

Adjunct Faculty Professional Improvement Grant Guidelines

In Article 19, Section A, the IFO/Minnesota State Master Agreement provides funding to adjunct faculty for professional improvement activities. The Inter Faculty Organization values and supports its contingent faculty! Please consider taking advantage of this new opportunity for grants, limited to \$1,500, by applying and participating in one of the activities described in this document or purchasing appropriate materials. This program was first bargained for in the 2017-2019 contract and funded for the 2018-2019 academic/fiscal year, and is included in the 2019-2021 contract.

Annual Application Deadlines will be in Fall and Spring.

PURPOSE and CRITERIA: The purpose of an adjunct faculty improvement grant is professional development in the discipline in which the applicant teaches for St. Cloud State University. Any activity or purchase must meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. It furthers the applicant's professional development and engagement with the discipline; including conference attendance and presentations, original research or creative projects, continuing education, or broadening perspectives and skill sets.
2. The activity prepares faculty for current or new teaching assignments, furthers a research agenda, and/or aligns with faculty member's professional development plan.
3. It could be interactive, hands-on training, participation in a professional development opportunity, or purchase of appropriate materials. (See Article 19, Section B, for a representative list and description—for a searchable and downloadable PDF, see: <https://www.stcloudstate.edu/humanresources/union.aspx>.)
4. Any items purchased would enhance the applicant's professional development and engagement with the discipline, prepare the applicant for current or new teaching assignments, and/or further a research agenda.
5. The IFO Master Agreement with MinnState specifies that the "... procedures and criteria [for evaluating grant applications] shall include a priority for professional improvement funds focused on equity and inclusion and/or elimination of education equity gaps." (Article 19.A Subd.5). Accordingly, in the rubric used for evaluating applications, professional development engagements (workshops/short courses) that would (demonstrably) improve faculty member's competence in teaching, pedagogy, and/or research to close academic/educational equity gaps (understood as low success rates of first generation, and low-income students, and students of color relative to their peers) shall be a priority item.

AWARD AMOUNT: The committee may normally award up to \$1,500 per application. In special circumstances, the committee may decide to increase that limit.

APPLICANT CRITERIA

- Article 19, Section A, Subd. 4 (Professional Improvement Funds for Adjuncts) Adjunct faculty will be eligible to receive professional improvement funds throughout any fiscal year in which they are assigned to teach more than 3 credits or more than one course during the academic year
- No more than one application/award per individual, during any application round.

FUNDING

- Attendance at a workshop, conference, or other relevant event can be funded as follows: o Registration, including extra meeting activities;

- o Travel expenses such as airfare, automobile mileage, taxis, etc.
- o Living expenses/per diems for the day(s) of the activity and reasonable travel days;
- A faculty member who participated in an activity since the last application date may apply in the next funding round for an adjunct grant to reimburse for that activity.
 - o **Note:** Employee business expenses must be submitted for reimbursement within 60 days after the expense is incurred. If not submitted within 60 days, the reimbursement becomes taxable. If this situation is applicable to you, contact Research and Sponsored Programs prior to submission. Items purchased with grant funds must follow the guidelines in Article 19, Section B, of the Master Agreement.
- Faculty may apply for professional development activities scheduled in summer, fall, or spring within the fiscal year; however, **faculty must be employed within the current academic year.**
- Activities or events in international locations require strong justification to explain why the university should support such travel.
- Adjunct grants are designed for individual, rather than collaborative, projects.

OTHER CONDITIONS

- A travel authorization form is required by the University for all out-of-state or international travel.
- If the travel is not approved by SCSU Administration (e.g. travel advisory issued by the U.S. Dept. of State), travel funds will be cancelled.

PREPARING THE APPLICATION

- Be specific about the title, location, exact dates of the activities or events, total days not including travel days, and your proposed travel dates for the activity in which you will participate.
- For materials purchases, be specific regarding description and intended use of the items.
- Grant applications must have all signatures as listed on the signature page by the deadline to be considered complete. (If there are issues with obtaining signatures, please contact the FA office as early as possible.

PREPARING THE NARRATIVE: Be sure to review the evaluation rubric when composing the narrative. Because there are likely to be multiple applications for this funding, complete explanations are necessary for fair and appropriate evaluation.

Project Description: Describe the project or activity, stating how you will use the funds. Explain how and why the project is important, and how it will meet the criteria explained above:

Contribution to Department: What is the benefit of the proposal to the department or instructional program? If you have received funding in the past for a similar activity, explain how this application provides benefits to your professional development and/or to your department beyond what was provided by the previous activity.

Contribution to SCSU: Explain how this proposal provides benefits to the university. Adjunct Professional Improvement Grant Guidelines

History at SCSU: Describe your activities at SCSU, especially how many years you have been an adjunct or served in other campus roles. Include courses you have taught, departments in which you have worked, and a brief history of your relationship to the University community.

