Policies and Procedures Manual

Title: Faculty Conference Travel Policy
Policy Administrator: Director of Academic Budget & Operations
Effective Date: Jul-01-2015
Approved by: Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College

Purpose
In order to support faculty members in their pursuit of professional development in the area of professional development through research, the College provides full or partial reimbursement for many of the expenses they will incur when traveling for professional reasons.

Policy
The Statutes of the Faculty offers the following important commentary on the College’s expectations of its faculty members:

[The] College recognizes [that] its faculty is part of a wider academic community to which both the individual faculty member and the College have responsibilities involving the advancement of knowledge. These are usually met through research, publication and participation in the affairs of learned societies. (Statutes of the Faculty, Section II.B.)

The Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College (VPAA/Dean) supports travel undertaken either (a) to present the results of research to a meeting of the faculty member’s peers in his or her discipline or to a wider academic audience, or (b), in certain cases outlined in Section B below, simply to participate in professional meetings. This document provides information about what expenses will be covered by the VPAA/Dean and directions about how faculty members should apply for reimbursement.

The Committee on Faculty Scholarship stipulates procedures by which faculty members may apply for funding to conduct research (e.g., by visiting archives or undertaking fieldwork). From time to time, that Committee issues its own guidance on how faculty members may apply for such support.

A. Source of Funding

All funds for travel to conferences (or for equivalent purposes as described below) are administered by the Office of the VPAA/Dean. Academic departments may not use funds from their operating budgets to support such travel. Endowed funds and grant funds from external sources may be allocated for such purposes only if such allocation is consistent with the purposes of the endowment or grant.
B. Eligible Travel

B.1. Tenured and tenure-track faculty.
Faculty members who have been appointed to the ranks of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, or instructor\(^1\) may apply for reimbursement of travel expenses under any of the following circumstances:

a. Their name appears in the published program of a professional conference, symposium, workshop or meeting as a presenter, panelist, discussant, session chair, or officer of the sponsoring organization.

b. They have been invited to offer a “keynote” or other major address to an academic or professional audience on the basis of their academic expertise. They are attending an event at which their artistic or creative work will be presented and at which their presence will be formally recognized (e.g., the gallery opening of a single-artist show, the premiere of a significant work, a poetry reading.

The College will support up to three conferences per fiscal year\(^2\), including up to two international conferences for all tenured and tenure-track faculty.

B.2. Probationary faculty in their first two years.
The College has a particular interest in fostering the professional growth of tenure-track faculty members. Probationary faculty members in the first two years of tenure-track employment at the College\(^3\) who do not intend to apply for reimbursement under Section B.1 of the Policy during a given fiscal year may therefore apply for reimbursement of travel expenses to attend one professional conference (or equivalent event) in that year even if none of the criteria stipulated in Section B.1 are met. Such applications will generally be approved.

B.3. Pedagogical or assessment-oriented conferences.
The College prides itself on the high standards of the teaching that its faculty members provide. It also strives to demonstrate excellence in all areas of academic performance through outcomes assessment. In addition to whatever applications they may make for reimbursement of travel under Section B.1 above, therefore, faculty members who have been appointed to the ranks of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, or instructor may apply for reimbursement of travel expenses to attend one professional conference per fiscal year at which they can reasonably expect to acquire new skills in the areas of teaching, advising, or learning outcomes assessment. Such applications will be reviewed by the VPAA/Dean and approval will depend on the strength of the case that the applicant advances and on the availability of funds. Faculty members are advised to request prior approval of reimbursement for such trips before making travel arrangements (see Procedures).

B.4. Visiting faculty.
The College seeks to extend collegial support to those who join its faculty on a full-time basis but for a limited term. Faculty members who have been appointed to the ranks of visiting professor, visiting associate professor, visiting assistant professor, or visiting instructor may therefore apply for reimbursement of travel expenses to attend one

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\(^1\) As defined in Statutes, Section I.A.

\(^2\) The College uses a fiscal year that begins on July 1 and ends on June 30. The first official day of a conference will be used to determine the fiscal year in which it occurs.

\(^3\) For the purposes of this Policy, periods spent on leave (family leave, junior research leave, unsalaried leave) must count as years of employment.
professional conference (or equivalent event) during the term of their contract\(^4\) provided that their participation meets at least one of the criteria stipulated in Section B.1 above. Such applications will generally be approved.

Applications from visiting faculty members for reimbursement of additional conference travel may be submitted and will be reviewed by the VPAA/Dean, whose approval will depend on the strength of the case that the applicant advances and on the availability of funds. Faculty members are advised to request prior approval of reimbursement for such trips before making travel arrangements (see Procedures).

**B.5. Part-time faculty.**
The College relies on a small number of loyal part-time faculty members to assist it in carrying out its educational mission. Part-time faculty members may also apply for reimbursement of travel expenses to attend professional conferences (or equivalent events). Such applications will be reviewed by the VPAA/Dean and approval will depend on the strength of the case that the applicant advances, the length of time that the applicant has been teaching at the College, and the availability of funds. In most cases, reimbursement will be at a level lower than that set for full-time faculty members (see Section E of the Policy). Faculty members are advised to request prior approval of reimbursement for such trips before making travel arrangements (see Procedures).

