

MEMORANDUM

TO: Steering Committee
FROM: Committee on Faculty Affairs
RE: SOSA Awards
DATE: January 29, 2016

Final Recommendation from CFA on Revisions to the SOSA Program

Recognizing that the SOSA program makes a highly valuable institutional contribution to sustaining faculty's scholarship at TCNJ, the flexibility of SOSA awards is to be enhanced in a way that allows faculty to **choose between monetary grants or reassigned time**.

The goal of this change is to meet faculty's needs in situations when money rather than time would be more helpful in advancing their projects. This change will not affect funding made available through the MUSE program. It will also not decrease the number of SOSA awards given out every year or the process of evaluation by the SOSA committee. Deans and Department Chairs will not apply pressure on SOSA candidates to choose funding instead of reassigned time.

When submitting a SOSA application, faculty will have an option to indicate whether they choose:

- reassigned time for 3 FWH each year for 2 years;
- funding equivalent to the then-current overload pay for an Assistant Professor for 3 FWH for each of 2 years (currently \$9,930)
- funding equivalent to the then overload pay for an Assistant Professor for 3 FWH (currently \$4,965) for one year and reassigned time for 3 FWH for the other year, specifying in which year they want the reassigned time

Applicants selecting a monetary option would submit a budget and justification of expenses along with their SOSA project proposal. If requested by the proposing faculty member, the Office of Academic Grants and Sponsored Research (OAGSR) will support faculty in developing the budget.

The following expenses could be included in the budget: travel to research sites; equipment, supplies and technology purchases; purchases of datasets; payment of a participation fee to participants in experiments; and travel to present research results (beyond that normally supported from the School's travel budget). Other expenditure categories proposed by faculty members could also be considered, but these funds could not be used for faculty salary.

Upon approval of monetary SOSA awards, the Treasurer's office will create an account for each award and train recipients as PIs to manage their accounts.

Only expenses related to the research project described in the SOSA application will be covered by this funding. Adherence to this will be confirmed by OAGSR and approved by the appropriate Dean.

History:

On April 20, 2015, Steering charged CFA [Memo attached] to work with the SOSA committee to consider the following recommendation from the TCNJ Dean's Council and Academic Affairs:

Suggestion for revisions to SOSA program [Original Version]

Recognizing that SOSA program makes a highly valuable institutional contribution to sustaining faculty's scholarship at TCNJ, Deans Council and Academic Affairs propose to introduce flexibility of SOSA awards in a way that allows faculty to **choose between monetary grants or reassigned time**.

The goal of this change is to meet faculty's needs in situations when money rather than time would be more helpful in advancing their projects. This change will not affect funding made available through MUSE program. It will also not decrease the number of SOSA awards given out every year or the process of evaluation by the SOSA committee.

When submitting SOSA application, faculty will have an option to indicate whether they choose:

- reassigned time for 3 FWH each year for 2 years;
- funding for up to a total of \$8,000 for 2 years (\$4,000 each year).

Applicants selecting the monetary option would submit a budget and justification of expenses along with their SOSA project. Office of Academic Grants and Sponsored Research will support faculty in developing the budget and weigh in on its feasibility.

The following expenses could be included in the budget: travel to research sites, equipment and technology purchases, purchases of datasets and travel to present research results.

Upon approval of monetary SOSA awards, Treasurer's office will create an account for each award and train recipients as PIs to manage their accounts.

Only expenses related to research project described in the SOSA application will be covered by this funding. Adherence to this will be confirmed by OAGSR and approved by the appropriate Dean.

The SOSA committee gathered preliminary testimony from campus leaders and gave a general recommendation in favor of this proposal, but noted that the ramifications were significant. CFA discussed this proposal during its meetings on April 22nd, May 13th, August 26th, September 9th, September 23rd, and October 14th 2015 and January 27th 2016. Jill Bush, then the Chair of SOSA, attended the meeting on April 22nd and Stephanie Sen, the current Vice Chair, attended the meeting on September 23rd;

CFA sent out a Qualtrics survey in April 2015 asking whether faculty would be interested in using this funding option for possible future SOSA applications and also asked for general comments. While the majority of comments were favorable, there were concerns expressed that this change might dilute the original intent of SOSA and suggestions that the flexibility be made even wider, to include the option of taking the support in the form of summer salary. A substantial number of faculty (88) responded to the survey, with 28 saying that they were likely or very likely to avail of this option, with the largest number (12) saying that they would use it for travel. CFA could not arrange an Open Forum before the end of the fall semester and hence had to recommend that the SOSA RFP for the 2016-2018 period not include this flexibility.

A well-attended (~30 people) Open Forum was held from 11:30 am until noon on September 16th, 2015. A substantial majority of those attending were in favor of adding flexibility to the SOSA RFP, and many people liked the idea of adding the flexibility of allowing funding for one year and the standard course release the other year so that there would be time to analyze and write up research conducted with the original funding. Some attendees supported the idea of allowing summer salary to be a third option to reduce the perceived need of some faculty to have to supplement their earnings via teaching over the summer. A proposal to offer SOSA to all first- and second-year faculty (or perhaps all non-tenured faculty) and then rotate the remaining SOSA slots among all tenured faculty also attracted some support.

CFA sent out a second, more detailed, Qualtrics survey in October 2015 and accepted responses until January 23rd 2016. The results of this survey, including open ended responses, are attached, but the key results are that: 67% (46 of 69 respondents) supported the preliminary recommendation; 39% (22 of 57 respondents) were likely to opt for the monetary grant in lieu of some (or all) release time; and 82% (63 of 77 respondents) would be equally likely to apply for SOSA if the change goes through, with 14% more likely, and only 4% less likely, to do so.

