

DATE: August 3, 2015
TO: SSD Faculty and Administrative Staff
FROM: Scott VanderStoep
SUBJECT: Professional Travel Requests

It's time for the annual travel memo from the Dean's office. This is a long memo, but I hope you find it informative as you plan your professional travel.

Some of you have already submitted absence forms for the 2015-16 year. If you know your travel plans for this year and have not already submitted an absence form, please do so by **Friday, October 30**. The division does not have enough money to fund every faculty member to attend a conference. So we ask that you plan ahead; if you want to attend a conference any time this academic year, it is best to submit now. We will, of course, accept requests after October 30, but approval will be based on availability of funds.

Before you Travel: I know that expenses related to conferences are high. I find conference registration and lodging rates to be especially painful. I also recognize that the college's travel budget usually does not cover the entire expense. The division received an increase this year, but I suspect we will fall short again. For those who contribute personal resources to attend conferences, I am grateful for your commitment to your professional development.

The axioms related to conference travel are as follows:

1. The maximum allowed for faculty and staff who will present a paper at a conference in 2015-16 is \$800. Faculty attending conferences at which they will not be presenting are eligible for a maximum of \$600, pending availability of resources.
2. Priority in funding shall be given to: (a) pre-tenure faculty, (b) faculty taking students to conferences, and (c) faculty presenting papers. Tenured faculty who wish to attend a conference where they will not be presenting may apply, but their requests will be given lower priority and may only be approved after those in categories (a), (b), and (c) have been considered.
3. Faculty are strongly urged to include funds to attend conferences as part of their research grant proposals to federal agencies, foundations, and other extramural funding sources.
4. Faculty wishing to take students to conferences should consult the chairperson and me early in the planning stage; funding for this should come from at least three sources – the department, the students, and my office.

Absence Forms: Absence forms are required for professional travel any time during the calendar year, even if you're not submitting a request for money. Absence forms are also required for any absence from the college during the academic year during normal work hours, even for personal reasons. For example, completing an absence form would be appropriate if you are attending an out-of-town family event on a weekday during the school year.

Please check “I do request funding of expenses” and itemize your expenses on your absence form, even if some or all of your funding is coming from a source other than the Dean’s budget (e.g., grant). Include the account number in the designated box on the absence form if monies are coming from another Hope source. Most importantly, please be sure to get your chair to sign the form before submitting. If you have been approved for professional travel and decide not to attend, please let us know so we can allocate that money to another faculty member.

While you Travel: Please use your college credit card whenever possible for travel-related expenses. *Make sure to submit all your receipts to your department office manager.* Office managers will be responsible for forwarding your reimbursement form or credit card statement to Business Services or our office. Expenses will be paid *only with itemized receipts*. This mistake happens mostly with meals. If you pay for a meal with your college credit card, make sure to ask the server for both the card *and* the itemized receipt. Remember that alcohol *cannot* be charged to college cards. Ask your server to put food on one bill and alcohol on another.

Please read the “Hope College Travel and Entertainment Expense Policy” (http://www.hope.edu/admin/business/policies/travel_policy.pdf) document for additional information on business-related travel issues.

After you Travel: When you return from a trip and submit your request for reimbursement, please remember that payment will be made only for the approved amount. If the trip was more expensive than you anticipated, you will need to pay the difference by writing a check to Hope College for the difference. Charging items to your college credit card is the best way to minimize the need for reimbursement. If you are driving to a conference, please consider renting a college car. It is usually less expensive than mileage reimbursement.

For those who stuck with me, thank you for reading this entire memo. You may want to refer back to it as your travel date draws near. Enjoy the rest of your summer.