

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Support of Scholarly Activities (SOSA) for Awards in Academic Years 2024-2026

Deadline to [request a SOSA application](#): **SEPTEMBER 25, 2023**

DEADLINE to submit application via FACULTY PROCESS: OCTOBER 2, 2023

The Office of Academic Affairs will notify applicants of award decisions in late January

PROGRAM MISSION AND ENDURING PRINCIPLES

The Support of Scholarly Activities (SOSA) program is designed to promote faculty and librarian scholarship, creative activity, and professional activity of 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 tenure-track faculty members and librarians an alternate assignment within workload, and/or a monetary award, in order to have more time and/or resources to engage in scholarly, creative, and/or professional activities. The SOSA program is designed to support—with equal importance—both new faculty members and librarians who are establishing their agenda for scholarly, creative, and/or professional activity, as well as continuing faculty members and librarians engaged in ongoing scholarly, creative, and/or professional activity.

The SOSA program is a competitive yet inclusive grant program, as it provides faculty members and librarians with support to expand their program of scholarly, creative, and/or professional activity beyond the level that is already expected and included within workload. Successful proposals must be of high quality, innovative, and supported by the candidate's area of expertise, record of accomplishments, and academic goals. Given that SOSA support 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, and/or professional work. The review process is conducted in a fair, transparent, and efficient manner;
2. The proposed narrative describing the scholarly, creative, and/or professional program/project 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 and record of achieving scholarly goals should support the proposed SOSA work and enhance the scholarly culture at the College.

All full-time, tenure-line faculty members and librarians, regardless of tenure status or rank, who began their appointment at TCNJ *prior* to the 2022-2023 academic year are eligible and encouraged to apply for SOSA awards. (Tenure-line faculty and librarians who began their appointment at TCNJ *in* the 2022-23 and 2023-2024 academic years are participants in the New Faculty Support of Scholarship (NFSS) program, and are not eligible to apply for SOSA until their 3rd year.) The teaching or administrative needs of a Program, Department, or School cannot be used to discourage an applicant from applying.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

When submitting a SOSA application, applicants will have the option to indicate whether they choose a) reassigned time of 3 FWH each year for two years, b) a monetary award equivalent to the current overload pay (at the rate in effect when the application is submitted) for an assistant professor for 3 FWH (currently, \$6,015) for each of the two years, or c) a combination of monetary award and reassigned time, specifying the year during which they want to take the reassigned time. Applicants taking monetary awards must submit all reimbursement receipts no later than the December 1 that follows the academic year of their award (e.g, by December 1, 2025 for a AY 2024-2025 monetary award).

Once approved, applicants cannot change from reassigned time to a monetary award. Applicants who have been granted one year of reassigned time and one year of a monetary award cannot typically switch the year during which each type of award is taken.

SOSA has a finite number of awards, and recipients are determined by the SOSA Council, a representative group of faculty and librarians. Applicants who choose to accept a sabbatical or other form of professional leave (e.g., fellowships and visiting appointments) will relinquish their reassigned time or monetary award for the academic year(s) in which they take leave. Applicants who take family or medical leave during the award period should consult with their deans.

Applicants seeking SOSA support for collaborative projects with other TCNJ faculty or librarians who are also seeking SOSA support must each submit separate, individual applications and indicate on the cover page of the application the name of their collaborator(s). Applicants must devote a major portion of the proposal narrative to the specifics of how the project fits with their own scholarly/creative/professional objectives and describe their individual roles and activities in the collaboration. Applicants should not provide identical or nearly identical (verbatim) descriptions of the proposal narrative. All proposals will be evaluated individually.

APPLICATION FORMAT

Each applicant seeking SOSA support [must indicate via this form that they intend to apply for SOSA](#) during the 2023-2025 cycle. **Applicants must do so no later than September 25, 2023**, so that Academic Affairs can create a SOSA application case for the applicant in Faculty Process.

