

Topic: Professional Development Funds during the Pandemic

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Hello Mount Royal Faculty Association members,

Professional Development funds during the Pandemic

Over 50 percent of faculty surveyed reported that remote delivery has required them to cover teaching-related costs themselves. These costs range between \$500 and \$2,000 dollars, with some faculty reporting spending more than \$2,000 to conduct remote delivery.

The Association continued to insist that the Employer cover these costs and acknowledge downloading more invisible costs such as higher electrical bills and internet charges, which were formerly optional but now required to work. The Association continues to press for T2200 forms to be issued when CRA guidelines are revised. The CRA has indicated that a rule change is being contemplated and that home expenses will be deductible. Early indications are that these expenses will be net of any reimbursements from the employer.

Please encourage Employees within your Academic Unit to keep all receipts so that the appropriate claims can be made if and when CRA rules are amended.

The Association again maintains the Employer must assume the costs of remote delivery; members should not be burdened by making up the Employer's shortcomings with using personal PD allotments or other funds designated for professional development to cover the costs of remote delivery.

However, given the University's current stance, the Association encourages faculty to access the following available funds to help offset their teaching costs. Please remind Employees within your Academic Unit of these funds.

- 1) Underspent Faculty Development Committees (FDC) Funds. Due to the pandemic, costs for attending conferences have been reduced, leaving available monies in the FDC accounts.
NOTE: Unspent FDC funds are absorbed into the University's budget.
- 2) Contract Faculty PD Fund. Article 18.6 stipulates that the University must maintain a professional fund for contract employees. This fund has a substantial amount available for reimbursing costs up to \$1,200 per year on a first-come, first-served basis. [Click here](#) for details about how to access this fund.

The COVID-19 survey suggested that many Full-time and Contract faculty are reluctant to apply to these funds because they believe either they and/or their expenses may not qualify. The Association is working to reduce barriers and ensure clear processes for application. While this is taking place, please direct Employees within your Academic Unit to the Association if they are having difficulty accessing funds, the Association will assist them navigating the process.

CHAIRS' ADVISORY

Note: Full-time faculty are able to defray their costs using their personal allotments.

Note: Some Faculty Development Committees are accepting internet charges, office supplies, and some furniture expenses are eligible for reimbursement.

Note: Employees may purchase cellular phones with the Profession Development funds.

As always, the collective agreement touches upon a variety of aspects of Chairs' and Academic Directors' work, many that have not been addressed within this advisory. Despite these topics' absence, the Association is committed to providing resources and support to Chairs. To this end, the MRFA will be unveiling a [Chairs' Resource](#) section of the MRFA webpage with resources. With that in mind, the Association would like to request that as questions develop, and as absent resources are identified, please contact the [MRFA Office](#) so that we can address the questions and/or develop the resources.