**C. Duration of Travel**
Holy Cross stresses the close community of faculty and students. Furthermore, the nature of the college demands a high degree of availability by the faculty for the smooth and effective administration of [the] academic, departmental, and collegiate goals of the school. Therefore, presence on campus during the regular school hours is the norm.

Both for this reason and in order to ensure that the College retains the ability to assist as many faculty members as possible with the limited funds available for this purpose, the College will normally reimburse expenses for a maximum of four days and three nights. (See, however, Section F.1 of this Policy.) Faculty members are expected to make careful arrangements to preserve the integrity of the courses they are teaching.

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\(^4\) Note that contracts for visiting faculty members begin with the Mass of the Holy Spirit in one year and end with Commencement the following year. Travel for which reimbursement will be requested must occur within this period of approximately nine months.
D. Eligible Expenses

The following expenses are generally eligible for reimbursement under this Policy:

a. The full cost of air travel.
b. The full cost of essential ground transportation.
c. The full cost of registration for the conference (or equivalent event).
d. The full cost of parking, either at an airport or at the conference site.
e. The full actual cost of lodging.
f. Meals and other incidental expenses per diem equal to $30 per day.
g. For all other expenses or questions about expenses refer to the Employee Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy

Original itemized receipts are required for expenses claimed in categories a through e above.

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 College to fund as many trips as possible for as many faculty members as possible at the highest rate possible. In particular, faculty members should:

- book flights in such a way as to take advantage of lower fares;
- exercise good judgment in remaining flexible regarding flight times and routes; and
- rely on public transportation or on airport coach services in preference to renting cars unless circumstances make the latter a more reasonable alternative.

The VPAA/Dean may reduce or disallow reimbursement where she or he feels that such discretion has not been exercised appropriately.

E. Amount of Reimbursement

The College will reimburse a member of the full-time teaching faculty for 100% of the first $1,000 of approved eligible expenses for each trip taken and 50% of approved eligible expenses above $1,000. Reimbursement for part-time faculty members may be at a lower level and will depend on the strength of the case that the applicant advances and on the availability of funds as determined by the VPAA/Dean.

F. Special Considerations

F.1. Faculty members may request variances from the stipulations of this Policy based on a number of factors, including but not limited to:

- where the conference is being held (especially in instances of foreign travel that may involve exceptionally costly travel or lengthy journeys); and/or
- the nature of the participation (where involvement in multiple sessions may necessitate longer trips).

Such requests will be reviewed by the VPAA/Dean, whose approval will depend on the strength of the case that the requestor advances and on the availability of funds. Faculty members may wish to request prior approval of such variances before making travel arrangements.

F.2. When the organization sponsoring a conference, meeting, symposium or workshop meets the costs of participants’ travel, lodging, meals or incidental expenses, a faculty member may apply to the College only for reimbursement of expenses not covered by that organization.
F.3. Faculty members requesting reimbursement for travel abroad must complete the College’s Faculty and Administrator Foreign Travel for Professional Development Acknowledgement and Release prior to leaving the United States. No reimbursement will be forthcoming unless a signed form is on file.

**Procedures**

1. Faculty members planning travel that they believe should qualify for reimbursement under this Policy must fill out a Faculty Conference Travel Authorization; Estimate of Expenses and Request for Travel Advance form. They must also fill out a FCTA Conference Travel Approval form (which requires the signature of their Department Chair). The two forms must be submitted together, along with documentation to support eligibility (e.g., conference program, letter of invitation) to the office of the VPAA/Dean.
   - For routine travel, these forms must be received by the VPAA/Dean no later than 16 days before the intended travel date.
   - For travel that requires discretionary action by the VPAA/Dean (such as that described in Section B.3., part of Section B.4., and/or Sections B.5 and F.1 of the Policy), these forms must be received by the VPAA/Dean no later than 25 days before the intended travel date.
   - For travel abroad, faculty members must also submit a signed Faculty and Administrator Foreign Travel for Professional Development Acknowledgement and Release (see Section G.3 of the Policy).

2. Faculty members will be informed by email as soon as their travel request has been approved.

3. Within 14 days of returning from their trip, faculty members must complete the appropriate Expense Report-Faculty Conference Travel form and submit it with their original receipts.
Forms

Faculty and Administrator Foreign Travel for Professional Development Acknowledgement and Release

Faculty Conference Travel Authorization; Estimate of Expenses and Request for Travel Advance

FCTA Conference Travel Approval Form

Expense Report-Faculty Conference Travel Form

Related Information

Domestic Per Diem Rates (US GSA)

International Per Diem Rates (US DOS)

Employee Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy

Instructions and Sample Form: Faculty Conference Travel Authorization; Estimate of Expenses and Request for Travel Advance

Job Aid: Faculty Conference Travel Procedures for Faculty

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