

SUPPORT OF SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES (SOSA)

PURPOSE, PRINCIPLES, AND PROCEDURES

PROGRAM MISSION AND ENDURING PRINCIPLES

The Support of Scholarly Activities (SOSA) program is designed to support faculty and librarian scholarship, creative activity, and professional activity with exceptional merit and/or promise. The SOSA program reflects the College's commitment to making TCNJ a strong community of teacher-scholars and librarian-scholars. The program provides faculty members and librarians an alternate assignment within workload in order to have more time to engage in their scholarly, creative, or professional activities. SOSA awards may also be used for faculty and librarian scholarly, creative, or professional work, which engages students as collaborators or apprentices. The SOSA program is designed to support two equally important groups, both a) new faculty members and librarians in establishing their agenda for scholarship, creative, or professional activity, and b) continuing faculty members and librarians in engaging in scholarship, creative, or professional activity.

The SOSA program is a competitive yet inclusive grant program as it provides faculty members and librarians with re-assigned time to expand their program of scholarly, creative, or professional activity beyond the level that is already expected and included within workload. Successful proposals must be high quality and innovative and supported by the candidate's area of expertise, track record, and academic goals. Given that SOSA alternate assignment is possible only with budgetary resources, SOSA grants are awarded in accordance with the following enduring principles:

1. The SOSA program is a competitive process that supports prospective scholarly, creative, or professional work. The review process is conducted in a fair, transparent, and efficient manner.
2. The intellectual merit of the proposed scholarly, creative, and/or professional program/project for SOSA alternate assignment is given the greatest weight in the evaluation of any SOSA proposal.
3. The scholarly, creative, and/or professional qualifications of the applicant are also given consideration in the review process. The applicant's area of expertise, track record, and academic goals should support the proposed SOSA work and enhance the scholarly culture at the College.
4. The review process takes into consideration the broader impacts on both the applicant's scholarly, creative, or professional program and the overall teacher-scholar and librarian-scholar culture at TCNJ.

All full-time, tenure-line faculty members and librarians, regardless of tenure status or rank, are eligible and encouraged to apply for SOSA awards. The teaching or administrative needs of any Program, Department, or School cannot be used to discourage any applicant from applying.

DISTRIBUTION AND DURATION OF AWARDS

Awards are distributed competitively according to a procedure recommended by the Committee on Faculty Affairs (CFA) and approved through the governance process in consultation with the Union. A campus-wide SOSA Committee, made up of appointed members of the faculty, evaluates applications.

A total of 96 awards, of three faculty-weighted-hours each, are distributed each academic year. This total includes the number of awards that are ongoing from the previous year. The SOSA program now uses a system of two-year awards for all successful applicants. Approximately half of the 96 SOSA slots are awarded each year. A small number of one-year awards may also become available as a result of recipients

relinquishing one year of a two-year award. All applicants are assumed to be applying for a two-year award; they need not indicate in the proposal that they are seeking a two-year award.

CONDITIONS FOR ALTERNATE ASSIGNMENT IN SOSA

The following conditions apply to all faculty members receiving SOSA awards:

1. Recipients of SOSA alternate assignments may not accept overload course assignments during the same academic year that she/he holds the award. Overload that does not add-up to a course, such as 0.2 or 0.5 faculty-weighted-hours (FWH), is permitted. Overloads totaling more than 3 FWH during a SOSA year require Provost's approval.
2. Faculty members and librarians who apply for both a sabbatical and a SOSA award at the same time must choose to accept one or the other if both are awarded. Those who choose a sabbatical forfeit the SOSA award for the sabbatical year. Applicants may not receive both sabbatical leave (whole- or half-year) and a SOSA award during the same academic year. If a faculty member or librarian decides to take a sabbatical (whole- or half-year) during one year of a two-year SOSA award, the SOSA award is forfeited for that year.
3. Applicants who apply unsuccessfully for a SOSA award in one year may reapply in subsequent years.
4. SOSA awards may not be used to reduce any full-time faculty member's teaching load below one course unit per academic year.
5. Faculty members or librarians who are denied reappointment or tenure forfeit any SOSA award for the final year of employment.

