

Faculty Travel Policy
Division of Natural Sciences
Pacific Lutheran University
Effective June 2016

The Division of Natural Sciences is committed to supporting our colleagues' professional development by providing opportunities for growth and renewal for faculty in all areas of their professional lives and throughout the stages of their careers. The ongoing development of its faculty members is essential to the continued strength and life of the institution. One means by which to assist the faculty is by providing funds to help defray the cost of professional travel.

Travel funds¹ provided by the Division of Natural Sciences are limited and should be primarily used to provide opportunities for disseminating scholarship conducted by faculty members and to aid in their academic professional development as scholars and teachers. These funds are generally not used to support research activities, such as the collection of data, or to subsidize the cost of student travel. The Division has financial responsibility for several restricted funds, and these accounts can be drawn on to support these latter two activities if funds permit.

Benefits-eligible faculty² are qualified to apply for travel funds. To assist the faculty, the following provisions are in place for professional travel:

Types of Activities Supported:

The Division provides support for travel for benefits-eligible faculty who participate in the following types of external activities:

1. Professional meetings where the faculty member is delivering a paper or presentation, or participating in a panel discussion, where the work involved is relevant to the faculty member's work;
2. Professional conferences related to the faculty member's teaching and research activities, curriculum development or other academic matters that are relevant for the division;
3. Professional meetings where the faculty member is playing an active role as an officer or board member for the organization;
4. Meetings that the faculty member attends at the request of the division.

In collaboration with the department chair, the dean reserves the right to determine whether the conference or meeting in question is an appropriate investment of the division's resources. The division's ability to extend financial support to any faculty travel is limited by the availability of funds, time, and competing requests.

In addition, the investment of division and/or department funds in faculty travel is an

¹ Travel funds in this case are defined as those funds made available each fiscal year by the Provost's Office and make up part of the division's services and purchases (S&P) budget line.

² Benefits-eligible faculty are defined as those who regularly work the equivalent of a 0.5 FTE or more, and are generally eligible to participate in the university's benefits plan.

important part of the growth and development of the faculty. In some cases of travel, much can be gained if the experience is shared with other members of the faculty. Therefore, by accepting travel funds from the division, you agree to share your experience with other colleagues across the university if called upon by the dean.

Priorities:

1. Those members of the faculty giving presentations at conferences/meetings will receive the highest level of support.
2. Pre-tenured faculty members will be given the highest priority.
3. Those members of the faculty chairing conference sessions or serving as organization officers will receive a lower level of support. Officers in major organizations should be compensated for their travel by the organization. Please ask the organization to consider such compensation. The division will do its best to sponsor those who do not receive any compensation, or to cover the balance of those who do receive partial compensation.
4. Due to budget constraints, funds are not available for non-benefits-eligible faculty members.

Allowable Amounts per Event:

1. Faculty members who deliver a paper or presentation will be reimbursed by the division as funds permit for transportation and other expenses up to \$1500 to help defray the cost.
2. Faculty who are not actively participating in a conference may apply for assistance of a maximum of \$1000 toward the expenses of attendance at a meeting.

Once the budget for an upcoming fiscal year has been established, the dean, in collaboration with the department chairs, will review whether the allowable amounts can or need to be adjusted.

Expenses Supported:

The Division will support the following kinds of travel and conference expenses. This support is available for the benefits-eligible faculty member only, and will not be extended to family members or colleagues who are not members of the faculty of Pacific Lutheran University. Expenses are expected to be reasonable for the city visited and nature of the event.

1. conference registration fees;
2. transportation expenses according to the most cost effective mode of travel, i.e., mileage by car, train, airfare, etc.;
3. hotel and lodging expenses;
4. meal expenses; and
5. ground transportation as necessary.

It is expected that faculty members will make every effort to economize when traveling, thus drawing less heavily on the limited funds available and allowing the Division to fund as many trips as possible. In particular, faculty members should:

- take advantage of early registration fees;
- book flights in such a way as to take advantage of lower fares;
- exercise good judgment in remaining flexible regarding flight times and routes;
- rely on public transportation or on airport coach services in preference to renting cars unless circumstances make the latter a more reasonable alternative;
- show prudence and fiscal responsibility in their choice of restaurant; and
- share a hotel room whenever possible, or consider other options, such as a dorm room.

Application Process for Travel Support:

Travel funds are available for each fiscal year, which begins on June 1 and ends on May 31. No funds can be “carried over” from a prior year, nor may funds be “borrowed” from future years.

The earlier a faculty member can forecast a need for travel support, the more likely it is that the division will be able to provide support. In order to help ensure that some funds will be available to faculty in those disciplines whose meetings are later in the fiscal year, the funds will be distributed among the following three time periods in a manner that reflects past spending averages for each 4-month period:

- June through September
- October through January
- February through May

If there are funds for a particular time interval left over, they will be carried over to the subsequent time period.

All unreimbursed travel expenses will be recorded and if any funds are unused at the end of a fiscal year, the dean will allocate them to faculty members as he/she can in hopes of offsetting any costs they have taken on.

In all cases, **a faculty member must apply for travel support at least one month prior to incurring expenses** such as conference registration, airline ticket purchases, hotel arrangements, etc. by completing a **pre-travel authorization form**. Once completed, the form should be signed and given to your department chair. NOTE: this requirement specifically states “one month prior to incurring expenses” which may well be a much earlier date than the commencement of the trip. Faculty members are responsible for adhering to this timetable.

No travel support will be available for faculty members who fail to comply with the deadlines for requesting support.

The Division will not reimburse faculty members for travel expenses after-the-fact for any trip where the faculty member has not received prior approval for the expenses.

Department/Program Support of Travel:

In addition to division funds for faculty travel, departments or programs may have allocated budgets for travel. Department Chairs and Program Directors may use these funds for any of the following purposes:

- to supplement division funding of travel related expenses;
- to provide support for faculty travel not supported by division funds; and
- to support student travel.

Travel Expense Reimbursement:

University policy requires that travel expense vouchers must be submitted within 20 days following return from a trip. Please see the university's policy at the Business Office's website under Documents and Forms for additional information.