

Section: Staff Professional Development

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Sponsoring Unit/Department: Human Resources

Professional Development

The purpose of professional development is to equip employees with the necessary skills to achieve high performance. The College offers professional development to prepare employees for higher levels of skill that align with their current or potential future positions.

Professional Development includes the following categories:

1. College-directed training
2. Job-specific training
3. Career enhancement training
4. Educational enrichment

College-Directed Training

The supervisor or College may direct an employee or a group of employees to complete specified trainings. College-directed training is paid for by the College and may occur outside of normally scheduled work hours and is a requirement of employment. Compensatory time, adjusted schedules, and/or overtime policies apply, where appropriate.

Job-Specific Training

Training focused on the development of employees in their specific job and/or acquire new skills related to their current role. By performing their individual jobs effectively, employees can contribute at their highest level to the College's Mission, Vision and Values.

Career Enhancement Training or Activity

Career enhancement training or activity is intended to help employees in their professional growth as well as expand their careers.

Educational Enrichment

Formal education from an accredited institution within the United States that leads to a degree, certification or license not already held by an employee.

Staff Professional Development

There are four primary means for staff members to obtain professional development are listed below. All professional development, except as noted, require both supervisory and funding approval.

1. Institutional Resources including workshops, Organizational Effectiveness & Development (OED) opportunities, webinars, and the College's contracted providers including MyCareerCenter. These trainings require only supervisory approval.
2. Conference/training attendance
3. Educational Enrichment
4. Paid Educational Leave

Eligibility and Application for Professional Development and Educational Enrichment

Eligibility

To be eligible for Professional Development and/or Educational Enrichment opportunities,

- The employee must have completed their initial hire probation period.
- The employee must receive the supervisor's signature on an application as confirmation that current disciplinary action does not preclude professional development or Educational Enrichment activities.
- Eligible employees may receive up to \$2,500 in professional enrichment funds per fiscal year.

Application

The application for staff professional development and educational enrichment activities is found on the College Intranet under **College Forms/Human Resources/Request for Professional Development Funds**.

Limitations on professional development fund use

- The College shall designate funds annually towards the professional development of staff. Separate funds shall be designated for non-exempt and exempt employees.
- Funding approval does not constitute administrative approval for employee travel or professional development.
- Professional Development funds may be used for travel and other expenses related to professional development.
- Educational Enrichment funds may be used for tuition, books, and fees leading to a degree, certification, or license not already held by the employee. Book purchases are deducted from the employee's available \$2,500 eligibility.
- When applicable, an employee shall disclose the receipt of college professional development funds in any application for financial assistance from an additional source.
- Employees should consult with a tax professional regarding the treatment of educational expenses that are reimbursed through this program.
- All reimbursement requests for professional development and/or formal educational enrichment expenses must be during the fiscal year in which the activity occurred.
- All non-travel award payments are made on a reimbursement basis only.

- Education reimbursements are limited to tuition, fees, and books, and do not include any costs associated with financing or payment plans.
- A minimum grade of “C” (or “P” in the case where the course/class was taken for Pass/Fail) is required for each class eligible for reimbursement.
- Software purchases for Professional Development activities are eligible for reimbursement through the Staff Professional Development fund and cannot be placed or used on a College computer, and may not be installed or maintained by College staff, including IT staff, as part of their regularly assigned work duties.
- Professional Development funds may not be used for:
 - ◊ Electronic devices and equipment including, but not limited to, computers, tablets, musical instruments, phones, or cell phones.
 - ◊ Items that are more appropriately purchased by the department.
 - ◊ Training, materials, or equipment that an employee is required to have to perform the job duties.

