



The bargaining proposal approved at the DCFA Faculty General Meeting on November 26 included the objective of improving funding for professional development. This proposal is presented in the general meeting minutes of that date, and Bargaining Bulletin #3. Recently the proposal was amended, at the request of the Education Leave Committee, to update the education leave language to reflect current practice.

All bargaining bulletins can be found at www.dcf.ca

How much professional development funding does the current collective agreement guarantee we receive?

According to Article 9 of the 2014-2019 collective agreement, faculty members have access to three separate PD funding pools:

1. Each member receives \$600 a year in personal faculty PD funds. This money can either be kept separate in an individual account or, if the member and their colleagues agree to do so, pooled together to create a common fund. Each year any unspent portion of this money is carried forward to the next year.
2. In addition to personal PD funds, faculty also have the ability to apply for an Education Leave. Funding for Education Leaves is articulated in the Common Agreement in an amount that is equivalent to 0.6% of all faculty salaries for any given year. Education Leave provides successful applicants up to four months of time-release that can be prorated over more than one semester. It is a competitive funding opportunity managed by the Education Leave Committee. Each year any money remaining in the education leave fund is carried forward.
3. The collective agreement also provides for a College-Wide Professional Development Program, which is used to fund group PD activities, and which is administered by a joint advisory committee consisting of both faculty and administrators. The collective agreement specifies a minimum of \$3,000 for this purpose; the actual amounts have been in the \$30,000 range the last two years.

How much professional development funding is guaranteed to faculty in the collective agreements of other local, teaching-focused, post-secondary institutions?

See Appendix 1. Funding for professional development at Douglas College is among the lowest in the province.

How much professional funding do we actually need?

Short-term

While it is difficult to generalize about what all faculty might *need* to fund their own professional development, it is possible to show what a significant number of faculty have been *routinely asking for* from internal funding sources that are *not guaranteed* by either the collective or common agreement. Of particular interest are the amounts of money received by faculty who have successfully applied for funding from the Research and Scholarly Activity Travel Fund (RSATF), a pool of funding which provides up to \$3000 a year to faculty to facilitate presentations given at scholarly conferences and which is ultimately controlled by College administration.¹

In the 2018 calendar year, for instance, 27 faculty members received a total of \$52,720 in RSATF funding, an amount which makes for an average award of \$1952.59.² Given how much it costs to attend a conference outside the Lower Mainland, once travel, accommodation, conference fees, and per diems are all taken into account, this average amount of almost \$2000 is hardly surprising.

It is also not surprising that the RSATF has become the de facto funding source for faculty members hoping to present their work at a conference either annually or biennially, since *it currently takes more than 3 years* to accumulate the equivalent amount of personal PD funding via the collective agreement. There are many areas at the College which encourage annual or biennial conference attendance as a means to maintain currency and, for faculty members in these areas, attending and presenting at such conferences is a central and primary form of PD. Unfortunately, the miniscule amount of personal PD we are guaranteed annually by the current collective agreement means that the administratively controlled RSATF has become the *only* way these faculty can achieve their professional development goals.

At a minimum, and to avoid this reliance on the RSATF and other administratively controlled internal funding sources, *the collective agreement should guarantee all faculty \$2000 a year in personal PD funds.*

Long-term (Education Leave)

In 2018 twelve faculty applied for Education Leaves for the 2019-2020 academic year. Four were granted a full semester leave and one was granted two sections of time release (although he had requested four). In the past three years there has been an increasing number of applicants for Education Leaves, and an increasing number of these applicants are applying for support to (1) pursue or complete graduate studies, most often by writing PhD comprehensive exams or a PhD dissertation;

¹ While faculty are currently responsible for adjudicating RSATF applications, as well as applications to the RSATF's sister funds, the Research and Scholarly Activity Project Fund (RSAPF) and the Research Incentive Grant program (RIG), they are invited to do so at the sole discretion of College administration, as there are no collective agreement provisions which guarantee faculty involvement in the disbursement of these funds. In fact, if the College administration were so inclined, they could eliminate these funds altogether or minimize faculty involvement in the adjudication process, and faculty would have absolutely no means by which they could protest these decisions. It is for this reason that the RSATF can rightfully be described as "ultimately controlled by College administration."

