

# Utah Tech University Policy

## 634: Faculty Professional Development



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### I. Purpose

- 1.1 Utah Tech University (“the University”) considers its faculty to be one of its greatest resources. One of the goals of the University is to encourage and support faculty professional development endeavors in order to promote academic excellence and rigor and to enhance individual teaching performance.

### II. Scope

- 2.1 The University supports a comprehensive Faculty Professional Development program intended to offer support and assistance to faculty in fulfilling the University’s mission and ensuring quality programs. Evidence of sufficient and appropriate professional development is required to achieve post-probationary status and promotion through rank advancement.

### III. Definitions

- 3.1 ***Continuing education (CE):*** comprised of educational experiences or activities for members of various professional fields that consist of updated and/or specialized information or training, usually not offered for academic credit.
- 3.2 ***Sabbatical Leave:*** a period of time when a faculty member is excused from regular duties associated with their appointment in order to engage in scholarship, research on significant problems or issues, important creative expression, post-doctoral study at another institution, or another approved project.
- 3.3 ***Education Stipends:*** funds issued at the University’s discretion to assist an

individual faculty member to engage in study toward a terminal degree that will benefit the University in program quality and accreditation. Funding may include tuition, fees, transportation, housing, equipment, or materials.

- 3.4 ***Education Leave***: funding awarded at the University's discretion to cover full or partial salary and benefits for a post-probationary faculty member to earn a terminal degree in the faculty member's field of appointment in situations where a program has insufficient terminally-degreed faculty and assisting a current faculty member to obtain a terminal degree is more effective for the University than hiring an additional or new terminally-degreed faculty member.

## IV. Policy

### 4.1 Eligibility

- 4.1.1 A faculty member is awarded professional development funding based on peer review by the Faculty Professional Development Committee (PDC), administrative review of a specific proposal, and available funding.
- 4.1.2 Funds are available to all full-time, non-term appointed faculty. A faculty member on disciplinary probation is ineligible to receive professional development funding in any form. Funds are issued to individual members of the faculty, not allotted to departments, divisions, or schools.
- 4.1.3 All travel required or funded through the Faculty Professional Development Program must conform to 6-4 General Travel and all other applicable policies and procedures.
- 4.1.4 Faculty members who receive professional development funds but do not fulfill the specified post-award reporting requirement(s) will be ineligible to apply for any Faculty Professional Development Program funding or opportunities for a period of three (3) years after the original award.
- 4.1.5 The award of professional development funds to an individual faculty member does not infer that the individual will be retained or granted tenure, continuing status, non-probationary status, or promotion through rank advancement.
- 4.1.6 Nothing in this policy restricts the right of the University to implement termination provisions found in Policy 371 and/or Policy

641.

## 4.2 Funding

4.2.1 Professional Development Grants are largely dependent on funding from the Faculty Professional Development budget.

4.2.2 Other professional development opportunities are not funded from the Faculty Professional Development budget.

4.2.2.1 Full-Time faculty members who are required to maintain licensure or certification in a specific profession are eligible to request continuing education funding through deans and/or departments.

4.2.2.2 Educational Leave and Educational stipends are not funded through professional development, but may be funded from divisional sources.

4.2.2.3 Sabbatical funding is not available through professional development, however it may be funded (see section 4.6).

## 4.3 Faculty Professional Development Committee

4.3.1 Professional development requests, proposals, and applications are reviewed by the Faculty Professional Development Committee, which is comprised of:

4.3.1.1 The Committee chair, who is chosen jointly by the Faculty Senate President and the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost. The chair is non-voting except in circumstances of recusal or a tie.

4.3.1.2 Full-time, non-term appointment representative faculty members, one from each of the University's academic colleges.

4.3.1.3 The Executive Director of Human Resources or designee serves as an ex officio member.

4.3.2 If a member of the Committee requests any form of professional development funding during the term of committee service, that person will remove their name from voting and discussion of that request. In cases of such recusal, the committee chair will be eligible to vote.