TYPES OF ELIGIBLE SCHOLARLY/CREATIVE/PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

The following types of scholarly/creative/professional activities are eligible to be supported by the SOSA program:

1. Research

Any of the following categories of research are eligible for support as long as they are to be communicated to the academic community beyond TCNJ. Eligible venues for communicating research include a broad range commensurate with practices among the many disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields in which TCNJ teacher-scholars conduct their work. The most common include: articles in professional journals; published books, editions, textbooks, and chapters; original papers for conferences or professional societies; lecture recitals; service as editor or reviewer of scholarly works or proposals; proceedings of conferences, panels, or meetings; published manuals or handbooks to accompany texts, instruments, or equipment; software; and electronic media.

- a. *The Scholarship of Discovery* – The traditional research model in which new content knowledge is acquired.
- b. *The Scholarship of Integration* – The creation of new knowledge by synthesizing and making connections across disciplines or sub-disciplines.
- c. *The Scholarship of Application* – The bridging of the gap between theory and practice through both research and action.
- d. *The Scholarship of Pedagogy* – The discovery or evaluative analysis of the ways students learn, and the identification and assessment of methods used to foster learning.

2. Creative Endeavors

These include original works of art, creative writing, drama, documentary, music, dance, graphic design, digital arts, and architecture. These creative outcomes are presented to the public through

performances, shows, original compositions, sound or visual recordings, publications, displays or exhibits. Activities may include participation on panels, in discussion groups, seminars, or workshops, or curating exhibitions.

3. **Professional Activity**

Professional activities as a consultant or practitioner are considered scholarly activity when they involve the creation, rather than the application, of knowledge and impact significantly on one's discipline. These activities demonstrate professional recognition of one's scholarship at least at the local level and may include such work as original research when consulting for an outside organization, creating national standards for an accrediting organization, designing curricula for national or regional use, etc. Documentation of professional activities may include written evaluations by peers or professional organizations.

4. **Major Grant Application Preparation**

Preparation of applications for highly competitive, major grants (in support of scholarly, creative, or professional activities as described above) requiring extensive advance research and documentation.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) AND INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE (IACUC) APPROVAL

Faculty members who are planning research involving either human subjects or vertebrate animals must obtain approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), respectively.

- TCNJ's policies and procedures for IRB approval can be found at: <http://www.tcnj.edu/~irb/>.
- TCNJ's policies and procedures for IACUC approval can be found at: <http://grants.intrasun.tcnj.edu/compliance/animal.html>.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

1. **Review Process**

Submitted proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by an interdisciplinary SOSA Committee. After a norming process to standardize approaches to scoring, committee members will split into two panels to evaluate proposals using the review criteria listed below. The full Committee will consist of 11 members, with representatives from the following units:

- One person from each of the following schools: Arts and Communication, Business, Education, Engineering, Nursing and HES (total of 5)
- Two people from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (one from Humanities, one from Social Sciences)
- Two people from the School of Science (one from Math/Computer Science, one from Biology/Chemistry/Physics)
- One person from the Library
- One designee from the Provost (ex officio, non-voting)

Each panel will consist of 6 people, with the Provost's Designee sitting on both. The composition of each panel will be determined by the full SOSA Committee itself as it organizes for work each year. Each panel will elect its own chair, who does not necessarily have to be the same person as the chair of the full SOSA Committee.

In order to avoid bias, when proposals are discussed and reviewed by panels and the full SOSA Committee, individual committee members must not introduce any outside evidence or other information that is not included in the submitted proposals. Moreover, individual committee

members must not advocate for any of the submitted proposals. This is particularly important for proposals from the same discipline or general area of the SOSA Committee members.