Budget Justification: Provide a short summary of your budget, including detailed cost estimates. Include any pertinent information related to the cost of your activity and/or travel. Also include details for any expenses in the OTHER category on the Expense Summary. Budget items that are not justified may not be funded.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Attach a copy of information, if available, such as a brochure, website, email, etc., that describes the proposed activity or purchase.
- For a creative or research project, attach a complete description of the project and its relevance to your professional development.
- Attach supporting evidence (including travel agent/travel website verifications) of: airfare, registration fee(s), hotel rates, shuttle fares, etc. to the Expense Summary form. The committee expects that the applicant will attempt to secure the lowest reasonable travel costs, (ex. economy class airfare).
- If the activity for which you are applying bundles some or all of these expenses together in inclusive program fees, please note what items are covered in those fees.
- Circle or highlight all costs and any brochure information important to your application.
- If a creative or research project requires the purchase of services or tangible items, please list them in detail with estimated costs.
- Provide English translation(s) if documents are in a different language.

PREPARING THE EXPENSE SUMMARY

The Expense summary document will do the awardable calculations for you. Therefore, only enter information in the red typeface fields as follows:

- Type of Travel: Double click in this field and enter 1 for international travel or 2 for domestic travel. Tab to advance to the next field.
- Total Days of Grant Activity (including travel days): Enter the number of days. Note: the committee normally funds up to 2 days beyond an event's dates for domestic travel, or up to 4 days beyond an event's dates for international travel. For creative or research projects, list all travel expenses and justify them in the proposal narrative.
- Living Expenses: Enter the expected cost for food and housing. Please be aware of limits described on the Business Services Travel/Business Expenses Policy page.
<https://www.stcloudstate.edu/businessservices/accounting/travel/default.aspx>
- Travel Expenses: Enter the expected cost for airfare/RR, taxi/shuttle, rental car, mileage and parking. The awarded amount is limited to:
 - o Domestic travel: up to \$1,000 maximum
 - o International travel: \$1,000, the limit of funds to be awarded
 - o Mileage: reimbursement as listed in the Business Services Travel/Business Expenses Policy: Mileage charges that exceed the cost of domestic airfare must be justified.

- Registration Fees: Enter the expected cost for registration fees. The awardable amount is limited to \$1,000 maximum.
- Other Expenses, including books, software, materials, etc.: Enter a description of the expense item(s) and the expected cost(s).
- Total Requested: Limited to \$1,500 per application.

HINTS FOR WRITING A SUCCESSFUL GRANT APPLICATION

- Use the criteria and evaluation form as a guide when writing the grant application.
- The group evaluating your proposal includes faculty representing disciplines distant from your own. Describe your proposal so that a general academic audience can understand it, including why the topic is particularly important to your field of study. Make no assumptions.
- Write the proposal so it is clear, specific, and jargon-free. Clarifying which elements of your work will be enhanced will go a long way in making your proposal stand out from the rest.
- Avoid making general statements such as “teaching will improve” or “students will benefit.”
- Specify the courses you teach/will teach that will benefit from the activity.
- Specify which components of the course(s) will be revised/enhanced because of the activity.
- Indicate what specific topics/components of the activity or purchase will be useful in your professional development and engagement with your discipline.
- If the activity is unstructured (for example, where a group of experts meet to discuss latest issues), identify and describe what some of the “thorny issues” in your field are.
- If you plan to attend a software training workshop, explain (1) what that software is, (2) what is so special about it, (3) What software you are currently using or not using, (4) how this has negatively affected the efficiency or effectiveness with which you have been able to carry out your tasks, and (5) how the workshop/new software will improve your teaching or course design.
- Avoid using jargon and technical terms. Define discipline specific terms and explain relevance of your proposal to your development in the discipline.
- Proofread the grant proposal carefully to be sure your ideas are clearly communicated.
- Ask a colleague or FA Executive Committee member (preferably not in your discipline) to read a draft copy before submitting the final version.
- If you have any questions about the application or would like clarification of any item, contact a member of the Adjunct Professional Development Evaluation Group by emailing facassoc@stcloudstate.edu with your request.
- It may take some time to obtain the signatures on your application; therefore, plan ahead.

SELECTION PROCESS

- The Adjunct Professional Development Evaluation Group uses the Evaluation Form included here to judge how you meet the criteria and how you will use these funds to contribute to your teaching, research, or creative development, to your department, and to the university.
- Applications are scored independently by each group member and discussed by the group after that scoring.
- A scoring rubric of 40 possible points is used. Applicants need a minimum mean of 24 points to be considered for an award.
- The group may determine a cut-off score above 24 points, based on funds available for the round.
- The group strives to be as equitable as possible in distributing funds across colleges and disciplines.
- The group recommends grant award recommendations to the Faculty Association Executive Committee for final approval.

Applicants should expect to receive results of the selection process within one to three weeks after the application deadline.

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