
 - will be added to your bill in LionPATH.
 - Adjust next semester's course schedule as needed.
 - Use the scheduled class time of the dropped course as focused study time for all remaining courses.

THDRAWAL:

- Meet with an academic advisor to discuss reenrollment for the next semester.
- Adjust next semester's course schedule as needed.



END WITH CONFIDENCE

FIERCE FALL FINISH

Surprise! After the Fall/Thanksgiving Break, there are only two weeks of classes before finals week begins.

November is the perfect time to prepare for the end of the semester without cramming. Here are a few helpful tips:

- Create a Study Schedule: Break down the remaining weeks by setting goals for each class. Prioritize reviewing based on exam dates and assignment deadlines.
- Visit Office Hours and Study Groups: Clarify any confusing material with professors or peers. Study groups are great for collaborative learning and filling knowledge gaps.
- Set Achievable Goals for Break: Identify tasks to complete during the break, like drafting an essay or reviewing a chapter. Break them into smaller tasks so you can be productive while still enjoying downtime.
- Rest and Recharge: Make time to rest and have fun. Of Getting enough sleep and taking breaks will boost your focus for the final stretch of the semester.

Don't forget to check your final exam schedule in LionPATH! See the screenshot example below.

Final Exam Schedule



CAS 232N 001 Horror Film and Identity 12/17/2024 6:00PM-7:50PM

Gaige Tech-Bus Innov Bldg 121

STUDY SMARTER WORKSHOPS



Plan to attend one of these sessions to learn how to get the most out of the time you put into studying. You will learn research-based techniques about the learning process and how to improve your study skills.

- Thurs., Nov 7 2024, 10am-12pm
 - Register at: https://bit.ly/
 StudySmarterThurNov7 10am-12pm
- Thurs., Nov 14 2024, 1pm-3pm
 - Register at: https://bit.ly/StudySmarterThurNov14 1pm-3pm

Learn more <u>here</u>

FAFSA RELATED NEWS

FOR THE CURRENT AID YEAR (2024-25)

- **2024-25 Paper FAFSA**: If you filed a paper FAFSA but none of your financial aid has been processed, reach out to Financial Aid for support.
- Accepting Loans: Loans must be accepted before the end of
 the fall semester in order to process and pay any remaining
 Fall balance. Note: If you previously declined loans and
 would like to accept them, reach out to Financial Aid for
 support.
- Fall 2024 Graduates: Complete exit counseling Exit Counseling | Federal Student Aid for loan repayment options and information. Note: The purpose of exit counseling is to ensure you understand your student loan obligations and are prepared for repayment.

FOR THE NEXT AID YEAR (2025-26)

- Dec. 1: Public release date for the 25-26 FAFSA form.
- Read more about the 2025-26 FAFSA form here.

MAINTAIN SAP TO KEEP AID

Maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is essential for keeping your federal financial aid. November is a great time to check in on your academic progress to ensure you're on track! Here's what you need to know to stay eligible for aid:

- **Keep Your GPA Above 2.00:** A cumulative GPA of 2.00 or higher is a key part of SAP. If your GPA dips below this, it can put your financial aid eligibility at risk.
- Complete at Least 67% of attempted credits: Passing your classes is essential—aim to complete at least 67% of the courses you attempt. Dropping or failing classes affects your completion rate, so consider seeking support early if you're facing challenges.

Learn More about SAP Requirements

For more details, check out the policy here

CONNECT WITH FINANCIAL AID

Financial Aid is temporarily located in Thun Library. The best ways to connect are:

- Email: BerksFinAid@psu.edu
- By appointment: with Johnée Border, Assistant Director of Financial Aid at Berks
- **Phone: 610-396-6070** *No answer? Leave a message with your name, phone number, 9-digit PSU ID number, and reason for calling!*



FALL BREAK ESSENTIALS

STICKING AROUND FOR BREAK?

POPULAR VENUES IN BERKS COUNTY

- <u>AMC Berkshire</u> | Discount Tuesdays for AMC Stubs A-List, Premiere, and Insider (free to join) members.
- <u>Miller Center for the Arts</u> | Featuring live performances and offering student discounted tickets!
- Santander Performing Arts Center and Santander
 Arena | hosts hundreds of concerts, shows, live
 performances, and other forms of entertainment targeted
 to all age ranges.
- <u>The Works</u> | Featuring arcade, Go karts, slides, ziplines, sports court, laser tag, and dining.

BEFORE BREAK: CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION



Penn State Berks is thrilled to announce **International Education Week (IEW) 2024**, happening November 18–22! This year's theme, *Friends Across the Globe*, brings together students, faculty, and staff to celebrate global connections, cultures, and education.

