

Date: April 29, 2021
To: Noel Painter, Executive Vice President and Provost, Office of Academic Affairs
From: Professional Development Committee – Tandy Grubbs (Chair); Full membership listed below
RE: Professional Development Committee (PDC) Annual Report 2020-2021

PDC Committee Membership (2020-2021):

Barbara Costello (Library), Manuel de Murga (SoM), Carolyn Nicholson (SoBA), Kelly Smith (A&S/Social Science Div.), Yohann Ripert (A&S/Humanities), Mercedes Tichenor (A&S/Education Div.), Tandy Grubbs (Chair; A&S/Natural Science Div.)

PDC Membership, Reporting Structure, and Responsibilities:

Detailed within the Stetson University *Organization, Policies and Procedures Manual*, Section 2.6.O:

1. Membership

- a. Seven members of the faculty, including four from the College of Arts and Sciences, representing each of the four Divisions of Arts and Sciences, one from the duPont-Ball Library, one from the School of Business Administration, and one from the School of Music.

2. Reporting Structure

The Committee reports to the Executive Vice President and Provost.

3. Responsibilities

- a. To provide information on opportunities for professional growth for both individuals and groups of faculty through summer research, sabbatical leaves, seminars, and other forms of professional development.
 - b. To evaluate all faculty proposals for summer grants, and to make recommendations for summer grants to the Executive Vice President and Provost.
 - c. To review all faculty proposals for sabbatical leaves, and to make recommendations to the Executive Vice President and Provost.
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PDC Meetings and Action Items 2020-21:

All meetings of the PDC were conducted in a virtual capacity this year, including the annual PDC Faculty Informational Session that took place on Friday August 28th, noon – 1 pm, conducted in collaboration with the Brown Center under the leadership of Harry Price, Brown Center Faculty Director.

This year, the PDC instituted an alternate process for faculty to submit summer grant and sabbatical leave online applications - utilizing *Microsoft Forms* rather than the custom designed webforms used in the past that

had been created/managed by Stetson IT. Microsoft Forms works much like Google Forms or Qualtrics in that you can use it to create and administer online surveys, quizzes, so forth. An advantage associated with Microsoft Forms is that it is already fully integrated with Microsoft Office 365, meaning that organizational users (i.e., Stetson faculty) can access it by logging in with their Stetson email account. Information entered in a Microsoft Form is therefore secure and automatically archived as part of Stetson's existing Microsoft 365 license. Microsoft Forms also has a file upload feature, so that summer grant/sabbatical application files, prior grant/sabbatical reports, and faculty CVs can be uploaded by faculty as part of the application process. An Excel spreadsheet is automatically generated that summarizes all information entered by summer grant/sabbatical applicants, and this info is also automatically saved to a folder on the PDC OneDrive – simplifying workflow (reducing workload) that had to be done manually when we were utilizing the IT webform application method.

Our assessment of the new Microsoft Form methodology - it works beautifully, with far less technological glitch in comparison to the IT webform method from prior years. **We strongly recommend the continued use of Microsoft Forms for PDC submissions in the future. The PDC also recommends expanding the use of Microsoft Forms across the whole application and evaluation process so that it is not only utilized for faculty summer grant and sabbatical application submissions, but also for chair-level and dean evaluation letter submissions.**

Summer Grant Applications: A total of 28 summer grant applications were submitted this year. The members of the PDC independently evaluated each proposal according to the summer grant rubric categories of *scholarly value*, *scope of project*, *value to the university*, and *qualifications and quality*. Using aggregate rubric scores to rank the relative strengths of the proposals, the PDC recommended expending the total amount of the \$140,000 summer grant budget toward funding 26 of the 28 summer grant applications – an 92.9% funding rate. A \$4,900 stipend was recommended for each summer grant award recipient.

Summer grant applicants were also encouraged to request supplemental expenses directly related to the grant project activities. 10 of the successful summer grant applicants requested one or more forms of supplemental funding. To maximize the number of summer grant awards across competitive proposals, the PDC opted to cap the supplemental award this year at \$1,450 (rather than \$2,000).

Sabbatical Leave Applications: Using a method much like that used to evaluate summer grant applications, the members of the PDC independently evaluated each sabbatical proposal according to the rubric categories of *scholarly value*, *scope of project*, *impact on applicant's professional growth/value to university*, and *qualifications and quality*. The PDC forwarded a recommendation to approve all 14 sabbatical applications.