- When your application case is created, the Faculty Process system will email you a notice (within 3 business days of completing the form above) that you have a “case available,” which means you can access and upload your materials to Faculty Process before the October 2, 2023 deadline.
- [Help for using Faculty Process, including video tutorials, is posted on the Academic Affairs website.](#)
- Upload to Faculty Process all materials (proposal narrative and if applicable, SOSA final reports and budget/budget justification – all in pdf format). Complete in Faculty Process the “cover form” that appears at the bottom of the list of candidate requirements **no later than 11:59 pm on October 2, 2023.**
- **Application materials that have not been submitted by the October 2, 2023 deadline via Faculty Process WILL NOT BE REVIEWED.**

NOTE: The applicant’s budget file will NOT be reviewed by the SOSA Council. Should the proposal be recommended for funding, the Office of Academic Affairs will evaluate this document and provide final funding recommendations.

SOSA Final Reports

Faculty/Librarians who have completed a SOSA award within the last 5 years (including faculty/librarians who have received NFSS within their first 3 years at TCNJ) should upload their last two final reports into Faculty Process as part of their applications. (Academic affairs offers [Guidelines for SOSA Post-Award Reports.](#)) Applicants who have not received a SOSA within the last five years do not need to submit SOSA reports. Reports should not be submitted for SOSA awards still in process.

SOSA final reports are submitted **in addition to** a summary of the work in the proposal narrative.

Components of the Proposal Narrative (Description of the Proposed SOSA Project)

The SOSA Council will evaluate each proposal based on the review criteria below, using the *Evaluation Rubric*; 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 Council, which comprises members with broad disciplinary representation.

Requirements of the Proposal Narrative

Faculty/Librarians who have completed a SOSA award within the last 5 years (including faculty/librarians who have received NFSS within their first 3 years at TCNJ) should answer all 5 questions below. Those who have not received SOSA within the last 5 years or are only half-way through an award should answer the first 4 questions only.

- Applicants must answer the questions in order and **each question must be labeled explicitly** (i.e. “*Question 1*”, “*Question 2*”, etc. You need not copy and paste the question text into your proposal).
- Use 12 pt. Times New Roman font with 1 in. margins for all elements of the proposal, **including tables and figures.**
- Applicants are limited to three single-spaced pages for questions 1 through 4. Applicants who completed a SOSA in the past 5 years are granted an additional page to answer question 5. Pages 1 through 3 should address the first four questions. Page 4 should address the last two SOSA awards completed within the past five years.
- **Any elements of the proposal that do not adhere to the requirements of the RFP will not be reviewed by the SOSA committee.**

Questions

Question 1. Describe the specific *goal(s)* of the proposed scholarly or creative work. Explain the *question(s)* you are trying to answer and/or the *gap(s) in knowledge* you seek to address. Within your response, please explain the rationale for your work and why achieving this goal, answering this question, and/or filling this gap in knowledge would be impactful *within your scholarly field*.

Question 2. How would achieving the proposed scholarly/creative goal, answering the scholarly question, and/or filling the gap in knowledge *advance your scholarly or creative program*? While specific examples will vary by discipline, the description should focus solely on how the scholarly or creative work fits into and extends a cohesive research/scholarly agenda. You may choose to reference related work you have already completed or contextualize how the proposed work is part of a longer-term project.

Question 3. How will you go about achieving the proposed scholarly/creative goal, answering the scholarly question, and/or filling the gap in knowledge? Technical details specific to your scholarly discipline should be kept to a minimum, since your proposal must be understood by reviewers from other disciplines, but you should make it clear that a *well-structured plan, appropriate for the two-year duration of the award*, is in place. Do this by briefly describing any related actions you may have already taken (e.g., securing research sites, developing methodologies and protocols, contacting publishers, as appropriate to your field) and showing that you have thought through the specific steps involved in completing and disseminating your work. It may be beneficial to provide time estimates for particular activities to assist the reader in understanding the scope of the work.

Faculty and librarians applying for monetary grants need not provide a detailed budget justification in the proposal narrative, but should show the basic purpose of the monetary award.