² This data was pulled from the Research and Innovation Office's [most recent list of RSATF and RSAPF winners](#).

2) pursue a research study; or (3) disseminate research findings via publishing a book, book chapter(s), or journal article(s).

Given that there is an increasing number of Faculty pursuing a PhD or PhD-prepared, it is not surprising that there have been more applications for Education Leaves in the past 3 years. Many faculty job postings prefer or require a PhD credential, and degree programs (for e.g. Therapeutic Recreation, Child and Youth Care, Applied Psychology, Sport Science, etc.) are required to have some PhD-prepared faculty.

As a result, a growing number of faculty are coming to the College with an interest in pursuing research and are, in many cases, embedding their research interests into their teaching at the College. Completing a PhD, conducting research, and disseminating research are ways that faculty stay current in their field. It is anticipated that the four Education Leaves available each year will continue to fall short of demand and put faculty at a disadvantage when it comes to maintaining currency in their fields. Notably, having faculty who are current and active in their fields brings a positive reputation and prestige to the College.

The bargaining proposal is to increase the funding for Education Leave from 0.6% to 2.0% of faculty salaries.

Why is it in the College’s best interests to guarantee us access to the professional development funding we actually need?

The College’s current *Strategic Plan* states that all faculty should have access to “valuable professional-development opportunities to maintain the currency and relevancy of their knowledge, skills, and competencies.”³ If, as the complementary *2016-2020 Human Resources Plan* suggests, the College is indeed serious about “ensuring our employees build, share and sustain the knowledge and skills needed to provide inspiring and relevant educational experiences for our students,”⁴ then the College must step up and use the collective agreement to guarantee that all faculty have access to professional development funds that are adequate to faculty’s actual needs.

Also, the College has a negotiating mandate from the provincial government that grants them the “ability to negotiate conditional and modest funding that can be used to drive tangible service improvements for British Columbians,”⁵. Providing faculty with an appropriate level of PD funding will do just that by helping us all become instructors better able to teach and mentor our students.

My thanks to Dr. Colleen Reid (Education Leave Committee Chair) who wrote the narrative pertaining to education leave; and, my thanks to Dr. Jason Bourget (LLPA Area Steward & Bargaining Team Member) who wrote the majority of the remainder of this bulletin.

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³ [2015-2020 Douglas College Strategic Plan](#), p. 10.

⁴ [2016-2020 Douglas College Human Resources Plan](#), p. 6.

⁵ For more information about the government’s current bargaining mandate, see the government’s [Public Sector Bargaining Mandates and Agreements page](#) online.

Appendix 1 - PD Funding Comparison

	Short-Term Individual	Short-Term College-Wide	Long-term
Capilano University	on application		2.60%
Thompson Rivers University	\$ 1,800.00		
College of New Caledonia	0.80%		2.7 FTE salary equivalent
Douglas College	\$600 (=0.64% of Step 1 salary)	\$3,000 total in CA; 2017/18 actual \$31,750	0.60%
Kwantlen Polytechnic Insitute	\$700 per FTE + \$100/member	0.60%	1.60%
College of the Rockies	0.64%	0.60%	.4 FTE salary equivalent
University of the Fraser Valley	\$ 1,500.00	\$100,000 for short- term leaves between 16 & 90 days	0.40%
Vancouver Island University	\$ 1,000.00	\$4,500 annually for faculty associaion PD committee	8.5 FTE @70% salary
Okanagan College	0.60%	.4% of Step 1 salaries for journals, association dues, etc.	3% of salaries
Selkirk College	2% combined short-term and long-term		
Camosun College	2.1% combined short-term and long-term		
Langara College	0.90%		0.60%
Vancouver Community College		\$150,000 + 0.6%	2.75 FTE/year
North Island College	0.60%	.6% of salaries	0.90%
Thompson Rivers Open Learning	1.50%		
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology	1.00%	.6% of salaries	
Emily Carr University of Art & Design	0.75%		annual negotiation