Advice for Next Year:

There will most likely be a significant change in the composition and leadership of the PDC as the committee transitions into 2021-22. A few pieces of advice are offered here about continuing the successful operations of the PDC:

1. The PDC played a far more comprehensive role this past year in defining our summer grant and sabbatical leave application/evaluation procedures and schedules, including annual edits to the summer grant and sabbatical leave informational packets, the establishment of the summer grant and

sabbatical leave calendars, and working with the Provost's Office to get those materials posted in early-mid August - early enough in advance of summer grant and sabbatical application due dates. In the recent past, much of this planning work had been handled by the Office of the Associate Provost. If the PDC wishes to retain this responsibility and continue this higher level of pre-planning involvement in the annual summer grant and sabbatical leave application processes, then the work associated with the final development of the calendars (deciding on due dates for each step of the processes), final edits to the info packets, and posting of materials in coordination with the Provost's Office will need to be done by someone on the committee (the chair?) no later than mid-August. In the recent past, this has necessitated some effort on the part of the PDC chair during the late summer (i.e., at a time when faculty are generally off contract).

Ideally, it would be best if the prior year PDC prepped all these materials in late spring so that they could be rapidly rolled out the following fall. In practice though - particularly during our last two pandemic years - we have found it virtually impossible to set the summer grant and sabbatical leave application and evaluation calendar dates that far in advance (keeping in mind that Stetson did not definitively set the 2020-21 academic calendar until late summer because of lingering uncertainties about the pandemic). As the PDC considers how to handle the timing in future years, the committee members should keep in mind that the establishment of calendar dates should not be done in isolation. Instead, this planning should be done collaboratively with other stakeholders (and in particular, should include the Academic Deans and Provost). The fall semester workload for the Dean of A&S is particularly problematic in the grand scheme - since the majority of applications come from A&S faculty, and the evaluation of summer grant and sabbatical applications ends up happening around the same time as the Dean is evaluating and writing letters for T&P cases. Consequently, building in and maintaining a little extra time in for the deans to submit letters is important.

2. While PDC spring pre-planning can be a challenge because of uncertainties about the academic calendar for the upcoming year, we have made some effort this spring to assist the incoming PDC in preparing materials for fall 2021. A couple of the current PDC members have gone back through the summer grant and sabbatical leave informational packets that were used in 2020-21 and have made minor edits - no major changes in policy, but instead clarifying a few points in places where we noted confusing or inconsistent language. Those updated info packets will be emailed to the incoming chair of PDC once that appointment has been announced. Please note that suggested calendar dates have been offered (based upon the same approximate schedule that was followed in 2020-21), but these dates will need to be checked against the official 2021-22 academic calendar prior to posting. The new PDC may also elect to re-examine the policies and procedures as a whole and decide whether to make changes based-upon the preferences of the new PDC membership, although keeping in mind that this type of review will need to occur early - during off-contract summer months - if the PDC wishes to get those edits finalized in time and posted to the Provost's Office - Academic Affairs website by mid-August.
3. As stated earlier in this report ...

We strongly recommend the continued use of Microsoft Forms for PDC submissions in the future. The PDC also recommends expanding the use of Microsoft Forms across the whole application and evaluation process so that it is not only utilized for faculty summer grant and sabbatical application submissions, but also for chair-level and dean evaluation letter submissions.

If the PDC elects to continue using Microsoft Forms, you will not need to create the application forms from scratch. If you login to the PDC@stetson.edu account using the Microsoft 365 portal (the PDC chair can request the password from IT) and access the Microsoft 'Forms' application, you should find copies of the application forms that were utilized by the committee during 2020-21 – a separate form for summer grant and sabbatical leave applications. These can be copied, renamed, edited as the PDC wishes, and used again.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Weblinks to the new *Microsoft Form* 2022 Summer Grant and 2022-23 Sabbatical Leave application forms will need to be created by the incoming PDC and inserted in place of the old links in the summer grant and sabbatical leave information packets (the weblinks that remain in the proposed edited information packets point to the now obsolete 2020-21 forms).

4. Last year, both the Dean of A&S and the Provost approved a request to allow Sage Hall Administrative Assistant Vickie Bollinger to assist the PDC in handling some of the heavier workflow that happens during the fall term – especially around the time that summer grant and sabbatical leave applications are being submitted. There is a lot of busy work that needs to be done in a timely fashion such as sending acknowledgement emails to applicants, organizing materials within folders by school on the PDC Onedrive, making sure the correct department chair - and then dean - are notified about the need to submit an evaluation letter, so forth. Vickie's assistance and performance in this role was extraordinary. Hopefully, she can continue to serve in this capacity for upcoming years.