

The following is the draft of the letter to be sent to all faculty.

Draft Letter to all faculty:

As faculty of Bakersfield College we all have the opportunity to engage in professional development and flex activities throughout the year. Opening week, Levan events, and many other on campus activities can count toward your required hours of flex activities. We are sending you a list of some activities that are not allowable by state law and some suggestions to help you keep track of your activities.

Your flex reporting is required by the state. It is filed by our college and district and must be available to the state for an audit. As professional development is now part of the accreditation cycle, our documentation is more important than ever. Therefore, it is very important that everyone provide explanations of their flex activities that fall outside of the pre-approved activities as listed in the Professional Development Plan.

It is important that everyone work with their chairs and deans to gain prior approval for activities that are beyond the list of pre-approved activities. We want you to be innovative and engaged in many things, however, it is now necessary to be diligent and get prior approval for extra activities.

Overall Guidelines:

Flex activities, while designed to be as “flexible” as possible to allow each campus to create unique opportunities, cannot include anything in which the faculty member has or will be compensated. As faculty, we have already been paid for three days of flex activities and therefore we must account for these days through flex activities or absence reports.

Activities not allowed by State Law

1. Classroom observation: This is not allowable because it is an expected part of faculty contract and thus we are already compensated for it.
2. Course work or dissertation writing: Generally, such work cannot be claimed as flex hours unless the faculty can explain how the course work or dissertation is related to improving of curriculum. (These are not the words of the Professional Development Committee, but of our state chancellor for professional activities. Essentially, faculty need to collaborate with their chairs and deans to explain how a specific course meets state expectations.
3. Activities for which you are otherwise compensated: This includes money outside of salary from our college. For example, you may be paid a small stipend or honorarium by a book publisher to write a review. You cannot claim this as flex because the state has already paid you for all your flex activities. Remember, the state has already paid you for your flex time, so make sure you are not being paid again. You can either be paid for the book review, or claim the book review as flex and not accept any additional payment.

General advice

Some of us may be tempted to submit 50, 100, or even 200 hours of flex activities. This is really not too helpful to your dean who is required to read through all of this. These extra hours are much better for your portfolio when you are being evaluated. These hours do not roll over, and you don't get extra money. Save the extra work for other venues

List the Professional Development Number next to each flex activity and provide an explanation. These numbers and explanations do get sent forward and if we are audited, these forms will be much easier to understand and accept. You are writing this form for your dean, but also an outside reader. Your dean may understand why your trip to "X" is relevant to your teaching, but an outside reader may not. This is also why it is helpful to work with your deans and chairs as early as possible so everyone is on the same page.

Finally—Work with your deans. Encourage them to accept electronic copies of your flex forms so that you can fill it out on line and send it. Also, submit early. I am not a dean and I don't want to be. I cannot imagine the crazy hours spent in all the evaluations and endless meetings. Our deans usually receive all the full time flex forms in a one or two week period in May. They are doing everything they can to finish the evaluations and end of year reports.

We hope you agree that flex opportunities can enhance our teaching and that this letter serves as a simple reminder of the importance of meeting the state regulations.

Please feel free to contact our committee or your faculty co-chair,

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