

## **Faculty Development Committee: PDAs**

### **Case Statement**

Gustavus Adolphus College embraces the liberal arts model of the teacher-scholar. Critical to this mission are faculty who have the opportunity to thrive and grow professionally throughout their careers. This ethos creates a culture in which research, creativity, and scholarship infuse and inform the classroom.

Key for implementing the College' mission are student-centered faculty who are up-to-date in their fields and have ongoing collaborations with scholars in their discipline. Faculty's professional development (e.g., participation in international and national conferences, workshops, exhibitions, and panel discussions) is critical to the college's success. It engages faculty, creates new opportunities for them and their students, makes them more vibrant in the classroom, allows them to better teach students to become life-long learners, and helps to raise Gustavus' visibility on the national stage. Faculty development is crucial to 21st century education as well as for professors helping students meet the highest standards in their fields.

### **Professional Development Accounts**

For all these reasons, the Academic Strategic Plan and in the Commission Gustavus 150 documents identified faculty development as priorities. Among the mechanisms for faculty development, professional development accounts (PDAs) are the most flexible. Professional Development Accounts (PDAs) are accounts allocated to individual faculty members to support their ongoing scholarly activities and to provide for their professional development needs as they progress through their careers. PDAs would best meet Gustavus faculty's professional needs, supporting the faculty's wide range of scholarship, creative inquiry, and teaching development.

PDAs would fulfill the Commission 150's goals and recommendations, including those for personal growth and development of faculty, support for faculty development for interdisciplinary programs, enrichment of faculty development programs for globalism and multiculturalism, increased opportunities for student research and publishing, and greater prestige and visibility of faculty members domestically and internationally.

To provide financial support for the full spectrum of professional development activities, we aim to establish individual PDAs of \$2,000 annually for all full-time faculty. The PDA's amounts will be reviewed and adjusted periodically to account for inflation. PDAs will cover expenses *directly* related to a faculty member's work, including conference travel, research travel, books, materials for laboratories, support for artistic performance, etc. PDAs could not be used for stipends, childcare, or materials not directly related to scholarly work. All full-time faculty (including tenured, tenure-track, and adjunct faculty with continuing appointments) will be eligible. At the end of each year, faculty will submit a one-page document to the provost, detailing how PDA funds were spent and how they impacted research and teaching.

## **Need**

Currently, professional development funds are limited and proscribed, in the types of faculty development they can support. The Kendall Center supports the following activities across several internal grant programs: (1) partial support for conference travel; (2) a limited number of Research, Scholarship, and Creativity (RSC) grants to support a proposed research project (awarded competitively); (3) a small number of presidential Faculty-Student Collaboration grants to faculty-student research teams (also awarded competitively); and (4) several mini-grants for teaching enhancement.

These four funding avenues fall short in supporting the full range of activities that faculty need to do in their scholarly work. Professional development can take many forms, varying widely across disciplines and career stages. Examples of professional development activities include attending academic conferences, workshops, or performances, traveling to off-campus sites for research, acquiring books, supplies, or equipment, and supporting professional membership fees, journal subscriptions, and publication costs. Many of these activities are not supported within the current range of programs, but are critical for faculty development. PDAs' flexibility would allow faculty to pursue their individual professional goals and outcomes.

In addition, the total amount of available funds falls far short of the current needs of faculty members. Every year, numerous worthy proposals for RSC grants and Presidential Faculty-Student Collaboration grants remain unfunded. Under current funding levels, it is impossible for the Kendall Center travel grants to fully support attendance at even one conference per year; only about 60% of the faculty can receive support in any given year. In order to be outstanding teachers and scholars, faculty must maintain regular involvement in their profession; they carry out research, participate in performance, grow as educators, and work with students. To sustain a vigorous scholarly agenda, it is vital that faculty be able to plan for and access a and reliable source of funds from year to year.

## **How PDAs Would Impact Student Learning and Faculty Research**

While a student may initially be drawn to attractive facilities and landscaping, the people who make up the Gustavus community are primarily responsible for that student's learning and retention.

- It is therefore critical that the institution recruits and retains faculty of the highest caliber and that their morale and sense of personal commitment to the institution remain high.
- Faculty need to interact with other experts in their field not only to gain new knowledge, but to exchange ideas and to develop and maintain collaborations. These interactions lead to a tremendous number of opportunities, including new grant proposals, scholarly articles, sabbatical hosts, invitations to present at other institutions, graduate school opportunities for students, etc. Each of these benefits Gustavus' reputation and directly impacts student learning.
- The continued professional development of the faculty is critical to the college's success. Faculty participation in international and national conferences, workshops, exhibitions,

and panel discussions enhances Gustavus' academic reputation nationally. In the classroom, it is critical to engage students in their disciplines and help them to pursue their intellectual and creative projects. Faculty who are up-to-date in their fields are more enthusiastic teachers, impart cutting-edge knowledge to their students, and provide better guidance for graduate or professional schools.