A much less well-attended (~6 people) second Open Forum was held from 1:30 to 2:00 pm on October 18th, 2015. Here the opinions were evenly divided, with opponents focused on the possible invidious impact on people in the humanities (for whom the release time is almost always preferable) produced by the expected increase in applications from people outside HSS. However, supporters preferred the flexibility offered by the preliminary proposal and one noted that people in Nursing rarely apply for SOSA because they are so under-staffed that no one can, in good conscience, ask to teach less than a full load, while additional funds for research could be very useful.

Taking this very extensive testimony into account, CFA now makes the above formal final recommendation, approved by a vote of 9 to 2 held during the meeting of 27 January 2016. It contains the option to request funding in one year and a course release in the other year, but not, at this time, the summer salary option.

Changes to the original suggestion reflect concerns of several people about possible pressure placed on faculty to choose the funds so as to reduce the need to find adjunct faculty during the academic year and to remove the requirement that OAGSR weigh in on each proposal prior to submission. The maximum amount of support is raised and set equal to the state contract minimum salary that an Assistant Professor would receive for teaching an overload of 3 FWH. The possibility of raising that to the actual TCNJ overload pay rate should be considered further. Assuming that the funding option is perceived to be successful the summer salary option should be investigated further in the future.

Finally, CFA does note that the concern that the allowance of flexibility provided in this recommendation may have the unintended consequence of decreasing the equity of SOSA awards between Schools. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the SOSA RFP be reexamined after 3 years of awards made under the new version to see whether retaining it, reverting to the original (release time only), or yet another option, might be preferable at that time.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Committee on Faculty Affairs
FROM: Steering Committee
RE: SOSA Awards
DATE: April 20, 2015

Background:

The attached memo from Ieva Zake, writing on behalf of the Deans Council and Academic Affairs, proposes a change in the awarding of SOSA grants so that faculty can choose between monetary grants or reassigned time.

Charge:

Steering asks CFA to determine if the recommended change should be made to SOSA awards.

Steering suggests that CFA give to the SOSA committee the responsibility for crafting a preliminary recommendation.

In crafting a preliminary recommendation, SOSA should seek testimony from Academic Leaders and from the Faculty Senate. It may gather testimony via email.

Once the SOSA committee completes a preliminary recommendation, it should pass it on to CFA and notify Steering. CFA should then seek testimony on the preliminary recommendation via email to the entire faculty and at least two open forums.

Timeline:

The SOSA Committee should gather testimony and, if it believes the proposed change to the awards is warranted, complete a preliminary recommendation as soon as possible, but no later than the end of this semester.

TCNJ Governance Processes

Step #1 -- Identifying and reporting the problem: When a Standing Committee receives a charge from the Steering Committee, the first responsibility is to clearly articulate and report the problem to the campus community. The problem may have been set out clearly in the charge received from the Steering Committee, or it may be necessary for the Standing Committee to frame a problem statement. The problem statement should indicate the difficulties or uncertainties that need to be addressed through new or revised policy, procedure, or program. The problem statement should be broadly stated

and should include a context such as existing policy or practice. Problem statements may include solution parameters but should not suggest any specific solutions. Clearly stated problems will lead to better recommendations.

Step #2 -- Preparing a preliminary recommendation: Once the campus community has received the problem statement, committees can begin to collect data needed to make a preliminary recommendation. Committees should receive input from affected individuals and all relevant stakeholder groups prior to making a preliminary recommendation. For issues that have broad implications or that affect a large number of individuals, initial testimony should be solicited from the campus community at large. For some issues, sufficient initial testimony may come from input through committee membership or solicitation from targeted constituent groups. When, in the best judgment of the committee, adequate clarity of the principles contributing to the problem are known, a preliminary recommendation should be drafted and disseminated to the campus community through regular updates and the Governance website. At this point, committees typically receive input or testimony through committee membership, formal testimony, and open comment from affected individuals and all stakeholder groups. Committees must be proactive in inviting stakeholder groups (including Student Government, Staff Senate and Faculty Senate) to provide formal testimony. In cases where testimony results in significant and substantive changes to the preliminary recommendation, the new recommendation will be considered to be in step #2.

Step #3 -- Making a final recommendation: Committees must use sound judgment to give the campus adequate time to review the preliminary recommendation before making their final recommendation. Again, committees are expected to be proactive in receiving feedback on the preliminary recommendation. If a full calendar year has passed since the formal announcement of the preliminary recommendation, the committee must resubmit a preliminary recommendation to the campus community. When, in the best judgment of the committee, the campus community has responded to the proposed resolution of the issue, the committee shall send its final recommendation (with documentation) to the Steering Committee. That final recommendation should include a suggested implementation date. Accompanying the final recommendation shall be a report of how testimony was gathered, the nature of that testimony, and how the Committee responded to that testimony, including a description of how the preliminary recommendation evolved as a result of testimony.

Testimony

The presenting of testimony, prior to both the preliminary and final recommendations, is central to the concept of shared governance. All stakeholder groups will have an opportunity to provide input into governance issues through direct membership as well as invited testimony. Individuals appointed or elected to the governance system are expected to take a broad institutional perspective relative to issues being considered. In contrast, invited testimony will reflect the stakeholder perspective on the issue being considered. Committees are expected to be proactive in inviting stakeholder groups to provide testimony at both steps # 2 and #3 of the process. Committees need to identify stakeholder groups that are interested in each particular issue and invite their testimony at scheduled Committee meetings or hearings. Committees should report in their transmittal memos which groups were targeted as stakeholders, how testimony was invited, the form of the testimony (written, oral, etc.), and the substantive content of the testimony.

To see the Steering Committee’s guidelines for gathering testimony and making a final recommendation, see the “Governance Toolbox” at <http://academicaffairs.pages.tcnj.edu/college-governance/a-governance-toolbox/>