Here's a snapshot of the week's highlights:

• Photo Contest (Nov 1–13): Capture your unique perspective! Submit photos in the categories below for a chance to win a prize.



Study/Travel Abroad Experiences

Home Away from Home: What makes you feel at home at Penn State Berks or in Berks County

- Cultural Perspectives: Showcase culture through food, clothing, festivals, or celebrations
- International Day: Wednesday, Nov 20 in the Lion's Den
 - Explore the diverse cultures within our campus
 - cuisine, games, music, and clothing.
 - Interested in representing your culture? Sign up here
- Friendsgiving: Thursday, Nov 21 in the MPR (007 Perkins)
 - Celebrate friendship and cultural exchange over a meal with traditional Thanksgiving food and international dishes. It's a chance to connect and learn about each other's traditions.

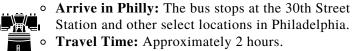
Don't miss out on this week of celebration and learning—everyone is welcome! For more information about events and to enter the photo contest visit the IEW site.

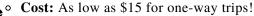
TRAVEL OPTIONS TO PHL & NYC



FROM READING TO PHILLY

- The most direct choice is to travel by bus, with services from Amtrak (using the Thruway Connecting Services).
 - Depart from Reading: Buses depart from the <u>BARTA</u> <u>Transportation Center in downtown Reading at 701</u>
 Franklin St, Reading, PA 19602.





FROM READING TO NYC

- Students recommend OurBus.
 - Depart from Reading: Buses depart from 2910 N 5th Street Hwy, Reading, PA 19605 (Fairground Square Mall) in the parking lot between Boscov's and Wells Fargo. Alternatively, you can board the bus downtown at the <u>BARTA Transportation Center</u> at 701 Franklin St, Reading, PA 19602.
 - Arrive in NYC: The bus stop is located at 368 Park Avenue South, New York, NY, between 26th and 27th streets, or at Port Authority, depending on the trip. The precise location and time of your departure will be available once you make your reservation.
 - Note: For those seeking transportation to the Lehigh Valley area, OurBus stops in Kutztown, Allentown, and Hellertown on the way to NYC!

Travel Time: Approximately 4 hours.

- Cost: Fares start at \$39 for one-way trips.
- Another option: Amtrak

DID YOU KNOW

- Amtrak Student Discount: Students between ages 17-24 can save 15% on purchases made one (1) day in advance with our national student discount.
 - The discount will automatically be applied when qualifying travel is selected. Or, use the Amtrak applied and enter code V814 when booking your trip.

Learn more at <u>Amtrak.com</u>



ICYMI: In Case You Missed It

CONNECT WITH ADVISING



Academic Advising Center

LOCATION: Franco 160

EMAIL:

bkadvisingcenter@psu.edu

PHONE: 610-396-6280

3 STEPS TO CREATING A COURSE SCHEDULE!

- 1. **REVIEW Current Course Progress.** Assess your current performance to determine if you might need to repeat a course in the next semester.
- 2. ADDRESS Holds & To-Do List Items.

 Unaddressed Holds and/or To Do List Items can impact your ability to schedule courses. Make sure to clear any outstanding items before your course enrollment date.
- 3. MEET With Your Assigned Academic Advisor. This person can help you determine the best plan to remain on track towards graduation. Be honest with them about your current performance for the most accurate planning. Find your assigned advisor on your LionPATH dashboard/home base in "My Advisors"



Need Help? Review the LionPATH Help Guides here

FREE .

TUTORING RESOURCES

LEARNING CENTER (161 FRANCO)

- Tutoring in math, chemistry, biology, and more.
- Support with study skills, time management, test anxiety, and more.
- Schedule an appointment at https://berks.mywconline.com/

Open for Peer Tutoring by Appointment:

Monday-Thursday 9am-7pm | Friday 9am-1pm

Walk-In Hours Dr. Ryan Hassler, Faculty Math Tutor:

Mondays Noon to 3pm | Tuesday & Thursday 1:30pm – 3pm

WRITING CENTER (141 FRANCO)

- Support with written material such as papers, speeches, resumes, and more!
- Available in-person or via Zoom
- Schedule an appointment at https://berks.mywconline.com/

Open for Peer Tutoring: Monday-Friday 10am - 6:30pm

MATH PEERS & PROFS (222 LUERSSEN)

- Tutoring sessions available for Math 4, 21, 22, 26, 34, 41, and Stat 100 with Math faculty and teaching assistants.
- Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:15pm-1:15pm.
- No appointment is necessary!