#### 4.4 Reporting

- 4.4.1 The Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost will provide a written report to the Committee chair of the professional development funds from all sources actually distributed to faculty as well as funds pending reimbursement prior to the December and March reviews and at the end of the fiscal year.
- 4.4.2 Annually, the Committee will provide a general report to the Faculty Senate on professional development requests received and approved.

#### 4.5 Professional Development Grants

4.5.1 Professional Development Grants are available to help faculty better fulfill their teaching responsibilities by assisting faculty members to stay current in their academic disciplines and to learn and develop current pedagogical techniques. Professional Development Grants are made available annually to help full-time faculty members maintain and improve academic rigor and excellence within the University community in fulfillment of the academic mission of the University.

- 4.5.1.1 Full-time faculty members are eligible to apply for Professional Development Grants. Faculty members with limited term appointments are ineligible.

#### 4.5.2 Responsibilities

4.5.2.1 The Committee expects that each applicant will honestly and thoroughly articulate the need underlying the request for a professional development grant and explain how the experience will aid the faculty member in meeting that need. It is the responsibility of the applicant to carefully describe how the proposed experience will meet the required needs and provide benefit for both the faculty member and the University. Committee evaluation of applications will primarily be based on these descriptions. The Committee will prioritize applications based on the faculty member's need and the expected benefit of the professional development experience.

- 4.5.2.2 It is the responsibility of the Committee to evaluate all applications on the stated criteria within a timely manner following each application deadline. Evaluation of

applications will be conducted without reference to the identities of applicants. When the Committee is unable to fund an applicant's request, notice will be given to the faculty member not more than 14 calendar days after the date applications review was completed.

- 4.5.2.3 When an application deadline falls on a weekend or University holiday, the committee will have 14 calendar days to make recommendations, beginning on the next academic day after the deadline.
- 4.5.3 Applicants will demonstrate through the application process that a need exists and that the need will be satisfied through the proposed professional development experience. Examples of needs include but are not limited to the following activities, which are not comprehensive and are not listed in order of importance:
  - 4.5.3.1 Learning about new developments within a faculty member's discipline.
  - 4.5.3.2 Learning about content in order to develop a new course.
  - 4.5.3.3 Improving one's teaching skills.
  - 4.5.3.4 Contributing to the academic reputation and/or influence of the University.
  - 4.5.3.5 Developing qualifications to teach required courses.
- 4.5.4 The following activities are examples of experiences that can be funded through Professional Development Grants. This list is not intended to be comprehensive and the experiences are not ranked in order of importance.
  - 4.5.4.1 Participation in or attendance at a research or professional conference.
  - 4.5.4.2 Participation in or attendance at a teaching-oriented conference.
  - 4.5.4.3 Enrolling in workshops or courses unrelated to earning a terminal degree.
  - 4.5.4.4 Travel to conduct research and/or carry out creative activity as defined in Policy 641. These requests will be considered during the March review period only.

4.5.5 The following types of expenses are excluded:

- 4.5.5.1 Membership in professional organizations unless such membership is inseparable from another allowable fee (registration at a conference, for example).
- 4.5.5.2 Course work being applied toward a terminal degree.
- 4.5.5.3 Supporting student research activities.
- 4.5.5.4 Paying assistants or students.
- 4.5.5.5 Continuing education not directly related to the faculty member's teaching responsibilities.
- 4.5.5.6 Expenses incurred while teaching a travel study or study abroad course.
- 4.5.5.7 Faculty members who receive an Educational Stipend, or Sabbatical or Educational Leave are ineligible to receive a Professional Development Grant in the same academic year.

