

Committee for Faculty Excellence Annual Report 2016-2017  
(as of April 28, 2017)

As of April 28, 2017, the Committee for Faculty Excellence (CFE) had approved over 122 Teaching and Productive Scholarships (TAPS) grant requests from over 90 different faculty members. The CFE also reviewed and ranked five sabbatical proposals and reviewed six portfolios from candidates for the Annual Award for Excellence in Service. In spring 2017 the CFE reviewed five portfolios for the Annual Award for Faculty Excellence Scholarly and/or Creative Pursuits.

**1. TAPS AWARDS.** Starting with a TAPS (Teaching and Productive Scholarship) budget of \$157,000, the committee made 122 TAPS grant awards through April 28 of FY 2016-2017, totaling \$144,039.41. This is an average award of approximately \$1,180, with approximately \$118,000 awarded to support domestic travel (including Canada), \$20,000 to support international travel, and \$5,070 awarded for equipment and other research support. 107 of the awards supported domestic travel, 11 supported international travel, and four funded research equipment and services. Based on the applications under review as of April 28, 2017, it seems highly likely that the CFE will expend its entire TAPS budget by the end of FY 2016-2017.

The SharePoint-based electronic application process adopted by the committee in 2014-2015 allowed the committee to process TAPS applications typically within 7-10 days during the regular semester and within two weeks over breaks.

As noted in previous CFE reports, the rising demand for TAPS awards – reflecting a trend that has developed over the last several years – demonstrates the critical importance of TAPS support for faculty. TAPS has emerged as the single most important source of faculty development funding on campus and we are very pleased to note the SVCAA’s highly proactive role in supporting the committee by the allocation of \$157,000 for FY 2016-2107.

In FY 2016-2017, the CFE set the eligible amount for domestic grants at \$1,750, with a \$2,000 grant limit to support international travel. The CFE re-visited these amounts in December, 2016, and chose to increase the limits to \$2,000 for domestic travel and \$2,500 for international travel. The increase was intended to encourage faculty to pursue additional opportunities for scholarly production. For 2017-2018, the CFE elected to return to the \$1,750 and \$2,000 limits for the beginning of the fiscal year,

**2. SABBATICAL PROPOSALS.** In fall 2016, the CFE received, reviewed and met to rank five sabbatical proposals for FY 2016-2017. All of these were approved and funded by the office of the SVCAA.

**3. SERVICE AWARD.** In fall 2016 the committee reviewed six portfolios from candidates for the second Annual Award for Excellence in Service and selected Dr. June Carter for the honor and the \$1000 award.

**4. SCHOLARSHIP/CREATIVE ACTIVITIES AWARD.** In spring 2017 the committee reviewed five portfolios for the Annual Award for Faculty Excellence Scholarly and/or Creative Pursuits. The committee selected Dr. Melissa Pilgrim as the award winner and she received a \$1000 prize.

Committee members in 2016-2017 included Stephen Bismarck, Jack Cheng, David Damrel (past chair), Felicia Jenkins, Colleen O'Brien, Andrew Kearns, Lynn McMillan, Calvin Odhiambo (current chair), Anselm Omoike, Amy Connolly, Amanda Schwartz and Matthew Donaldson. Due to the difficulties of convening a 12-member group, the committee has developed a practice that combines face-to-face meetings with electronic participation and consultation through SharePoint and BlackBoard.

Service on this committee ensures that significant faculty development activities and faculty accomplishments are rewarded and supported. The twelve-month work of this year's unit representatives demonstrates commendable service to supporting faculty development and faculty excellence in teaching, research, and service at USC Upstate. New members begin work immediately after the last Faculty meeting of the year (typically April/May) and out-going members are frequently asked to train their replacements. The committee is a significant service obligation for faculty members. It should also be noted that the work of this committee depends heavily on the professionalism and efficiency of the SVCAA's office and administrative assistants across the university.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. David Damrel  
Chair, Committee for Faculty Excellence, 2015-2017