Paid Educational Leave

- Exempt employees as a group are allocated up to 12 months of paid educational leave per fiscal year. For example, in a single fiscal year, three employees could receive four months each of paid educational leave.
- The Paid Educational Leave program may provide up to six months of paid leave to focus on completing a degree or certificate program. If multiple requests for paid education leave are made, the total amount of paid educational leave during an employee's total career life-cycle at The College will not exceed 12 months per employee.
- Paid Educational Leave funds may be used to complete an Associates, Bachelor, Master or Doctoral Degree from an accredited institution or a certification recognized by the industry or a professional organization.
- Since the intent of paid educational leave is to provide time away to focus on education, the employee approved for this leave may not perform substantive work for the College during this time.
- Employees granted a paid educational leave will continue to receive compensation and all current benefits.
- To be eligible, an individual must have been a full time employee for a minimum of five (5) years
- An employee is ineligible for paid educational leave if they have already received paid leave for the degree sought.
- Applicant must demonstrate the relationship of the degree to their current employment, the mission of the College or future career goal with the College.
- Applicant must provide evidence that the stated degree program can be completed at an accredited institution during the allotted time of the leave.

Conditions tied to accepting Paid Educational Leave

5. Within 30 days of the semester/term start date the employee must provide to OED, or the Human Resources designee, verification of enrollment.
6. Failure on the part of the recipient to complete his/her degree, make the agreed upon progress during the granted leave, or to return to work at the College for the required period after the granted and exercised leave will result in the following action:
 - ◇ HumanResources will conduct an investigation and, based on the findings, determine the appropriate action to be taken which may include:
 - ◇ recipient to repay the college the cost of salary and benefits provided during the leave period,
 - ◇ requirement to utilize an alternative form of leave during the leave period; or
 - ◇ other disciplinary actions indicated in the Employee Handbook.
 - In the event that a change in terms and conditions of employment occurs while the employee is on educational leave, the employee will be subject to the same terms and conditions as other employees.

Application and Awarding Process for Paid Educational Leave

- The Staff Professional Development Working Group will develop criteria for screening and selecting applicants for Paid Educational Leave.
- Application forms and instructions can be found on the College intranet.
- The Professional Development Work Group shall review the application for completeness and supporting documentation.
- In the event two or more applicants are deemed by the Work Group to be equal in qualifications but the time or funding provided by the College for the program is inadequate, the final determination may be based upon personal interviews by the Chief Human Resources Officer or designee.

Educational Leave Return to Work Requirements

The determination of any change in position shall be the responsibility of the appropriate Administrator working with the supervisor and the Human Resources Department and, in consultation with the employee prior to the Educational Leave, or as soon as a determination has been made.

The employee on paid educational leave is obligated to return to work in one of the following placements:

- His/her home position; or
- A position of equal grade and step with similar job requirements; or
- A position agreed upon prior to the beginning of the leave.

Compensation and Return-to-Work Requirements

- Employees granted a paid educational leave will continue to receive compensation and all current benefits.
- The employee shall return and work for the College for a minimum of an equal amount of time for which they were granted leave or may be required to return up to the full amount of the benefit.

Staff Professional Development Working Group

Purpose

The purpose of the Staff Professional Development (SPD) Work Group is to recommend professional development applications to the Director of Organizational Effectiveness Development or designee for funding in the current fiscal year.

Structure of the Workgroup

The Work Group shall be composed of staff representatives selected by the Staff Council.

- The SPD Work group shall be composed of an equal number of exempt and non-exempt staff.
- The SPD Work group will devise policies for review and consideration of professional development applications.
- The Director of Organizational Effectiveness and Development or designee will be a standing member of the SPD Work Group and is responsible for final approval of all staff professional development requests.

The SPD Work Group is charged to:

- Develop program guidelines including implementation, report content, methodologies, and application/processing forms. The Director of Organizational Effectiveness and Development or designee shall have final authority for awarding of funds, guidelines and program implementation.
- Submit an annual financial report each fiscal year on program activities and monies expended for the previous fiscal year to the Chief Human Resources Officer or designee and the Executive Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration. The report shall include the following information:
 - Name of awardee
 - Type of award (Professional Development or Education)
 - Award amount
 - Beginning fund balance
 - Total dollar utilization
 - Ending fund balance
 - Total utilization for the fiscal year

Department-Mandated Training

Department or unit mandated training shall be expensed from departmental budgets and not through this program. A department decision to approve professional development funding for an employee should not assume approval of the request for individual professional development, educational enrichment or paid educational leave program.