In order to avoid bias for proposals submitted by SOSA Committee members, these proposals will be directed to and reviewed by the panel on which the Committee member does not serve, so that no one reviews his/her own proposal.

2. Review Procedures

The SOSA Committee will follow the major steps listed below in its review of proposals.

- a. The full Committee will initially engage in a proposal norming step. The full Committee will first discuss how to use and apply the evaluation rubric. The full Committee will then review several example proposals, with each individual Committee member independently reviewing each example proposal using the evaluation rubric to assign scores. The Chair will then compile the scores, and the full Committee will discuss the proposals, the range of scores, and the use of the rubric. This norming step is designed to standardize approaches to scoring, establish consistency in scoring between and among reviewers, and ensure a fair and transparent evaluation process.
- b. The full Committee will divide into two panels, with each panel reviewing approximately half of the proposals. Individual panel members will assign preliminary scores to each proposal using the evaluation rubric. Each panel chair will compile a summary spreadsheet of the preliminary scores, and each panel will meet to review and discuss the proposals. Any panel member can nominate any proposal for discussion by the panel. As a result of the discussions, panel members may choose to revise their preliminary scores.
- c. Each panel will then submit their scores to the SOSA Chair, who will compile a summary spreadsheet and submit all preliminary scores to the full Committee. The scores for the proposals that were submitted by SOSA committee members will be sent to the Provost's Designee rather than to the SOSA Chair.
- d. The full Committee will re-convene for a comprehensive review of all preliminary scores, and then it will develop final scores. Upon review of all of the preliminary scores, individual SOSA Committee members can nominate any proposal for review and discussion by the full Committee. The full Committee does not have to review and discuss every proposal.
- e. Upon completion of the full Committee's determination of final scores, the SOSA Chair will provide the final scores to the Provost's Designee. The Provost's Designee will integrate the scores from any individual SOSA Committee members who had submitted proposals. The Provost's Designee will then submit the complete summary of final scores to the Office of Academic Affairs.
- f. After the SOSA results are announced, the Chair of the SOSA Committee can share the average scores of each category in the evaluation rubric with applicants who request feedback.

3. Review Criteria

The applicant should keep in mind that non-specialists will be evaluating her/his proposal, so the applicant should be certain to use non-technical language that is accessible to any educated lay person. It is the applicant's responsibility to present the proposal in a clear, well-organized, and coherent manner that effectively communicates the proposed work and its merits. SOSA Committee members will evaluate each proposal on the basis of its intellectual merit and the qualifications/expertise of the applicant. The evaluation rubric that will be used by the SOSA Committee can be found on the last page of the Request for Proposals.

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Every supported faculty member and librarian must submit a final report of scholarly/creative/professional activities at the end of the grant period, to be submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs on the first Monday of October. Reports will be used in the evaluation of subsequent applications. Failure to submit a report will place future workload assignments for scholarship in jeopardy.

The report should include a brief description of 1) the nature of the scholarly/creative/professional activities carried out during the SOSA award, 2) the objectives and expected outcomes from the original, funded SOSA proposal, and 3) a short explanation of how they were met or why they were not met. Instructions for the format of the *Alternate Assignments Follow-up Report* are available online:
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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Proposal Deadline: Monday, October 3, 2011, 4:00 pm

Submit 12 copies of the complete application to the Office of Academic Affairs (Green Hall 212)

Announcement of Awards: Mid-January 2012

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 - a. *The Scholarship of Discovery* – The traditional research model in which new content knowledge is acquired.

- b. *The Scholarship of Integration* – The creation of new knowledge by synthesizing and making connections across disciplines or sub-disciplines.
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APPLICATION FORMAT

Applicants should **submit 12 copies** of her/his proposal by **4:00 pm, Monday, October 3, 2011** to the Office of Academic Affairs for the SOSA Committee's review and recommendations to the Provost. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

A variety of previously funded proposals are available for viewing, and there will be a SOSA proposal workshop held in September 2011. The locations for these will be announced.

