



## Research, Creative Activity and Professional Development

1. College Seed Grants
  - a. Program Description
    - i. Internal funds are available from the College of Journalism and Mass Communications to support research, scholarship and creative activities through biannual competitions.
    - ii. These funds will provide seed money for projects that will enhance the grantee's ability to obtain external funding to support prominent scholarly work or creative activity. Priority will be given to eligible faculty who propose projects of high promise and who make a compelling case that this funding is critical to their success. The College of Journalism and Mass Communications will award these grants based upon the merits of the project and the availability of funds. All full-time faculty (professors, lecturers, and professors of practice), regardless of rank, are eligible to apply for a seed grant.
  - b. Program Objective
    - i. The seed grant program is designed to enable faculty to begin or extend projects that are likely to:
      1. Lead to peer-reviewed publication
      2. Lead to national or international presentation or exhibition
      3. Lead to measurable enhanced student learning outcomes or curriculum innovation
      4. Lead to grant funding or in-kind support from outside CoJMC
  - c. Limitations
    - i. Funding is limited. Applications are limited to a maximum request of \$5,000. However, applications less than \$2,000 are more likely to be funded. Projects that are well thought out, reasonable in their size and scope, provide a detailed budget, provide a detailed plan to pursue external funding, and are likely to result in peer-reviewed publications or national/international presentations or exhibitions or enhanced curricular innovation are more likely to be supported.
    - ii. Funds will be awarded based on the deadlines below. Faculty members are limited to two applications per academic year and faculty may not apply for a second seed grant, while still having unspent funds from a prior seed grant. Awards will be limited by available funding and applications may not be funded or may only be partially funded. Not all applications will be funded. Funds will not be awarded for work already completed.
  - d. Allowable and Unallowable Costs
    - i. All projects must comply with all University of Nebraska-Lincoln research policies, including policies related to human and animal subjects. Questions related to UNL's research policies should be directed to the Office of Research Responsibility.

- ii. The College of Journalism and Mass Communications will abide by all UNL purchasing and expenditure policies. All purchases must be pre-approved according to the established college process.
  - iii. Funds cannot be used to support, replace or supplement faculty salaries or faculty course buyouts.
- e. Award Criteria
  - i. The following will be considered when making funding selections:
    1. Significance of the project or program proposed
    2. Relationship of the project to the college's strategic priorities
    3. Number of awards or other college allocations previously received by the applicant, including prior seed grants
    4. Expected and measurable outcomes of peer-reviewed publication, national or international presentation or exhibition, enhanced student learning, or curriculum innovation
    5. Complete justification of all expenses
    6. Other sources of funding
  - ii. Preference will be given to:
    1. Applications that have a detailed plan to pursue external funding
    2. Applicants who do not have other college funding allocations, including endowed professorships
- f. Application Process
  - i. Funding Proposals should include:
    1. 250-word abstract
    2. Proposal Document: (3 page maximum). Please include sufficient detail to convince reviewers of the project's scholarly merit and relevance
      - a. Introduction
      - b. Clear Project Aim (research question or planned outcome)
      - c. Situate the project in existing literature (significance of project)
      - d. Short term-objectives and description of how the project fits into the applicant's long-term plan for scholarship, pedagogy or promotion
      - e. Explanation of how the project fits with the applicant's previous/other research.
    3. Proposal Plan:
      - a. Describe data/information sources, method of analysis, and expectations regarding outcomes.
      - b. Clearly identify specific activities to be conducted and how these activities will enhance the applicant's future research and scholarship.
      - c. Describe what the funds will accomplish that cannot be achieved through other means.
    4. Timeline: What is the timeline for project?
    5. Identify potential external funding opportunities (program and funding agency), submission deadlines and submission timeline, if applicable.
    6. List of Key Personnel: Include a 250-word biographical summary for all faculty not in the College of Journalism and Mass Communications.

