

# Staff Professional Development Guidelines

**Title:** Staff Professional Development Guidelines

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**Issuing Authority:** Vice President and Chief Financial Officer

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## Purpose of Guidelines

The College has established these guidelines to support staff in pursuing professional development activities. These guidelines also assist in budget development, to ensure the best possible use of the College's resources, and to provide consistent spending guidelines across various divisions of the College.

## Guidelines

The College values the professional development of staff and supports all staff in pursuing professional development opportunities.

**Staff Professional Development Opportunities at No-Cost:** The College encourages staff to take advantage of professional development opportunities provided on campus or free of charge, such as:

- All-staff meetings
- Lynda.com training resources on the Human Resources professional development webpage
- EAP Seminars on the Human Resources website
- IT/DISCO computing seminars and training
- Enrollment in St. Olaf courses (2 free course credits per year if .50+ FTE)
- Various lectures, events or speakers brought to campus by faculty and student groups
- Free training or webinars put on by vendors or higher education partners
- Other departments - invite someone from another department or division to share knowledge
- Peer institutions – utilize the knowledge of peers at other institutions in similar roles
- Engage in events on campus (art, theater, music performances, athletic events, etc.)

**Staff Professional Development Funding Guidelines:** The College also understands that sometimes it may be necessary to take specialized training outside of St. Olaf in order to further the mission of the College. Each division of the College has an allotted professional development budget based on the staffing levels and specialized knowledge required in each division. Professional development costs, including registration fees, travel, and meal costs, should be funded from the department's professional development budget. Professional development for any one individual should generally not exceed \$1,500 per year. It is permissible for staff to account for professional development costs over a two-year period. For example, if a staff member wants to attend a national training event with total costs of \$3,000, it is permissible to attend the event every other year, as long as it falls within the department's annual allotment for professional development. It is important to note that each department's budget does not equate to \$1,500 per employee; that is simply the high-end allowed per individual to ensure that multiple individuals within a department or division will have access to funds within the department's professional development pool.

**Tips for Supervisors and Vice-Presidents:** Supervisors and Vice Presidents should make efforts to ensure all staff have opportunities to be engaged in professional development. Some ways to achieve this might include rotating which employees attend an annual conference, allowing attendance at a conference biennially instead of annually, or bringing in a speaker to large groups of staff that might not otherwise have many training opportunities.

Each division should seek to minimize the amount spent on dues and memberships. This may include looking to eliminate unnecessary memberships, or limiting memberships to one for the entire division, rather than each employee paying for a membership separately.

Conferences often have grants available to help cover the costs of attendance. Encourage employees to look into opportunities for reduced registration fees to stretch the division's professional development dollars further.

**Department Meetings/Retreats:** The College will allow up to two department meetings, retreats or team-building activities per year to be funded out of the division's professional development fund. The total cumulative cost for these meetings should not exceed \$50 per employee per year. This spending threshold applies to all costs for the meeting, including the costs for food, non-alcoholic beverages, consultants, speakers, venues, travel costs, etc., and funding must be available within the division's annual allotment for professional development.