The proposal must follow the format noted below, **otherwise it will not be reviewed**. Please submit double-sided copies to save paper.

1. Cover Sheet

Use the following format:

Name:

Email address:

Department:

Title of proposed SOSA program/project(s):

Year(s) of last two SOSA awards:

Whether approval by IRB (human subjects) or IACUC (certain animal studies) has been received or is still needed.

The following statement, with Chairperson's or Dean's initials obtained (initials indicate only that a Chairperson or Dean is aware of the applicant's intention to apply for a SOSA award. There is no expectation that Deans or Chairpersons will read or review SOSA applications):

I have been informed of the applicant's intention to apply to have SOSA alternate assignment included within his/her workload. I have discussed with the applicant the use of facilities, support staff, and any other College resources essential to the execution of his/her proposed activities.

Chairperson or Dean Initials _____

2. Proposal Narrative (Description of the Proposed SOSA Program/Project)

The SOSA Committee will evaluate each proposal based the review criteria outlined below; however, the applicant should keep in mind that non-specialists will be evaluating the proposal. It is the applicant's responsibility to present the proposed program/project in a clear, well-organized manner that effectively communicates all elements of the proposal to the SOSA Committee, which is comprised of members with broad disciplinary representation.

The Proposal Narrative should be no more than 3 single-spaced pages (1-inch margins, Times New Roman font, 12 pt font; *do not exceed the page limit. Committee members will not read beyond three single-spaced pages*), and should include the following three titled sections:

- a. *Intellectual Merit* – The applicant should describe the ideas, goals, and methods of the scholarly/creative/professional program or project(s) that she/he will be conducting over the two-year SOSA award, its context and importance to the applicant's discipline, and an indication of the eventual scholarly outcomes. The applicant's description should include the following:
 - Description of proposed activity – an overview of the planned scholarly/creative/professional program/project(s). The description should be scholarly, yet accessible to the non-specialist.
 - Significance – an explanation of how the applicant's proposed work fits into the broader category of research in the field(s) being conducted by others regionally, nationally, and/or internationally.
 - Objectives – an indication of the applicant's goals and plans for accomplishment during the two-year SOSA award period. Specification of methods to achieve the proposed goals and a timeline of activities is often helpful in evaluating the feasibility of the proposed work.
 - Dissemination – the applicant's expectation for sharing the results of proposed work (e.g. scholarly article, book, conference presentation, exhibition, etc.).
- b. *Qualifications/Expertise of the Applicant* – Describe the qualifications and expertise of the faculty/librarian applicant, particularly as these are related to the applicant's ability to conduct the

- proposed work and to achieve the expected objectives. If collaborations or other resources will be needed to complete the proposed work, describe if these have been established and/or secured yet. The applicant should also briefly summarize her/his past scholarly/creative accomplishments (including outcomes from past SOSA awards) within the context of her/his overall scholarly/creative program.
- c. *Broader Impacts* – Explain how the SOSA award will be important for the applicant at this point in time. In particular, is the applicant pre-tenure or re-engaging in a scholarly/creative/professional area? Where there are gaps in the chronology of the applicant’s scholarly/creative/professional record, the applicant may include a brief description of specific contextual factors (e.g., administrative roles, non-academic employment) that account for those gaps.

3. Curriculum Vita

Provide a professional CV highlighting information from the applicant’s scholarly and creative work. Please do not include copies of publications or examples of creative work.

