Short-Term Faculty Improvement Grant Guidelines

Funding is provided through the IFO/MnSCU contract agreement (Article 19).

Application Deadline: Round 1 - October 15th Round 2 - March 15th

If the 15th falls on a weekend, applications are due by close of business the following working day. See https://www.stcloudstate.edu/rsp/grants/internal/faculty-improvement.aspx for specific details.

PURPOSE and CRITERIA: The primary purpose of a short-term faculty improvement grant is educational in focus. Article 19, subd. 1 of the Contract states that these funds are to be used for "improving professional competence". The IFO Master Agreement with MinnState further 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) The professional improvement opportunity (often a workshop or a short course) must meet the following criteria:

1. The workshop/course prepares faculty for current or new teaching assignments and/or aligns with faculty member's professional development plan.
2. It should be interactive, hands-on training focused on a single topic, and demand active participation.
3. It should be a non-credit workshop or non-credit course of 1-14 days in length.
4. 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 award up to $5,000 per application.

APPLICANT CRITERIA

*   Applicants must be faculty with bargaining unit status: tenure-track, non-tenure track, qualifying fixed term or qualifying adjunct (>3 credits) -- at the time of application and during grant activity.
*   No more than one application/award per individual, during any application round.
*   FIG Short-term grant recipients may receive a FIG Research grant at the same time.

FUNDING

• Attendance at a workshop within an annual conference will only be funded as follows: o Living expenses/per diems will be funded for workshop days only.

o Registration will be funded for the workshop only.
o Travel expenses will not be funded if you attend the conference before or after the workshop.

- If a faculty member has already attended a workshop that occurred after the last application date, they may apply for a short-term grant to cover that workshop during the next available funding round. However, you cannot apply for a workshop that occurred in the previous fiscal year.
- **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.
- In the spring application round, you may apply for workshops scheduled in spring, summer, or fall.
- Workshops in overseas locations require strong justification to explain why the university should pay these travel expenses.
- The value to the university may decrease when numerous individuals apply to attend the same workshop. Therefore, explain in detail the uniqueness your participation will contribute to others on campus, OR, justify the value of multiple faculty attending the same workshop.
- Short-term grants were designed for individual, rather than collaborative, projects.
- Short-term grants **do not fund** the following activities:

o attendance at, or travel to, annual meetings or professional conferences

o presentation of a paper/keynote at an event o workshops/traininglongerthan14days
o credit-bearing classes/workshops

OTHER CONDITIONS

- A travel authorization form is required by the University for all out-of-state and international travel.
- The Permission to Incur Special Expenses form is required for registration or conference fees over $1,000. However, do not attach these forms to the short-term grant application.
- If the travel is not approved by SCSU Administration (e.g. travel advisory issued by the U.S. Dept. of State), these travel funds will be cancelled.

PREPARING THE NARRATIVE: Be sure to review the evaluation rubric when composing the narrative.

Project Description: Describe your project, stating how you will use the funds. Explain in *detail* how and why the project is important, and how it will meet the criteria explained in #1 above:

1. The workshop/course prepares faculty for current or new teaching assignments and/or aligns with faculty member's professional development plan.
2. It should be interactive, hands-on training focused on a single topic, and demand active participation.
3. It should be a non-credit workshop or non-credit course of 1-14 days in length.
4. 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.

Contribution to Department: What is the benefit of the proposal to the department or instructional program? How do you plan to disseminate expertise gained as a result of the workshop/course? If you have received funding in the past for a similar workshop, explain how this application provides benefits to your professional development and/or to your department beyond what was provided by the previous workshop(s).

Contribution to SCSU: Explain how this application provides benefits to the university. If you have received funding in the past for a similar workshop, explain how this application provides benefits to the university beyond what was provided by the previous project(s).

Budget Justification: Provide a short summary of your budget, explaining where you obtained the figures for your budget. Include any pertinent information related to the cost of your workshop 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 the brochure (or website, email, etc.) that describes the workshop/course.
- Attach supporting evidence (including travel agent/travel website verifications) of: airfare, registration fee, 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 program to which you are applying bundles some or all of these expenses together in an inclusive program fee, separate out living expenses, travel expenses, and the registration fee from the inclusive fee and provide documentation from the program organizer (or other appropriate source) for the amounts indicated.
- Circle all expenses and any brochure information important to your application.
- English translation is necessary 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 travel days. Note: the committee funds up to 2 days beyond a 14-day workshop for domestic travel, or up to 4 days beyond a 14-day workshop for international travel.
- Living Expenses: Enter the expected cost for food and housing. The awardable amount is limited to $150 per day of grant activity (including travel days).
- Travel Expenses: Enter the expected cost for airfare/RR, taxi/shuttle, rental car, mileage and parking. The awarded amount is limited to:

- o Domestictravel: upto$1,000maximum
- o Internationaltravel: upto$2,000maximum

- o Mileage: reimbursement as listed in the Business Services Travel/Business Expenses Policy

- Registration Fees: Enter the expected cost for registration fees.
- Other Expenses: Enter a description of the expense item(s) and the expected cost(s). The awardable amount is limited to $300.
- Total Requested: Limited to $5,000 per application.

HINTS FOR WRITING A SUCCESSFUL GRANT APPLICATION

- Use the criteria and evaluation form as a guide when writing the grant application.
- The committee evaluating your proposal includes faculty representing disciplines distant from your own. Describe your proposed workshop/course so that a general academic audience can understand it, including why the topic is particularly important to your field of study.
- Write the proposal so it is clear, specific, and jargon-free. Clarifying which specific part(s) of your job that will be enhanced, will go a long way in making your proposal stand out from of 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 workshop.
- Specify which components of the course will be revised/enhanced because of the workshop.
- Indicate what specific topics/components of the workshop/course will be useful to you.
- If the workshop 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 teaching is not your primary responsibility and 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 so (5) how the workshop/new software will make it better.
- Avoid using jargon and technical terms. For example, "attending a workshop that will familiarize me with the resource-based theory of competitive advantage" could appear to be rather broad and unclear to a reviewer who is not in strategic management. Therefore, explain (1) what is so problematic about competitive advantage, (2) what are the important theories that are being used in the strategic management field, (3) what is the emphasis in "resource-based theory," (4) what is the complexity in the theory that reading articles and books would not help, (5) which specific courses the resource- based theory will be included in.
- Proofread the grant proposal carefully to be sure your ideas are clearly communicated.
- Ask a colleague or committee member 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 Professional Development Committee.
- It may take some time to obtain the signatures; therefore, plan ahead.

SELECTION PROCESS

- The Professional Development Committee uses the Evaluation Form to judge how well you will use these funds to contribute to your teaching, your department, and to the university.

- Applications are scored by each committee member.
- A scoring rubric of 36 possible points is used. Applicants need a minimum of 21.6 points to be considered for an award.
- The committee will determine a cut-off point based on funds available for the round.
- Given proposals of comparable worth, greater consideration is given to applicants who have not received a recent grant, which allows the grant monies to be spread more evenly among faculty.
- The committee strives to be as equitable as possible in distributing funds across colleges.
- The committee submits grant award recommendations to Faculty Senate for approval.
- Applicants should expect to receive results of the selection process in six to eight weeks from the application deadline.

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