Question 4. What are the expected *tangible scholarly or creative outcomes* of the proposed work? Place these expected outcomes within the context of the disciplinary standards for your department to assist the reviewers in understanding the value of these outcomes in your field. This may be especially helpful if your proposed outcomes are subsets of a longer-term project. If your tangible

scholarly or creative outcomes span multiple disciplines, refer to each applicable set of disciplinary standards. To provide specificity, you are encouraged to:

- identify the audience(s) for your work,
- provide estimates of the quantity of written products or the progress of the long-term project (e.g., word counts in fields where this is applicable, number of book chapters completed, the total number of published articles, reports, conference presentations, etc.), or
- name specific venues for dissemination, highlighting those used previously and whether they are local, national, or international.

Question 5. {Applicants who have completed a SOSA award within the past 5 years only.} For SOSA awards within the past 5 years, list the specific outcomes proposed and provide *evidence* documenting the extent to which these outcomes have been met. For products still in progress or under review, identify their stage in the writing or review process (e.g., completed draft, initial submission, revised and resubmitted, accepted pending minor revisions). If outcomes have not been met or your scholarly or creative goals have changed, explain why they have not been met and what has been accomplished in their place.

SCORING

Each question will be scored on a scale of 1–10 (very weak to outstanding), with all questions weighted equally. A detailed scoring rubric is included below.

- The final score will be determined as the *average of points* for questions 1–5 for faculty who have received SOSA within the last 5 years, and of questions 1–4 for those who have not.
- To ensure transparency in scoring, applicants will be provided a z-score for each of the 5 questions (or 4 questions for faculty/librarians who have not received SOSA in the past 5 years).

EVALUATION RUBRIC FOR SOSA APPLICATIONS

Applicant's Name _____

Items completed in accordance with SOSA RFP:

Chair & Dean Notified <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	SOSA Final Reports <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA	Budget <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA	Appropriate format? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
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Proposal Assessment: Scores range from Very Weak (1) to Outstanding (10)

Criterion	Score
<p>1. Convincing Rationale Applicant presents a logical and focused rationale for the project that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Context/background for the proposed activities that is accessible to non-experts ● Specific goals or objectives for the proposed activities ● Unanswered questions or gaps in knowledge within the applicant's field ● Clear connections between the proposed activities and the questions or gaps ● A reasonable estimation of impact within the field 	
<p>2. Advancement of Scholarly or Creative Agenda The applicant presents a strong case that the proposed activities will further their scholarly agenda or creative program by providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A clear description of the applicant's long-term goals and intended impact of the overall scholarly/creative program in language accessible to persons outside the applicant's field ● A summary of current and/or prior work by the applicant that is relevant to the long-term goals. ● An explanation of how the proposed activities fit within and extend the applicant's scholarly/creative agenda 	
<p>3. Detailed Plan The applicant's plan indicates that the project is substantive and can be reasonably completed within the timeframe of the SOSA award by outlining in accessible language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Any actions taken prior to SOSA to ensure the applicant will be prepared to begin the project upon receipt of the award ● A clear description of workflow that will ensure completion of the proposed work within the two-year duration of the award ● Timelines and/or descriptions that clearly indicate the project will require substantial time and/or resources ● The timing of monetary awards (for those requesting monetary grants) 	

<p>4. Expected Tangible Scholarly Outcomes The applicant lists substantive scholarly or creative outcomes as appropriate for the award period <u>and the discipline.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proposed outcomes are tangible and specific ● The value of the proposed outcomes is supported by language from relevant disciplinary standards 	
<p>5. Prior SOSA Outcomes Met (if applicable) The applicant provides evidence that the goals and outcomes of prior SOSA awards from the past 5 years have been achieved. Evidence includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A comparison showing alignment between proposed and realized outcomes ● Justification for any outcomes not met that includes (a) substantive progress toward the original goals, or (b) if an applicant's scholarly or creative direction has shifted, substitute goals and outcomes that are reasonably equivalent to those originally proposed 	

Scoring

SOSA received within the last 5 years

No SOSA within the last 5 years

Average of Q1–5: _____

Average of Q1–4: _____