

PROFESSIONAL ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

Section 1. Scope of this Article. This article addresses three categories of “Professional Enrichment” that enable NFA-CSN bargaining unit members to advance their educational qualifications in pursuit of a higher salary grade, to fulfill workload requirements for maintaining currency in their academic disciplines and updating occupationally relevant skills vital to CSN’s educational mission, and to enrich their professional effectiveness through sustained engagement in planned projects of personal interest that also benefit the college. CSN Administration agrees to support bargaining unit members’ participation in Salary Advancement, Professional Development, and Sabbatical Leave by funding and/or administering these programs under the terms of this Article. This Article’s language shall not be construed as limiting or obstructing any new or additional opportunities for bargaining members’ professional enrichment which may be created during the time period covered by this Agreement.

Section 2. Salary Advancement. The Professional Advancement Program enabling bargaining unit members to attain a higher level of compensation through completion of advanced degree programs, graduate level course work, and/or occupationally related course work shall continue as articulated by NSHE Code Title 4, Chapter 3, Section 38; NSHE Procedures and Guidelines Manual Chapter 3, Section 3; and existing CSN practices included in this Article.

(a) Bargaining unit members inform their department chair and dean of their intent to seek Professional Advancement. With these supervisors’ approval and before beginning a degree program or credit courses, bargaining unit members make formal application to the Faculty Senate’s standing Professional Advancement Committee. Bargaining unit members may use Grant-in-Aid to pay for approved course work completed at any NSHE institution. Bargaining unit members provide official transcripts to verify academic degree and credit course completion.

(b) Bargaining unit members seeking recognition of occupationally related course work must submit their applications to the PAC within one year of course completion. Bargaining unit members must document attendance (contact hours) to verify completion of occupationally related courses. As noted in NSHE Procedures and Guidelines Manual Chapter 3, fifteen (15) contact hours shall be equivalent to one academic credit hour. Within 60 calendar days of the ratification of this Agreement, bargaining unit members who have submitted occupationally related course contact hours, but who have not yet achieved advancement to a higher salary range, shall be provided an accurate accounting of total contact hours recorded to date, their academic credit hour equivalent, and the balance(s) needed to obtain future salary advancement. Accounting errors shall be corrected without restriction by the one-year time limit specified in **Section 2 (b)** above, pending a bargaining member’s provision of evidence for contact hours completed and recognized by the PAC but not credited to his/her personnel record. Annually thereafter, bargaining unit members pursuing occupationally related continuing education shall receive updated reports of their progress toward salary advancement.

(c) Within 60 calendar days of the ratification of this Agreement, the PAC shall publish its criteria and procedures for evaluating bargaining unit members’ applications pursuant to subsections (a) and (b) of this **Section 2**; any changes to the application evaluation process shall be published within 30 calendar days. Applications screened and approved by the PAC are forwarded to the VPAA for final approval or denial. Approvals for salary

grade advancement are finalized by Human Resources; salary grade advancement is implemented with the next fiscal year's employment contract unless an exception is approved by the CSN President.

(d) Applications denied at any step in the process result in denial justification being sent to the bargaining unit member who applied and who may appeal and grieve the denial.

(e) Accurate records for all bargaining unit members seeking salary advancement shall be maintained by Human Resources.

Section 3. Professional Development. Bargaining unit members exercise discretion in devising, scheduling, and completing individualized professional development that meets workload expectations and professional enrichment needs through participation in conferences, meetings, seminars, workshops, discipline-related groups and organizations, independent study and research, publishing and creative work, public speaking and community education, etc.

(a) Bargaining unit members on "A" contracts shall have the cooperation of their supervisors in setting aside from normal duties up to five (5) hours each work week for the purposes of the members' professional development.

(b) CSN Administration shall maintain funds sufficient to reimburse travel expenses incurred by bargaining unit members who complete professional development activities pre-approved by the Faculty Senate Travel Committee and the VPAA. In the event that any fiscal year's travel fund is depleted before that year's end, the funding allocation for bargaining unit members' professional development travel shall be increased for the following fiscal year.

(c) CSN Administration shall earmark funding sufficient to provide financial or release time incentives to bargaining unit members whose professional development activities support critical areas of the College's mission through new or master course creation, course and program reviews and certifications, institutional accreditation, etc.

Section 4. Sabbatical Leave. Sabbatical Leave allocations to CSN; sabbatical eligibility, application, and selection procedures; and all other aspects of this program's implementation and administration as articulated in NSHE Code Title 4, Chapter 3, Section 14, and in CSN's "Sabbatical Leave" policy (effective date 9/22/11) shall continue, as clarified here.

(a) In the event that sabbatical leave opportunities may be limited or cancelled, CSN Administration shall communicate its decision and rationale to NFA-CSN in advance.

(b) In the event that VPAA's sabbatical approval recommendations to the CSN President deviate from a priority order set by the Faculty Senate's Sabbatical Leave Committee, the VPAA shall so inform that Committee's chairperson in advance.

(c) In the event that a bargaining unit member's application for sabbatical leave is denied, written justification of the decision shall be provided at the bargaining unit member's request.