4.5.6 The following criteria are used to assess and prioritize requests:

- 4.5.6.1 Significance and University impact of the need delineated in the application.
  - 4.5.6.2 Potential of the proposed experience to fulfill that need.
  - 4.5.6.3 Ability of the experience to accrue benefit to students.
  - 4.5.6.4 Period of time since the faculty member last received professional development funding. Consideration is given to faculty members who have not recently received professional development funding.
- 4.5.7 A faculty member is not required to disclose deficiencies identified through evaluations in order to secure a Professional Development Grant. Funding for remediation of identified deficiencies may be available from alternate sources.
- 4.5.8 Applications submitted to the chair of the Committee are accepted throughout the year, with deadlines at 5:00 p.m. on each of the following days:
- 4.5.8.1 September 15

4.5.8.2 November 15

4.5.8.3 January 15

4.5.8.4 March 15

4.5.9 When an application deadline falls on a weekend or University holiday, the deadline will be 5:00 p.m. on the next academic day after the deadline. Applications received after a deadline will not be reviewed until the next deadline.

4.5.10 The Committee may deny or postpone applications in earlier review periods as necessary to reserve some funds for applications received later in the academic year.

4.5.11 Funding Limit

4.5.11.1 Professional development funds are generally limited to \$2,000 per person per academic year.

4.5.11.2 Recommendations for an individual faculty member may not exceed \$6,000 in a three-year period.

4.5.11.3 Additional or alternate funding for professional development experiences may be obtained from other sources.

4.5.11.4 These limits are not guarantees of the availability of this much funding for each faculty member, they are only a maximum limit.

4.5.12 Post-Award Requirements.

4.5.12.1 Recipients of Professional Development Grants may be required to submit a brief report outlining the activity to the appropriate Dean. A faculty member should check with their Dean as to what their particular reporting requirements are.

4.5.12.2 The report of the activity must be included in the faculty member's required online portfolio.

4.5.12.3 Faculty members are also encouraged to share information and insights gained through professional development experiences with other faculty members in formal or informal settings.

4.6 Sabbatical Leave

- 4.6.1 Sabbatical Leave is not a faculty benefit; it is a program for professional development and creativity that benefits the University which is awarded at the University's discretion. Sabbatical Leave is subject to availability of funds and suitable instructional replacements.
- 4.6.2 Full-time tenured or continuing status faculty members with at least six (6) years of full-time faculty service at the University are eligible to submit requests. Probationary faculty members and faculty members with limited term appointments are ineligible.
  - 4.6.2.1 A faculty member who is awarded a Sabbatical or Educational Leave may not submit an application for Sabbatical Leave for at least six (6) years after the end of the previous leave.
  - 4.6.2.2 Sabbatical Leave may not be used for the purpose of obtaining a terminal degree in one's discipline of appointment (see Educational Leave below).
- 4.6.3 Proposals for Sabbatical Leave must be submitted to the chair of the Faculty Professional Development Committee by November 15 to be considered for the subsequent academic year. Proposals must include provisions for formal dissemination to the University community of the knowledge and/or skills gained through the sabbatical.
  - 4.6.3.1 Professional Development funds will not be used for Sabbatical Leave. The role of the Faculty Professional Development Committee is advisory, and all recommendations will be forwarded to the relevant dean and Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost for approvals.
- 4.6.4 The following criteria are used to assess and prioritize requests:
  - 4.6.4.1 Potential benefit to the University from the proposed sabbatical activities.
  - 4.6.4.2 Length and quality of the faculty member's service to the University.
  - 4.6.4.3 Relationship of proposed activity to faculty member's area of appointment or assigned duties and potential benefit to students.
- 4.6.5 Funding

- 4.6.5.1 A faculty member may be awarded up to 75% of their annual base salary for a two semester Sabbatical Leave, and up to 75% of half of the annual base salary for a one semester Sabbatical Leave. Sabbatical Leave is not offered during summer semesters.
- 4.6.5.2 Sabbatical Leave requires additional approvals from the President of the University and the Board of Trustees prior to being awarded.
- 4.6.5.3 If a faculty member's Sabbatical Leave has been approved by the Board of Trustees but is cancelled due to funding restrictions, the faculty member is entitled to Sabbatical Leave at the earliest possible time without reapplication.