7. Current & Pending Support: List all funded and pending internal (university) or external grants for PI, including title, award amount, funding period and fund agency. Include a summary of all previous funding from the College of Journalism and Mass Communications in the last five years.
  8. Include a budget (1-page maximum) and budget justification (1-page maximum).
  9. Include a current copy of the applicant's CV/resume
- g. Awards
- i. The college's executive committee will consider applications. Those applications that are funded will receive a cost object for their project or program. All expenses associated with the project should be charged to the given cost object. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that expended funds do not exceed the awarded amount.
- h. Report
- i. Applicants who receive funding are required to submit a report (1-page maximum) and deliver a public presentation on the results or status of their project within 90 days of the funding end date. The report should detail how well the project met the stated goals and objectives.
2. Research Awards Program
- a. The Research and Extramural Funding Awards program is designed to use salary release dollars from extramural grants to reward and encourage extramural funding procurement and publication of research results. In addition to advancing the industries we serve and our mission as a Carnegie Research 1 institution, extramural funding provides revenue to support facilities and administration. The Research and Extramural Funding Awards program is being established to encourage activities that will increase this source of revenue by incentivizing grant procurement, research publications, and new grant proposals.
  - b. CoJMC provides three distinct mechanisms for rewarding faculty under the auspices of the Research and Extramural Funding Awards program.
    - i. First, 2.5% of the faculty salary funds (2.5% of the salary release dollars contributed by each investigator) bought out with external grants or contracts will be spent by the College to fund internal grants to support research and creative activity.
    - ii. Second, 50% of the remaining funds available (i.e., 5% of the salary release dollars contributed by each investigator) will be returned to investigators who secured those funds as non-recurring salary for the hard work done and for the prestige and resources brought to the College.
    - iii. Third, 50% of the remaining funds available will be allocated to reward activities that increase research program prestige and productivity.
  - c. The College allocates this third set of funds as follows:
    - i. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the remaining funds will be allocated to faculty who receive acceptance either of first-authored articles in top-tier research journals in journalism or communication (not teaching journals) or original scholarly books (not textbooks or the compilation of others' work in edited books). A scholarly book of original journalism or communication research will be considered the equivalent of three journal articles. This total pool of funds will be divided by the

number of such acceptances by all faculty in the college in the period January 1 of the preceding academic year to December 31 of the current academic year (the award year). (For example, if there were a total of seven such acceptances for research journal articles and one scholarly book in the College during this period and the available funds were \$2,000, then each first author of a research journal article accepted would receive \$200 and the first author of the book would receive \$600). Each faculty member will receive a non-recurring increase in their salary of that amount for each acceptance. The maximum amount awarded per acceptance, however, no matter the total funds available, will be \$1,000 for a journal article or \$2,000 for a scholarly book.

- ii. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the remaining funds will be allocated to faculty who submit a new grant proposal or competitive renewal proposal as a principal investigator (with a minimum of \$50K in direct costs from an extramural source) for the first submission, between January 1 and December 31. As in item 1 above, this pool will be divided by the number of such submissions, and each faculty member will receive a non-recurring salary increase of that amount for each submitted proposal. The maximum amount awarded per submission, however, no matter the total available funds in this category, will be \$1,000.
- iii. List of research journals for publication awards:
  1. Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly
  2. Journalism and Communication Monographs
  3. Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media
  4. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication
  5. Communication Methods and Measures
  6. Journal of Communication Inquiry
  7. International Communication Research
  8. Journal Communication Law and Policy
  9. Mass Communication and Society
  10. Journal of Media Ethics Communication, Culture & Critique
  11. Communication Monographs
  12. Communication Research
  13. Communication Theory
  14. Journal of Communication
  15. Annals of the Association (Communication Yearbook) Journalism
  16. Journalism Studies
  17. Journalism History C
  18. Community Journalism
  19. Digital Journalism
  20. Electronic News
  21. Newspaper Research Journal
  22. Visual Communication Quarterly
  23. New Media and Society
  24. Social Media and Society
  25. Human Communication Research
  26. Journal of Applied Communication Research
  27. Health Communication
  28. Journal of Health Communication

29. Journal of Advertising
30. International Journal of Advertising
31. Journal of Advertising Research
32. Public Relations Review
33. Journal of Public Relations Research
34. Management Communication Quarterly
35. Journal of Sports Media
36. Communication and Sport
37. International Journal of Sport Communication
38. Plus any journal with an impact factor of 2 or above.

