

**Faculty Professional
Development Support**
Division of Natural Sciences
Pacific Lutheran University
Effective May 2021

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 development.

Professional development funds¹ provided by the Division of Natural Sciences are limited and will be 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 not used 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 this latter activity if funds permit.

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

Types of Activities Supported:

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

1. Professional meetings, either online or in-person, 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 meetings, either online or in-person, 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, either online or in-person, where the faculty member is playing an active role as an officer or board member for the organization;
4. Meetings, either online or in-person, that the faculty member attends at the request of the Division.
5. Scholarly endeavors, either online or in-person, that otherwise support and/or promote a faculty member's professional development.

¹ Professional development 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.

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

In addition, the investment of Division and/or department funds in faculty professional development is an important part of the growth and development of the faculty. In some cases, much can be gained if the experience is shared with other members of the faculty. Therefore, by accepting professional development funds from the Division, the faculty member agrees to share their 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 conference participation by the organization when possible. 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 professional development expenses of up to \$1500 to help defray the cost.
2. Faculty engaging in a professional development opportunity who are not actively participating in a conference may apply for assistance of a maximum of \$1000 toward the expenses associated with doing so.

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 members 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/meeting registration fees for either online or in-person conferences/meetings;

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, thus drawing less heavily on the limited funds available and allowing the Division to fund as many requests for professional development support 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 Professional Development Support:

Professional development 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 professional development 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 professional 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 professional development 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 when possible in hopes of offsetting any costs they have taken on.

In all cases, **a faculty member must apply for professional development 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 professional development activity. Faculty members are responsible for adhering to this timetable.

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

The Division may not be able to reimburse faculty members for professional development expenses after-the-fact for any activity where the faculty member has not received prior approval for the expenses.

Department/Program Support of Professional Development

In addition to Division funds for faculty professional development, departments or programs may use departmental gift accounts to support faculty professional development. Department chairs and program directors may use these funds for any of the following purposes:

- to supplement Division funding supporting professional development;
- to provide support for faculty professional development not supported by Division funds;
and
- to support student professional development/travel.

Professional Development Expense Reimbursement:

University policy requires that professional development expense vouchers must be submitted within 20 days following completion of the activity. Please see the university's policy at the Business Office's website under Documents and Forms for additional information.