



UPDATE

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It's Just a Pilot!!!!

PDA Flex Hours during the 2005-06 Academic Year Part 1 of 2: Contract Faculty

Three surveys and eight years later, AFA and the District negotiated a pilot program to test the feasibility of using Flex Hours in lieu of the two scheduled non-institutional PDA days. The goal is to provide relevant or interesting opportunities for professional development. Flex Activities are the standard throughout the California Community College System, and SRJC is now joining in their use.

During this year, the Professional Development Activity Committee, the Staff Resource Coordinating Committee, and the Flex Pilot Committee (Terri Frongia, Janet McCulloch, Bea Griffiths, and Mary Kay Rudolph) are working through the various processes and criteria necessary to implement this process. At the end of this academic year, AFA hopes to renegotiate Article 22 with input from the College community. **Things that do not work will not become part of the Contract.**

Flex Activities Make Professional Development More Meaningful

The philosophy guiding the new Flex activity program emphasizes designing a program of professional development for all faculty by offering a diversity of subjects and formats such as on-line, video, individual activities, department or group activities, or conference attendance. Rather than offering a one-size-fits-all program, faculty will be able to create the kinds of activities that work for them. As we look to the future, we hope to see new and vibrant faculty who will value this new system for its flexibility and emphasis on personal responsibility.

Reasons For Converting to the Flex Program

Because faculty have indicated through numerous surveys that PDA days have not been relevant to their professional development needs,

it was necessary to try the approach that most California Community Colleges use to fulfill the State requirements. This conversion will achieve the following results:

- Continued apportionment from the State of California for PDA hours/days
- Opportunities for large numbers of new faculty to learn and grow with the institution
- Potential rejuvenation of tired faculty through a wider variety of activities more relevant to professional or personal development
- True flexibility for both regular and adjunct faculty

The new Flex program will allow faculty to participate in a wide range of new and different activities beneficial to themselves and the institution. Some examples are:

- Attending conferences
- Taking classes required for licensure
- Community Outreach (not part of advisory committee assignments)
- CATE workshops
- CPR training
- ISW/PSW
- Departmental activities that benefit the department, the institution and the students
- Observing another instructor's class (not as an evaluator)
- Adjunct faculty PDA scheduling flexibility (not forced into the wrong time of a PDA day)
- Non-credit Unit A members are able to participate and be paid for PDA

Other Important Considerations

Attendance at the two Institutional days is mandatory, there is no make-up provision if you miss

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all or part of the day and, for the purposes of professional development, a “day” is defined as 6-hours long. (You must still complete an Absence form to maintain pay and STRS credit). The remaining obligation of 12 hours of professional development Flex may be completed at any time before May 1, 2005 when you are not scheduled for contractual duties (teaching/allied service, office hours, Advisory Committee meetings, and regularly scheduled department and College committee meetings for committees to which you are appointed). In **ALL** cases it is necessary to report participation in these activities or submit Absence forms in order to be paid and maintain full STRS credit for the year.

Additionally, all FLEX activities must occur in the current academic year – contract faculty may not “bank” time from year to year; adjunct faculty are hired on a semester-to-semester basis and, therefore, must complete Flex hours during each semester they teach. For further information, see the FAQ’s on the Staff Resource Center website at: www.santarosa.edu/src.

Availability of Activities

The District will schedule workshops throughout the academic year and, for contract faculty, attendance at these workshops will count towards the required 12 hours. Faculty must report attendance at each of these workshops, and forms will be available at the workshops themselves. It is also possible to download forms for applying to create a workshop or special group activity. For a list of currently approved activities go to the Staff Resource Center website: www.santarosa.edu/src.

Presenters are also publishing these workshops through the campus e-mail system, so watch for activities that have been approved for Flex credit. The e-mails will have the following information:

FOR FACULTY: this activity has been approved for Flex credit. A Flex Verification Form needs to be submitted upon completion of the workshop/activity for credit to be applied to your hours of obligation. Information and forms can be accessed via the Staff Resource Center website at: <http://www.santarosa.edu/src/wks-smn.html>

If you are the presenter of a Flex workshop or activity, you will receive Flex credit equal to twice the length of the workshop or activity for the first workshop and equal to the length of the workshop for any subsequent offering of the same workshop.

The Staff Development Committee is interested in sponsoring District workshops/activities that are of interest to faculty. If you have an idea for a topic to present, please contact the Staff Development office for consideration by the PDA Committee. They meet on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month. The Staff Resource Center keeps a record of all approved workshop/activities and the website is updated regularly.

Independent Flex Activities HOW TO’s

Many faculty may also choose to do independent Flex activities that occur in other places at other times. For the pilot year we are restricted to having independent Flex activities approved prior to May 1 and completed prior to the end of this academic year (May 27, 2006). In the future, we expect a provision for approved activities to occur during the summer months.

To implement an independent Flex activity, a faculty member must file an Independent Flex Proposal Form with your cluster/location Dean more than two weeks before the scheduled activity. The Dean will forward the form to the Staff Development Committee for approval. You will be notified by them following review and approval. Upon completion of the approved activity, the faculty member must complete a Flex Verification Form.

Your Feedback Is Essential

AFA and Staff Development are eager for your feedback during this pilot year. So far, individuals and groups have responded very favorably and are creating new and fascinating activities to respond to the new challenge. As large numbers of new faculty come into the institution they will need and want this kind of system as part of their integration into the culture of SRJC. We sincerely hope that this new system will address the needs of all faculty and will provide a revitalization of the professional development process.