### 3. Course Buyout

#### a. Course Buyout

- i. The College of Journalism and Mass Communications will allow faculty members to buyout one class per year provided she/he meets the necessary criteria.
- ii. The primary concern that must be addressed when a faculty member applies for teaching buyout is the need to maintain a high-quality educational program at the College of Journalism and Mass Communications. It is also important that teaching buyouts be consistent with college policies and that guidelines for granting buyout be consistently applied across the college. Further, the process should be transparent in that the faculty members utilizing a buyout and the rate of each buyout are disclosed to the entire college.

#### b. Criteria for Consideration

- i. Buyouts are intended to provide release time for faculty with research commitments and external funding. The extent of a faculty member's research commitment and external funding will be considered when buyout requests are evaluated
- ii. Buyouts are intended to benefit the College by enhancing research productivity without adversely affecting teaching.
- iii. The cost of a buyout of a single course will be 12.5% of a faculty member's academic year salary.
- iv. If the cost of hiring an adjunct to teach the affected course is greater than 12.5% of the faculty member's academic year salary, the Dean may request a higher buyout amount.
- v. Adjuncts must be capable of providing a high quality of instruction. The Associate Dean will seek input from faculty within the affected program regarding the best available instructor, including individuals outside of those nominated in the request for a buyout. The final decision regarding selection of a lecturer will rest with the Dean. The decision will be based upon the Dean's evaluation of which of the possible candidates will provide the best educational program for the students. It is important to note that faculty buyout is a privilege that may not be available due to a shortage of qualified lecturers.

#### c. Process to Request a Buyout

- i. CoJMC Faculty interested in a course buyout must formally request the buyout in writing. The request must be submitted 90 days before the beginning of a semester to the appropriate associate dean in order to allow maximum flexibility in determining the appropriateness of the request and adjusting teaching assignments to maintain educational quality. If the associate dean approves of

the request, they will forward to the dean for final approval. The written request for buyout must include the following information:

- ii. The number and name of the course(s) to be bought out.
- iii. An explanation of the purpose of the buyout that identifies faculty member's intended use of the additional time and how the buyout will benefit the college.
- iv. Identification of the source of the buyout funds.
- v. The significance of the faculty member's research and external funding during the semester for which the buyout is requested.
- vi. Identification of possible adjuncts that can teach the class. The candidate's resume and a summary of his/her teaching and professional experience should also be provided. Finally, the candidate's relationship to the faculty proposing the buyout should be clearly explained, including potential conflicts of interest.

d. Other limitations on faculty buyout include:

- i. Even when someone buys out of a class during the year, course buyout is not the equivalent of faculty development leave or a leave of absence. Faculty are expected to continue to work with students, supervise graduate students and fulfill college service requirements.
- ii. The Chancellor's Faculty Residency Policy must continue to be observed. This policy states that faculty members are expected to be present on campus in order to hold office hours, teach, and advise students. (Faculty Residency Policy).
- iii. UNL's policy on outside employment must continue to be observed. This policy requires that any outside employment requiring more than two days a month must be approved by the board of regents. (Outside Activity Policy).
- iv. UNL's travel policy requires faculty to notify the Dean any time they are away from campus during their academic appointment, including both business and personal travel. Faculty must also notify the dean when they are participating in business-related travel at times not during their appointment (i.e. summer). When travel is funded by the university faculty must obtain approval of a memo of absence and a pre-travel authorization in Firefly. When travel is funded through other means or is personal in nature, approval of a memorandum of absence must be obtained. This policy must continue to be observed during all course buyout situations.

4. Faculty Development Leave

a. Eligibility

- i. After six years in rank, faculty members are eligible to apply for a Faculty Development Leave (FDL) to pursue a research project, a pedagogical research project, or professional development opportunity with approval from the CoJMC Executive Committee and Dean: <https://executivevc.unl.edu/faculty/evaluation-recognition/development-fellowships>

b. Goal

- i. The goal for the leave should be consistent with the faculty member's apportionment. Faculty with a high apportionment in research (20% or more) should use the FDL for research; faculty with a high apportionment in teaching may use the FDL for pedagogical research or professional development. The first step is to discuss feasibility with the associate dean of research and faculty affairs. If multiple faculty members hope to take FDLs in a specific year or the person who would have covered your course is unavailable, you may have to

delay your request for an FDL. It is unlikely that more than one FDL will be granted within the same semester.

