



SUBJECT	Professional Development for Governors
SUBMITTED TO	Governance Committee
MEETING DATE	September 14, 2023
SESSION CLASSIFICATION	Recommended session criteria from Board Meetings Policy: OPEN
REQUEST	For input only - No action requested
LEAD	Byron Thom, Committee Chair
SUPPORTED BY	Karen Hakkarainen, Board Secretary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September 2021, the Board of Governors agreed to provide each serving Governor with \$1500 per annum for professional development, with a focus on supporting Governors to enhance their skills in service to UBC and the Board. This briefing outlines proposed guidelines for the use of the funds, as well as options for budgeting and for management of the funds. Feedback from the Committee will inform draft guidelines to be brought to the Committee for approval at a future meeting.

ISSUE

In September 2021, the UBC Board of Governors, in keeping with its commitment to continuous improvement, agreed to provide each Governor, excluding the President, with \$1500 per year for professional development. The Board intends that Governors will use the funds for training and development activities that support and advance Governors to fulfil their responsibilities as Governors. These activities may include, for example, conference attendance, leadership coaching, courses offered through the Institute of Corporate Directors or similar organizations, or reference materials on governance.

Activities taken for health and wellness, general interest, or recreational purposes, as well as technology, equipment and supplies, are generally excluded from professional development funds at UBC.

Since 2021, the uptake by Governors of these funds has been limited, with seven governors accessing the professional development funds in 24 months.

To access the funds, Governors have been required to submit their requests for approval to the Governance Committee Chair and the Board Chair. In the interest of removing barriers to Governors pursuing professional development, it has been proposed that Governors need not seek prior approval of the Board Chair and Governance Committee Chair and instead are granted latitude to determine their own professional development needs. Governors will benefit from guidelines to determine whether the professional development activity under consideration aligns to the intended purpose of the funds.

Additionally, the Committee may wish to consider whether and in what circumstances a Governor should have access to funds in excess of \$1500 per annum for professional development.

Another consideration for the Committee is ease of administration. Ideally, maintaining a program of support for Governor professional development should not be overly burdensome or administratively taxing for the Board Secretariat Staff.

Finally, consideration must be given to the Board's budget. If all eligible Governors were to access professional development funds each year, the Board would be required to budget \$30K annually for professional development. It may be reasonable to assume that not all Governors will pursue professional development each year and that an annual budget of a lesser amount could be considered. Additionally, some Governors may wish to pursue activities that cost in excess of \$1500 and may wish to seek additional financial support from the Board. The Governance Committee may wish to consider whether and how such requests should be considered.

Suggested Guidelines for the professional development funds are attached as Appendix 1 and provided for discussion.

BUDGET OPTIONS FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES

The following budget questions/options are presented for the Committee's consideration:

1. What amount should the Secretariat Office allocate in the annual budget?
 - a. Establish an annual budget line of \$30K to enable 20 Governors to participate in professional development each fiscal year; **or**
 - b. Establish an annual budget of a lesser amount, in recognition that not all Governors will access professional development each year, e.g. \$15K per year to support an average of 10 Governors professional development per year.
2. How should we deal with unused budget allocation in a given fiscal year or requests to fund PD amounts greater than \$1500 per annum?
 - a. Recommendation: Governors' requests for additional funds over and above \$1500 may be submitted for adjudication by the Governance Committee at the end of the fiscal year (i.e., the March meeting cycle) to be funded by any unused funds in the annual professional development budget.
 - b. Unused budget is returned to UBC.
3. Any other options to consider?

Appendix 1: Board of Governors Guidelines for Professional Development Funds

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**UBC Board of Governors
Guidelines for Professional Development Funds**

In support of its commitment to continuous improvement, the Board of Governors will annually establish a fund from which Governor may access up to \$1500 per year for the purpose of professional development that supports the Governor's service on the Board.

The fund will be established on a fiscal year basis; the availability of funds will be subject to the overall financial health of the University and the University's ability to support Governors' professional development.

Governors must serve at least six months of any fiscal year (01 April to March 31) to qualify for the funds.

Funds must be used in the fiscal year in which the entitlement occurs. Governors may not "carry over" entitlements from one fiscal year to the next.

Governors may determine the development activity most appropriate to their needs. Examples of activities include but are not limited to:

- Registration fees and related travel expenses for conferences on topics related to Governors' fulfilling their fiduciary and oversight responsibilities as Governors;
- leadership coaching;
- governance courses offered through the Institute of Corporate Directors or similar organizations; and
- reference materials on governance.

Depending on the professional development opportunity pursued, Governors may be asked to share their learnings with Board colleagues. For example, a Governor who attends a conference may be asked to share key takeaways with the Board.

Receipts for expenses that align to the purpose of the fund may be submitted to the Board Secretariat Office Administrative Coordinator for processing for reimbursement. Governors are encouraged to submit their expense receipts within 2 weeks of incurring the expense.

Inquiries about access to the fund or whether a professional development activity aligns to the intended purpose of the funds may be direct to the Board Secretary.