****

**STAFF SENATE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND**

**OBJECTIVES**

* To address a need for funding to allow WCU Staff to participate in professional development opportunities.
* To encourage WCU Staff to become highly trained and demonstrate a commitment to excellence as related to the WCU Strategic Plan.
* To encourage and facilitate opportunities for all WCU Staff to engage in professional development.

**ELIGIBLE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

The following categories are considered eligible expenses under the Staff Senate Professional Development (SSPD) fund:

* Professional Development and Skills Enhancement **certifications, workshops, seminars, conferences, training and related travel expenses required for you to do your job at WCU.** *(Please note that travel expenses will be considered in accordance with* [*WCU Travel Guidelines*](https://www.wcu.edu/discover/campus-services-and-operations/controllers-office/for-faculty-and-staff/travel.aspx)*.)*
* Career-enhancing **certification programs and related travel expenses.** *(Please note that travel expenses will be considered in accordance with* [*WCU Travel Guidelines*](https://www.wcu.edu/discover/campus-services-and-operations/controllers-office/for-faculty-and-staff/travel.aspx)*.)*
* Career-advancing **college admission tests** (e.g., SAT, GRE, etc.).

*Tuition, fees, and books are not eligible for SSPD funding. Staff members seeking to further their education are encouraged to use the WCU Tuition Waiver and Staff and Family Scholarship and other resources available to them.*

**AWARD CONDITIONS AND BENEFITS**

* This funding is meant to complement departmental funding. All applicants must ask their respective departments for funds, when the travel is position-related, but are not required to secure them to be considered for SSPD funds. This is not required for career-advancing college admission tests.
* Professional Development awards will be distributed in amounts up to $750.00 per year, per applicant. Please note that while priority will be given to first-time applicants, you are eligible to apply more than once in a given award period, with the total amount of all awards not to exceed the $750.00 award cap as stated above. All requests must meet the criteria for eligible opportunities and are subject to available funds.
* When applying for an SSPD award, clear evidence of how the opportunity ties into an employee’s current position or career advancement and how it will benefit (a) their department, and (b) the University, must be provided.
* Documentation of successful completion is required within two weeks of completing or attending your SSPD funded opportunity.
* Upon completion of the specified Professional Development activity, the SSPD Committee reserves the right to request that any SSPD award recipients to present a 5-minute presentation on what they’ve learned during their funded activity, and how they will utilize their new knowledge and/or skill(s) in their daily work. (For example, you may be invited to the Staff Senate monthly meeting to present your experience or be a Professional Development Spotlight in the Staff Senate Newsletter.)
* If you withdraw or are unable to attend the professional development opportunity, repayment of any funds that have been reimbursed (i.e., registration fees, airfare, travel advances) is required, in accordance with [*WCU Travel Guidelines*](https://www.wcu.edu/discover/campus-services-and-operations/controllers-office/for-faculty-and-staff/travel.aspx).

**WHO CAN APPLY?**

* All permanent WCU staff members may apply.
* Staff members must have been employed by WCU for at least one (1) year in a staff capacity at the time of the application.

**WHAT IS THE APPLICATION PROCESS?**

Step 1: Seek departmental and/or unit funding.

Step 2: If departmental (full or partial) funding is unavailable complete the SSPD funding application at: [staffsenate.wcu.edu](https://www.wcu.edu/discover/leadership/staff-senate/). Applicant must complete and submit supporting documents which include documentation of:

* Certifications, Workshops, Seminars, Conferences Information
* Agenda (if available)
* Travel Itinerary
* Itemized Budget (with the full amount of the professional development opportunity)

Questions? Please contact Derek Kent:

**Email**: dakent@wcu.edu   
 **Phone**: 828-227-2892

**SELECTION PROCESS**

* First-time applicants will be given priority consideration.
* Decisions will be based on the information and documentation provided.
* The decisions of the committee are final.
* The amount of the award will be based on available funds at the time of the application (partial funding may be awarded).

**NOTIFICATION**

The applicant will be notified of the committee’s decision within four (4) weeks after receipt of completed application by e-mail. If the application is approved, the applicant will receive further instruction on how to process the reimbursement.