#### 4.6.6 Conditions

- 4.6.6.1 The period of time on Sabbatical Leave accrues toward rank advancement.
- 4.6.6.2 A faculty member on Sabbatical Leave is eligible to receive all adjustments in salary for which they would otherwise qualify and continues to receive University benefits.
- 4.6.6.3 Except in extreme circumstances, a faculty member may not defer or cancel an approved Sabbatical Leave less than 60 days prior to the start of the leave period.
- 4.6.6.4 A faculty member on Sabbatical Leave:
  - 4.6.6.4.1 Must disclose all scholarships, subsidies, and grant monies that were provided during the sabbatical period.
  - 4.6.6.4.2 May not receive any additional compensation or professional development funding from the University during the sabbatical period.
  - 4.6.6.4.3 May accept a fellowship, assistantship, research grant, or similar employment, but in no case shall the compensation from the University and the outside source(s) total more than 100% of the amount of the individual faculty member's full-time base salary during the sabbatical period. Outside compensation or earnings must be disclosed.

- 4.6.6.4.4 May receive an allowance, stipend, or grant from non-University sources for transportation, housing, equipment, or materials. Such allowances do not accrue toward total compensation.
- 4.6.6.4.5 A faculty member on Sabbatical Leave remains employed by the University and must perform self-evaluations and be evaluated by supervisors according to the requirements of Policy 642.

#### 4.6.7 Post Award Requirements

- 4.6.7.1 A written report to the faculty member's department chair and dean and the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost must be submitted not more than 60 days after the end of the Sabbatical Leave.
- 4.6.7.2 An oral report to the Board of Trustees is required.
- 4.6.7.3 At the conclusion of a Sabbatical Leave, the faculty member is required to return to the University and serve for a length of time at least equal to the sabbatical period or the salary and benefits or they will be contractually obligated to repay the University an amount equal to the salary received and the cost of employee benefits received from the University while on Sabbatical Leave.

#### 4.7 Educational Stipends

- 4.7.1 Full-time faculty members who have not earned the terminal degree required in their discipline of appointment may be eligible to apply for Educational Stipends at their Dean and Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost's discretion. Faculty members with limited term appointments are ineligible.
- 4.7.2 A faculty member cannot be awarded Sabbatical Leave and an Educational Stipend in the same academic year. A faculty member cannot be awarded an Educational Stipend and a Professional Development Grant during the same academic year. Faculty may receive Educational Leave and an Educational Stipend during the same year.
- 4.7.3 Conditions
  - 4.7.3.1 Verification of attendance/participation and satisfactory academic progress in the form of an official transcript must

be provided to the Dean and Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost after each semester of study for inclusion in the faculty member's personnel file.

4.7.3.2 If the faculty member does not show satisfactory progress toward degree, they will be contractually obligated to repay the University an amount equal to the Educational Stipend received.

4.7.4 The funding limit for an individual faculty member from all University sources is \$2,500 per year and \$10,000 lifetime.

#### 4.8 Educational Leave

4.8.1 Education Leave may be awarded in situations where a program has insufficient terminally-degreed faculty and assisting a current faculty member to obtain a terminal degree is more effective for the University than hiring an additional or new terminally-degreed faculty member. The faculty member on educational leave can be excused from all or some of their faculty duties during the Educational Leave. A written agreement between the University and the faculty detailing specific requirements and expectations as outlined in this policy member is required.

4.8.2 Full-time faculty members who have not earned the terminal degree required in their field of appointment may be eligible to apply for Educational Leave at the Dean and Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost's discretion. Faculty members with limited term appointments are ineligible.

4.8.3 A faculty member cannot be awarded Educational Leave and Sabbatical Leave during the same academic year. A faculty member on Educational Leave cannot receive Professional Development funding. A faculty member may receive Educational Leave and an Educational Stipend during the same year.