Currently professional development funds are primarily restricted to presentations at professional conferences. Here are some examples of projects that are not currently eligible for funding, but would be supported by PDAs:

A biology professor uses her PDA funds to travel with a student to a large research university in New York, where the faculty member and student conduct molecular biological research with specialized equipment available there. The professor makes important professional contacts, and the Gustavus student works side-by-side with graduate students, learning the ropes of graduate school first-hand. The final result of this travel is that the professor and student co-author a paper, published in a scholarly journal.

A sociology professor uses her PDA funds to learn Portuguese, advancing her research on HIV-infected children in Brazil. Language proficiency would also allow her to lead travel courses in Brazil and teach more effectively in the Latin American, Latino, and Caribbean Studies program.

A music professor uses his PDA funds to pay for travel to play in an instrumental ensemble. This opportunity allows him to continue to develop his skills as a musician at the highest level.

A chemistry professor uses his PDA funds to attend a conference where he interacts with colleagues in his field of specialty and meets his future sabbatical host, paving the way for him and Gustavus students to collaborate in a major multi-institutional research project.

PDAs would fulfill these and many other unmet needs and allow faculty to develop intellectually as scholars and teachers throughout their careers.

## **Implementation Plan**

Currently the travel fund has an endowment of approximately \$100,000. If the current travel fund is folded into the PDA's, we would need to raise the following amounts of money to transition to \$2,000 per faculty member in 3 years.

- **Year One**
  - provide each eligible faculty member with a \$1,000 PDA
  - raise 2.1 million dollars for the endowment fund
  - conduct an education session during the faculty retreat
- **Year Two**
  - provide each eligible faculty member with a \$1,500 PDA
  - raise 2.1 million dollars for the endowment fund

- receive feedback from faculty
- **Year Three**
  - provide each eligible faculty member with a \$2,000 PDA
  - raise 2.1 million dollars for the endowment fund
  - review PDA

## **Appendix 1: Proposed Plan for Transition to PDAs**

The committee has considered the question of how best to facilitate a smooth transition, from our present arrangement for funding faculty travel, to individual PDAs, which will include funding for travel as one item within the wider set of uses towards which PDAs may be applied.

There are considerations to be taken into account from at least two opposing perspectives. First, we would like the PDAs to be established as soon as possible, as this will allow a larger number of faculty to use the funds for a wider diversity of purposes. At the same time however we realize that faculty travel should not be compromised by moving to adopt PDAs before there is sufficient money to allow for faculty travel at a level at least equal to that presently available.

Given the tension between these two aims, it is the sense of the committee that a ‘both/and’ approach would be more effective than a procedure for adoption that simply replaces the travel fund with PDAs at some point along a continuum—a procedure that would inevitably compromise either one or both of these two aims. The committee therefore suggests a temporary overlapping of the two funding systems until such time as the PDA fund has increased to a level of funding sufficient to provide the maximal level of travel funds now available. Such an arrangement might take a variety of forms; the committee offers the following proposal.

Initial phase:

The procedure presently available through the Kendall Center for securing travel funds should be continued over that period of time required to amass enough money to support PDAs for all full time faculty at the level of \$1000/academic year **with enough additional money** to fund the transitional Kendall funding as described below.

Transitional phase:

When the PDA fund has reached said amount, the present system for funding faculty travel should be replaced by a dual approach that 1) provides annual PDAs to individual faculty members in the amount of \$1000 for a wide range of professional expenses, AND 2) continues to employ a truncated version of our present system of funding faculty travel. This revised funding through Kendall would offer the additional money necessary to make up all funding beyond \$1000 for faculty travel under the same restriction that are currently in place. (For details see: <https://gustavus.edu/kendallcenter/travel/documents/FacultyTravelGUIDELINES12-10.pdf>) . Should a faculty member plan to present a paper at a conference in Boston, for example, s/he would be eligible for an additional \$200 (to be applied specifically to the

conference travel expenses) above and beyond the \$1000 already received through her/his annual PDA. This would amount to a total availability of \$1200—the amount currently available to faculty presenting papers. The present additional \$500 would also be available to faculty presenting at international conferences, likewise the potential carry-over from one fiscal year to another of up to \$500 (as under the present requirements.)

The actual financial details of this transitional funding from Kendall needs to be worked out in detail; but the guiding principle would be to make available a level of funding no less than what is currently available.

Final phase:

As the PDA fund matures and greater funding becomes available on an annual basis for all full time faculty, the transitional travel grants from Kendall (used to make up the difference) should be phased out. This might be done, for example, by eliminating the Kendall funding for all domestic/Canadian travel when PDAs reached the amount of \$1200/year, leaving in place the additional Kendall funding for international travel until such time as PDAs reached an annual amount equal to the maximum level of funding currently available, at which time the extra Kendall funding would be eliminated altogether.

#### **Faculty Development Committee Membership**

- Julie Bartley
- Eric Dugdale
- Mary Gaebler
- Yurie Hong
- Jeff Jeremiason
- Dan Moos
- Suzanne Wilson