Recommendation of the Professional Development Committee

Regarding Distribution of Faculty Professional Development Funds

Recommendation:

The Professional Development Committee recommends that professional development

funds be administered to full-time faculty members on an individual basis, rather than

through a collective pool or through departmental accounts. Each full-time faculty

member should receive a budget[1] of $2000 per fiscal year[2] to be spent on appropriate

personal professional development activities (defined below) that could then be reflected

in the faculty member's portfolio. Faculty will be required to submit a form indicating

the type of professional development s/he plans to engage in, as well as a preliminary

estimate of cost, to his/her department chair for approval prior to any expenditures taking

place. Following the expenditure, the faculty member will then be required to compile

and submit the chair-endorsed preliminary form, receipts and a formal request for

reimbursement. We recommend that the office of the Provost process these receipts and

be responsible for the distribution of funds. At the end of the academic year, any amount

remaining in the faculty member's budget would be rolled over into an "overflow pool"

administered by the Professional Development Committee, to which faculty members

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[1] This budget does not represent a stipend, bonus, benefit, or payment. It is not
redeemable for cash. Use of one's budget is not mandatory, and may be voluntarily
donated to the "overflow pool" at any time during the school year.

[2] Pro-rated for faculty members who are hired mid-year.

who have accrued expenses beyond their annual budget (for example, who have spent $2500 attending a conference) could apply for reimbursement.

A small, separate pool of resources administered by the office of the Provost would remain set aside to cover faculty professional development expenses accrued at the request of the college, for the benefit of the college community. Examples of such expenses include annual participation of ESC faculty at the SACS conference, the NISOD conference, the Chairs conference, the Association of Florida Colleges, and the League for Innovation.

Acceptable Professional Development Expenditures:

- Conference participation

- Certification or recertification

- Attendance or presentations at workshops and seminars

- In-service training

- Consulting in one's area of expertise

- Presentation of Art or Music

- Serving on juries or as a judge for professional organizations

- Research

- Publication costs

- Books

- Journal subscriptions

- Membership dues in professional organizations

- Attendance at events related to one's field (eg, museum exhibits, science fairs)

- Travel and per diem expenses related to any of the above activities

Edison State College will not approve the use of Professional Development Funds for entertainment, gifts, personal items for the office, reimbursement for student expenses, and items that neither enhance the classroom experience nor provide professional experience for the instructor. Ineligible expenses also include services for work that cannot be separated from personal use, such as cell phones and/or cell phone plans and internet services at home.

Rationale:

Professional development is an integral aspect of the mission plan for Edison State College. The values statement approved by the Board of Trustees in 2010 asserts the importance of "intellectual inquiry" and "academic rigor," while the promotion, development, and retention of "a culture that supports the professional growth of faculty" is part of the strategic priorities of the College. Putting these values into action and achieving the objectives and goals of the mission statement is contingent upon the faculty's ability to continuously acquire knowledge and skills in their discipline that then translate into better classroom content and practices. Ensuring adequate opportunity for

professional development also plays a role in addressing the recommendations of SACS, particularly Section 3.7.1[3] and 3.7.3.[4]

The current system for the distribution of professional development funds presents several challenges that make it difficult for ESC to uphold its Values Statement, Strategic Priorities, and response to SACS, which the individual budget method seeks to overcome. First, the funds available in the general pool historically have not allowed for all requests for professional development support to be met. There is currently no written policy in place that establishes a system of priority for the distribution of the available funds, nor is there a reliable fall-back option for faculty whose funding request cannot be met by the general pool, as not all departments have a budget for faculty professional development. This has led to serious concerns about transparency and inequity, as well as an inability for some faculty members to complete desired professional development opportunities – an important aspect of their portfolio evaluation. Furthermore, the fall and spring deadline system often neglects faculty who have winter or summer opportunities for professional development, or who have only a small window of time to respond to opportunities for professional development. The individual budget would give faculty more opportunities to engage in meaningful professional development activities that are specific to their field and that enhance the classroom experience for ESC's students. Equal budgets for all would provide a fair and equitable means of fund distribution while eliminating the handicap of the biannual deadlines, while personal control over a budget

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[3] "The institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution."

[4] "The institution provides ongoing professional development of faculty as teachers, scholars, and practitioners."

would improve fiscal responsibility. Finally, the professional development allowance

could prove to be a valuable recruiting tool as Edison State seeks to bring new, high-

quality full-time faculty on board, pursuant to SACS recommendation.