I'M NERVOUS ABOUT TUTORING

To get the most out of your tutoring sessions, follow these easy steps:

- 1. Make a plan: Demand for tutoring increases around assessment deadlines. Establish enough time before your exam(s) and assignment(s) for tutoring. Pro Tip: Make an appointment at least one week ahead of your exam!
 - 2. Try it out: It is beneficial to attempt your work alone. It can give you a clear idea of where you are struggling. Pro Tip: Bring 2-5 attempted questions/problems to maximize your session. For written work, bring an outline or draft to the session.
 - 3. Bring course materials: It could be helpful for the tutor to see the course lecture notes, textbook, study guide, and/or assignment guidelines. The more information they have, the better they can support you!



CAMPUS RESOURSE LIST

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

- 24/7 Penn State Crisis Line can be used in consultation for those at PSU to support someone who is experiencing a crisis or for yourself. You can reach the Crisis Line by:
 - Calling 1-877-229-6400
 - Texting "LIONS" to 741741
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention offers resources and tips on how to support a friend -- or get help yourself.
 - Check it out at https://seizetheawkward.org/
- Berks County Crisis Line can be used by residents of Berk County to assist children, adolescents and adults experiencing varying levels of crisis.
 - o Call the line at 610-379-2007
- Counseling Services are available to all Penn State Berks students for FREE.
 - Learn more at https://berks.psu.edu/counseling-services
- Life Hack Kits are free step-by-step wellness packages designed to help navigate and demystify the perplexing parts of being human.
 - Learn more at https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/ wellness-services/life-hacks
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is free and confidential support for any person in distress, providing prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones.
 - Call the line by dialing 988 or calling 800-273-8255
- Online Mental Health Screenings are free and anonymous for several areas of mental health, including depression, anxiety, academic distress, eating concerns, frustration level, family stress, and alcohol use.
 - Begin a screening at https://tinyurl.com/CAPSScreening
- **Red Folder** at Penn State is a guide to help faculty, staff, student leaders, and others who interact with students to recognize, respond effectively to, and refer Penn State students in distress.
 - Review resources specific to Penn State Berks at https://redfolder.psu.edu/campus-resources/
- Safe Berks Campus Advocate provides support for survivors of domestic and sexual violence as well as offers Prevention and Awareness Programming.
 - 24/7 Hotline: 844-789-SAFE
 - Text: SAFE BERKS to 20121
- WellTrack Boost is a tool designed to help understand the
 activities associated with changes in mood and motivation, as
 well as to identify patterns in daily activities and how they are
 associated with changes in emotional states.
 - Get FREE PSU access at https://psu.welltrack.com/

NITTANY CORNER

FOOD PANTRY

The Nittany Corner food pantry was funded and established by the Penn State Berks class of 2017. Pantry items are FREE to Penn State Berks students! Visit the pantry in the Thun Library's Cohen Lounge

GENERAL

• ACADEMIC ADVISING [160 FRANCO]

- Questions about course scheduling, degree progress, changing your major, or advising policies contact your assigned academic adviser (listed in LionPATH). You can also reach out to Academic Advising for support.
 - Email: bkadvisingcenter@psu.edu
 - **Phone:** 610-396-6280

BIAS INCIDENT REPORT FORM

 To report concerns regarding bias, intolerance, discrimination, harassment, and/or incivility, use the form found here

• BURSAR

- Questions about your **bill** or **payment options**, contact the Bursar's Office at University Park
 - Contact: https://www.bursar.psu.edu/contact-us

CARE REPORT FORM

• To express concern for a student experiencing distress of an academic, health, safety, or financial nature, use the form found here

• FINANCIAL AID

- Questions about your **aid**, **holds**, or **to do list items**, contact the Financial Aid Office
 - Email: BerksFinAid@psu.edu
 - **Phone:** 610-396-6070

HOUSING & FOOD SERVICES [106 PERKINS]

- Questions about ID Cards or Residence Hall and Housing Contracts email <u>HousingBK@psu.edu</u>
- Questions about meal plans and food services, including reporting food allergies, email absfoodservicebk@psu.edu

THUN LIBRARY

- Looking for a place to study, access course materials, a lounge with vending machines, or support with technology, visit Thun Library.
 - Webpage: https://libraries.psu.edu/berks
 - Access their full calendar <u>here</u>.
 - Course Reserves (free access to textbooks for your classes) can be used in the library in 2 hours intervals.
 Check here

TUTORING

- Need help with **Math or Science**, schedule a tutoring session with a Learning Center Tutor (in 161 Franco) here.
- Need help with a paper, speech, resume, or other written material, schedule an appointment with a Writing Center Tutor (in 146 Franco) here.
- Need help with math, attend the "Peers and Profs" help sessions on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:15-1:15p.m. in Luerssen 222. No appointment necessary!
 - Courses Supported: Math 4, 21, 22, 26, 41, & 110

VETERAN BENEFITS

- Questions about VA certifications, contact the Registrar's Office
 - Email: BKVeterans@psu.edu
 - **Phone:** 610-396-6085