- c. Timeline
  - i. CoJMC starts to plan the teaching schedules one year in advance (e.g., in September or October 2023 for AY2024-25), so it is best to inform the associate dean in early fall if you hope to take an FDL anytime during the following academic year. Thus, please plan to discuss the proposal at least one calendar year prior to your expected leave time. Formal college application deadlines for submitting your FDL proposal to the college are August 31 for the following fall and January 31 for the following spring. Informal discussion with the associate dean and proposal drafts should be held before the formal application process is completed to ensure the best outcomes for success.
- d. Apportionment
  - i. Within the application, the candidate should list current apportionment and proposed apportionment during the FDL; the apportionment proposed during the FDL will serve as the basis for the annual review that includes the FDL. For tenured faculty, apportionment is typically 100% research during a one-semester FDL; the candidate is released from teaching and service duties at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and may not teach elsewhere for salary.
  - ii. Apportionment for professors of practice could vary during FDL, but generally will remain 80- 100% teaching, depending up on the project. The assumption is that during FDL, faculty are released from all other duties, aside from those in the FDL.
- e. Pre-approval Process
  - i. Leaves must be pre-approved by the Executive Vice Chancellor (EVC) Office before moving to the President's Office. The process is as follows:
  - ii. Discuss the feasibility with the Associate Dean of Research and Faculty Affairs. Draft your proposal and request feedback in advance before the deadline (see dates above).
  - iii. Complete the online form and submit a full proposal to the college.
  - iv. Once application is completed, the proposal will go to the CoJMC Executive Committee for review, generally during the September and February meetings.
  - v. If approved at the college level, the full proposal is routed to the EVC Office. Final approval is then provided at the UNL President's office.
- f. Criteria for CoJMC Evaluation
  - i. The CoJMC Executive Committee will evaluate the proposals based on the following criteria:
    - 1. Quality of FDL Proposal
      - a. The quality of the FDL research proposal is the most significant factor in evaluating applications. The proposal should have a clear, logical, well-developed plan for completion or incorporation and be limited to two pages, excluding references and other supporting details. The various categories of proposals that will be considered are provided below.
    - 2. Research/Creative Activity
      - a. Research projects would involve faculty members pursuing scholarly or creative work in their fields. The proposal should highlight how the project is related to the faculty member's prior

research and its expected contribution to their professional development. Specific timelines will be required to reflect a full-time commitment to the FDL activities, as will specification of expected outlet(s). For example, a book project could include a book contract or timeline for production and a documentary might include a script outline or production schedule.

3. Pedagogical
  - a. Pedagogical projects would involve activities such as writing a textbook, development of substantive and publishable teaching cases, software, and other related instructional material. It could also involve professional development, such as an immersion in an ADPR agency or newsroom for a term, with the inclusion of a project that could stem from that immersion. The proposal should provide details of the proposed project, its potential for adoption both in the faculty member's classes as well as by other faculty in the academy, the expected contribution to student learning, and the potential market for the output. Specific timelines will be required, as will the specification of expected publication outlet(s). Project examples include a curriculum assessment plan or a new course development.
4. Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of:
  - a. Clarity of the proposal in terms of providing a clear sense of the research questions being addressed, the expected contribution to the field, and its significant role in facilitating the professional development of the faculty member. In the case of pedagogical proposals, a clear, logical link should be established to the faculty member's teaching interests and expected student learning.
  - b. Rigor/thoroughness of proposal. The proposals should be rigorous and thorough in terms of providing specifics regarding methodology, measurements or assessment. The outcomes should be sufficiently detailed to allow the merits of the proposal to be evaluated.
  - c. Likelihood of completion and publication. The proposals will be evaluated on the likelihood that the faculty member will be able to complete the project within the proposed time frame.
5. Outcome of Previous FDL Grant (if applicable)
  - a. Applications must include a brief report of the outcome of previous FDL grant. Faculty members should provide a brief statement as to how their prior FDL project contributed to the knowledge in their discipline and added value to their professional development as a university professor.
6. Research and/or teaching productivity during most recent five-year period
  - a. Faculty should provide a brief summary of their research or teaching productivity over the past five years in terms of refereed journal articles, books, book chapters, other intellectual



contributions and presentations at professional conferences. For professors of practice, this likely will include general teaching experience and instructional accolades. A discussion on how the current FDL project relates to the faculty members' expertise should be provided.