4. Past SOSA Award Reports

If the applicant has previously received a SOSA award(s) within the past five years, please include copies of the applicant’s final reports from all awards received during this five-year period of time. Applications that lack past reports when these are required will be considered incomplete and will be disqualified. Alternate Assignment Follow-up Report format instructions are available at: <http://www.tcnj.edu/~academic/research/index.html>.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

1. Review Process

Submitted proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by an interdisciplinary SOSA Committee. After a norming process to standardize approaches to scoring, committee members will split into two panels to evaluate proposals using the review criteria listed below. The full Committee will consist of 11 members, with representatives from the following units:

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- d. The full Committee will re-convene for a comprehensive review of all preliminary scores, and then it will develop final scores. Development of final scores will likely require review and discussion of those proposals needing consideration by the full Committee. Upon review of all of the preliminary scores, individual SOSA Committee members can nominate any proposal for review and discussion by the full Committee. The full Committee does not have to review and discuss every proposal.
- e. Upon completion of the full Committee's determination of final scores, the SOSA Chair will provide the final scores to the Provost's Designee. The Provost's Designee will integrate the scores from any individual SOSA Committee members who had submitted proposals. The Provost's Designee will then submit the complete summary of final scores to the Office of Academic Affairs.
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Interim reports at the end of the first year of a two-year award are not necessary.

EVALUATION RUBRIC FOR SOSA APPLICATIONS

Applicant's Name _____

Correct format? Yes No

Previous SOSA funding? Yes No

Score definitions:

0 absent / 1 poor / 2 barely adequate / 3 fair / 4 good / 5 very good / 6 excellent / 7 outstanding

Score the following categories based on how they are presented in the proposal, in both content and clarity.

Intellectual Merit

Score = (max 42 pts)

Quality and coherence of the scholarly/creative/professional ideas and work proposed	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Clarity of proposed objectives	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Clarity and feasibility of proposed methods	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Clarity of expected scholarly/creative/professional outcomes	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Importance/significance to the discipline and to applicant's ongoing scholarly/creative/professional program (sets the proposal within the appropriate context)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Potential for the proposed work to yield tangible scholarly/creative/professional outcomes (e.g., publications, grants, performances, new scholarly directions, etc.)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Qualifications/Expertise of the Applicant

Score = (max 21 pts)

Scholarly/creative/professional qualifications of the applicant to conduct the proposed work	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Overall body of scholarly/creative/professional outcomes within the context of the applicant's program (taking into consideration the applicant's career stage)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Recent scholarly/creative/professional outcomes within the past 2-4 years (taking into consideration the applicant's service obligations and any past SOSA awards)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Total Score (Intellectual Merit + Qualifications/Expertise) = (max 63 pts)

Broader Impacts for the Applicant and TCNJ

Score = (max 2 pts)

Applicant is pre-tenure <i>or</i> Applicant is re-engaging in scholarship/creative/professional activity	Y (2 pts)	N
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Final Score (Total Score + Broader Impacts) = (max 65 pts)

Appendix: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF QUALTRICS SURVEY ON SOSA (APRIL 26-MAY 10, 2011)

SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. How many years have you been at TCNJ?
2. What is your current rank?
3. Have you ever applied for SOSA?
4. Have you ever been turned down for SOSA?
5. did you or will you apply again?
6. If not, why not?
7. Do you have any concerns about the fairness of the SOSA evaluation process as it currently exists?
8. If so, please explain.
9. Before transformation, new tenure-track hires were given an automatic course reduction in their first year. Would you like to see SOSA used for this purpose now? If so, it would reduce the number of awards available for senior faculty.
10. If yes, how many years do you think SOSA should be used to provide course reduction to new faculty?
 - Only the first year
 - The first two years
 - Until tenure is granted
 - Until promotion to Associate Professor
11. Do you think junior faculty should be privileged by giving a bonus in the scoring of their applications?
12. Do you think faculty members who are applying for SOSA after a period of significant service to the college should be privileged by giving a bonus in the scoring of their applications?
13. Do you think faculty members who are taking their scholarly/creative/professional activities in a new direction for which they do not have a track record should be privileged by giving a bonus in the scoring of their applications?
14. Given that there are only a limited number of SOSA awards, do you think a rotation system should be instituted so that those who have not had a SOSA award in a number of years or who have never had a SOSA award should be given a bonus in the scoring of their applications?
15. Currently SOSA proposals are evaluated based 50% on the strength of the proposal and 50% on the qualifications of the applicants. Do you think these percentages are fair?
16. If not, how would you like to see them weighed?
17. SOSA applications are currently evaluated by a multidisciplinary committee. Given that not all departments/disciplines on campus can be represented, would you prefer?
 - a. To have proposals evaluated by a multidisciplinary committee that may include someone from the department/discipline of the applicant
 - b. To have proposals evaluated by a multidisciplinary committee that includes no one from the department/discipline of the applicant

