

Tech Snacks: Professional Development

Teaching is a profession with a high learning curve. As instructors, we learn every day – through our own experimentation, from our students, and from our fellow teachers. Below, we outline the PD funding process at MSUN some key opportunities and resources that MSUN faculty can use to grow into their roles as instructors.

PD opportunities & resources (teaching-specific)

In house through OTLE:

- ❑ **Tech Snacks sessions** — three sessions every Friday during the semester
- ❑ **Innovative Teaching & Learning Festival** — Wednesday, March 2, from 4pm to 6pm in Hensler Auditorium. MSUN faculty share examples of innovative teaching from their classrooms over the past year.
- ❑ **Faculty Learning Community meetings** — TBD
- ❑ **Libguide on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)** — Overview of SoTL professional organizations, research publications, & conferences:
www.msun.edu/otle > “Faculty Resources” > “Teaching and Learning Research”

Out of house:

- ❑ **XLi** — The Extended Learning Institute, sponsored by the MT Office of the Commissioner of Higher Ed, is a teaching and learning conference attended by faculty and staff in the MUS system. This year: April 7-8 at Montana Technological University in Butte, MT. More info at: <https://www.mtech.edu/cai/xli.html>
- ❑ **Networks** — A number of professional development networks exist through which college instructors can pose questions, ask for research recommendations, and share other information.
Example: POD Network’s Google Group, association listservs, Facebook groups for your discipline
- ❑ **Webinars and Online Trainings** — Many organizations and universities offer webinars on teaching and learning topics (free or for a fee). Often, these are recorded for later viewing. Extended trainings or “courses” also exist online for all kinds of specific topics, such as “online course design” or “cultural responsiveness in the classroom.”
Example: POD affiliate webinars; Quality Matters (QM) online course design training
- ❑ **Podcasts** — Learn about current teaching and learning research while doing dishes!
Examples: Cult of Pedagogy Podcast; Teacher Education Podcast
- ❑ **Conferences and Institutes** — Teaching and learning related conferences occur almost every month of the year, all over the US and Canada. They provide great opportunities to learn about other instructors’ teaching innovations that you might be able to use. You can simply attend a conference, or you might present a poster, give a presentation, or serve on a roundtable discussion. “Institutes” are usually intensive workshops on a focused topic that take place over the course of a few days. Elon University keeps a great comprehensive list of conferences:
<https://www.elon.edu/u/academics/catl/sotl/teaching-learning-conferences/>

Professional development funding

MSU-Northern allocates roughly \$20,000 to faculty professional development each year. Details are located on the Provost’s webpage (www.msun.edu/provost/).

FAQs

How much funding can I request?

Faculty members can request up to \$1,800 per fiscal year (July 1 to June 30)

Does every faculty member have access to the funding?

Currently, faculty can put in a request each fiscal year, and the funding is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Put in your request as early as possible.

How do I request it?

Forms are available on the website and must be signed by your Dean. If the PD opportunity involves travel, you **MUST** submit a travel form with the application form. If you have to miss class due to the travel, you must clear it with your Dean.

Who decides if my request gets funded? How do they decide?

A committee of faculty and staff decides, in conjunction with the Provost's office. They use the documentation you submit to determine whether the PD opportunity is relevant to your own development in your professional capacity at MSU-Northern and to the university's mission.

What sorts of things are generally not funded?

The committee generally does not fund trainings/CEUs that are required for your job or professional licensure, or professional association memberships. Learning must be involved.

Do I have to report back?

You are strongly encouraged to present what you learned at some venue on campus. The Academic Senate's Instruction, Research, and Faculty Development committee now hosts a monthly Brown Bag Lunch Series as a venue to talk about your research and other academic work. Contact the chair (Charlie Mack) if you are interested in presenting.