7. Reporting Requirements:

- a. Per university requirements, upon return from the FDL leave, a faculty member must submit a written report to the dean of his/her college. Generally, CoJMC would like to have the faculty member present a public seminar on the results of their FDL project open to the faculty and students of the university within the academic year in which the faculty member returns.

5. Faculty Travel Funding

a. Travel Funding

- i. The college provides resources to support faculty travel in support of the teaching, research and service missions of the college.

b. Funding Limitations

- i. It is expected that faculty with assigned discretionary funding will utilize that funding to support their travel. This may include start-up funding, professorship funding or other professional development or support funds. If faculty exhaust their start-up, professional development or support funds, they may apply for funding through the Seacrest travel grant program.
- ii. Faculty with discretionary funding from professorships are ineligible to apply for funding through the Seacrest Grant program.

c. Seacrest Grant Program

- i. Qualifying faculty may apply for travel funding through the Seacrest Travel grant program. Qualifying faculty are those who hold a full-time position in the college, include tenured, tenure-track, professors of practice and lecturers, and who are not otherwise limited by the provisions above.
- ii. Faculty may apply for Seacrest travel funds by completing the memorandum of absence. Awards will be limited to \$1,500 for faculty who are presenting a paper or poster, moderating or presenting on a panel, or serving in a leadership role at a conference or other event. Documentation of activity is required to receive funding.
- iii. Faculty are limited to one award per fiscal year.
- iv. Funding will be based on the availability of funds.
- v. Seacrest grant funds cannot be used to support student travel expenses.

6. Staff Professional Development Policy

- a. The college's strategic plan underscores the necessity of establishing a culture of life-long learning and professional development and in Aim 7, Strategy 6, the plan specifies establishing an internal grant program to support continuing education and professional development for all employees. The Staff Development Committee has deliberated on this initiative during the 2023-2024 academic year and is pleased to present the proposed structure aimed at providing staff in the College of Journalism and Mass Communications a pathway for submitting requests for funding a personal, professional development

- experience and a pathway for providing funding for collegewide staff professional development programming.
- b. Staff Professional Development Funds:
    - i. The college will set aside \$10,000 annually to fund staff professional development opportunities. Below is a breakdown of how the funding dollars would be divided, an outline of the process for staff to request personal funding, and the evaluation process for awarding personal funding requests.
  - c. Staff Professional Development Funds Breakdown:
    - i. Total allocation of \$10,000
    - ii. \$6500 for personal professional development
    - iii. \$500 available for each staff member (application process)
    - iv. \$3500 for programming for all staff
      - 1. Staff retreat
      - 2. Lunch & Learn
      - 3. Other programming needs
  - d. Application Process for Personal PD Funds:
    - i. Requesting staff member completes [request form](#).
  - e. Evaluation of Request for Personal PD Funds:
    - i. Request for funding is received by the Director of Business & Operations
    - ii. Review panel is assembled by Director of Business & Operations and will include:
      - 1. Chair - Director Business & Operations Manager
      - 2. One member of the Staff Development Subcommittee
      - 3. Faculty Representative to Staff Council or the Associate Dean for Academic Programs
    - iii. Materials related to the request are shared with the three-member review panel
    - iv. The review panel will use this rubric to evaluate the request
      - 1. Directions: After reviewing the staff member's request, each committee member will fill out the rubric below to determine the benefit to the college, cost considerations, and career progression of the requested professional development. In addition to marking your score for each factor, please provide a short reason for your ranking for documentation and decision-making purposes.
      - 2. The maximum point allocation will be 9 per reviewer. The minimum point allocation will be 3 per reviewer. To be approved, the combined score from the committee (3 members) will need to be at least 15 (subject to change).
    - v. The staff member requesting funding will be notified via email if the funding request was approved or denied.

## Adoption

The policy on college seed grants was approved on December 8, 2022. The policy on the research awards was approved on March 11, 2022. The policy on course buyouts was approved on October 23, 2015. The

policy on faculty development leave was approved on November 4, 2022. The policy on faculty travel funding was approved on May 12, 2022. The Staff Professional Development Policy was approved on Sept. 13, 2024.