18. Have you ever served on the SOSA committee?
19. If so, did you have concerns about the workload, the fairness of the process, the composition of the committee, or anything else about the process?
20. Please explain.
21. Do you have any other comments regarding SOSA that you would like CFA to consider in its review?

ANALYSIS

Demographics: 145 faculty responded to the survey, approximately ?? percent. Of these, 25% identified themselves as Professors, 44% as Associate Professors, 13% as Assistant Professors with tenure, and 22% as Assistant Professors without tenure. The number of years at TCNJ were reported as between 1-41 years.

92% of the respondents reported that they had applied for SOSA. 60% of them had been turned down, and, of these, 23% reported that they would not apply again. Of those who elaborated, 52% felt the process was biased, unfair, arbitrary, and opaque. 31.5% felt it was too much trouble for too little reward.

77% of the respondents reported that they had previously served on the SOSA committee. Of these, 81% had concerns about the current process.

Fairness of the Current Process: Overall, 63% of the respondents felt that the current SOSA process was unfair. 94% of those who felt that way elaborated. Reasons given included:

bias or unfairness – sometimes indicating the prejudice is for/or against a) junior faculty, b) faculty who are active scholars, c) certain types of projects or certain disciplines, or d) faculty taking their scholarship in new directions	34%
members of the SOSA committee cannot properly evaluate applications from outside their own disciplines	28.5%
the criteria are unclear and the process is not transparent	17%
complaints that SOSA committee members lobby or explain proposals from their own fields	15%

When asked if the current application weighting of 50% on the qualifications of the applicant and 50% on the strength of the proposal was fair, 60% of respondents (81) indicated “no.”. In an open-ended follow-up question “How would you like to see them rated?”, 80 respondents elaborated. Of those who addressed this question, 61% of them indicated the proposal should be weighted more heavily than the qualifications of the applicant, with various percentages suggested. Only 11% responded that they would like the qualifications of the applicant to be weighed more heavily than the proposal. The distribution of responses was as follows:

fair as it is	3%
the proposal should be weighted more heavily than the qualifications of the applicant	61%
the qualifications of the applicant should be weighted more heavily than the proposal	11%
don't care/unable to distinguish a preference	25%

Consideration for groups of faculty perceived to be disadvantaged by the current system: When asked if SOSA should be automatically awarded to junior faculty thereby reducing the number of awards the rest of the faculty could compete for, respondents split an even 50% in favor and 50% against.

When asked about giving special consideration to specific groups of faculty, responses were as follows:

	Yes	No
Junior faculty	52%	48%
Faculty returning to scholarship after significant service	52%	48%
Faculty taking scholarship in a new direction	32%	68%
Faculty who have not had recent SOSA awards	44%	56%

Composition of the Committee. When asked if respondents would prefer to have their applications evaluated by a committee that might include someone from their discipline, 77% said “yes,” whereas 23% preferred to have their applications evaluated by a group that includes no one from the applicant’s discipline.

Comments from Previous SOSA Committee Members. Respondents who have served on the SOSA Committee were asked about their concerns. 81% of them were concerned about the current process, and 25 of them elaborated. Of these, the following concerns were noted:

Workload too high	40%
Process unfair	44%

Other Comments. The final survey question allowed respondents to comment on any aspect of SOSA they wanted brought to CFA’s attention. Most of the comments reiterated issues discussed earlier.