4.8.4 No more than three (3) years of Educational Leave is available to any faculty member. In cases of financial exigency, Educational Leave may be cancelled or postponed by the University.

4.8.5 A faculty member on Educational Leave:

4.8.5.1 Is eligible to receive 75 – 100% of base salary but is not eligible to receive any additional compensation or professional development funding from the University other than an

#### Educational Stipend.

- 4.8.5.2 May accept a fellowship, assistantship, research grant, or similar employment, but in no case shall the compensation from the University and the outside source total more than 100% of the amount of the individual faculty member's full-time base salary during the Educational Leave period.
- 4.8.5.3 May receive an Educational Stipend from the University or an allowance, stipend, or grant from non-University sources for tuition, fees, transportation, housing, equipment, or materials. Such stipends and allowances do not accrue toward total compensation.
- 4.8.5.4 Is eligible to receive all adjustments in salary for which they would otherwise qualify and continues to receive University benefits.
- 4.8.5.5 A faculty member on Educational Leave remains employed by the University and must perform self-evaluations and be evaluated by supervisors according to the requirements of the Faculty Evaluation Policy.
- 4.8.5.6 Verification of attendance/participation and satisfactory academic progress in the form of official transcripts must be provided to the Dean and Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost after each semester for inclusion in the faculty member's personnel file. It is expected that the faculty member will complete the terminal degree according to an agreed-upon schedule, which may be revised as needed in consultation with the dean.
  - 4.8.5.6.1 If the faculty member does not show satisfactory progress toward degree, does not complete the degree according to the agreed-upon or revised schedule, or does not provide official transcripts demonstrating progress or completion, they will be contractually obligated to repay the University an amount equal to the salary and the cost of employee benefits received from the University while on Educational Leave.
- 4.8.6 A period of Educational Leave may not accrue toward tenure, continuing status, non-probationary status, or rank advancement.
- 4.8.7 Post-Award Requirements:

- 4.8.7.1 An oral report to the Board of Trustees is required after the Education Leave.
- 4.8.7.2 At the conclusion of an Educational Leave, the faculty member is required to return to the University and serve for a period of time not less than five (5) years.
- 4.8.7.3 If the faculty member does not return to the University and serve for at least five (5) years, they will be contractually obligated to repay the University an amount equal to the salary actually received and the cost of all benefits received from the University while on Educational Leave, prorated by the number of years actually served after returning from leave.
- 4.8.7.4 A faculty member who is awarded Educational Leave may not apply for Sabbatical Leave during the six (6) years following the end of the previous leave.

## V. References – N/A

## VI. Procedures

### 6.1 Review and Approval Process

- 6.1.1 The Committee reviews all professional development requests, proposals, and applications, and prioritizes them based on established criteria and available funding.
  - 6.1.1.1 Requests, proposals, and applications require the approval of the faculty member's department chair and dean before submission.
  - 6.1.1.2 Requests, applications, and proposals are submitted to the chair of the Committee.
  - 6.1.1.3 Incomplete or insufficient requests, applications, and proposals, and those received after a published deadline will not be reviewed until the next deadline for that category of professional development.
- 6.1.2 The Committee strives to make recommendations for funding distribution that are fair and equitable to all faculty and which give priority activities with the greatest potential for positive impact on students as well as ability to fulfill University and other collective goals.

- 6.1.2.1 A faculty member is not required to disclose a deficiency identified through evaluation in a funding application. The Committee will make every effort to respect the confidentiality of any faculty member whose application includes such a disclosure, but confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. A faculty member with a concern should consult with the appropriate dean.
- 6.1.3 After review, the Committee makes a recommendation to the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost about which applications should be funded and in what amount.
- 6.1.4 The Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost approves or disapproves professional development awards and informs the faculty member, the faculty member's dean, and Committee chair of the amount funded.

## VII. Addenda – N/A

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Policy Owner: Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost  
Policy Steward: Faculty Senate

### History:

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