

# **Student Professional Development Fund**

## **Mission, Policies, and Procedures**

### **Mission**

The Student Professional Development Fund has been established to provide Stetson University College of Law students in good academic standing with the opportunity for professional enrichment through participation in events that require expensive travel. By subsidizing the cost of these events, the fund allows students to participate at a defrayed cost in network building and professional development opportunities, unique learning experiences, educational programming, and job interviews, to the benefit of both the student and College of Law.

### **Policies and Procedures**

#### ***General***

An allocation for the Fund will be budgeted in the annual budget process, based on overall budgetary considerations, to be housed in the Student Affairs budget. The Student Bar Association will similarly contribute, as determined by SBA leadership. The scope of the funding does not include Judicial Clerkship interviews, which are considered for reimbursement under a separate policy.

Application for consideration of an event or opportunity may be made at any time during a student's enrollment, after the student has successfully completed their first semester. A student may apply for reimbursement for an event that takes place in the student's final semester, even though consideration and reimbursement may take place after the student's graduation.

All funding is by reimbursement; ***advance payment requests will not be considered.***

Only completed applications will be considered for reimbursement, and incomplete applications may be deemed ineligible until they are complete, regardless of the timing of the subject event. Help in completing an application is available in the Student Affairs or Career Development Offices.

Applications will be considered in light of all of the complete applications submitted in the cycle; the subject events are not to be ranked in any order of importance or preference.

Student Affairs will screen applications for eligibility and consonance with the Mission of the fund. Only applications approved by Student Affairs will be turned over to the Student Professional Development Fund Committee ("Committee") for determination on the amount of funding.

### ***Distribution Process***

1. All disbursements from the Fund will be decided upon and allocated by the Student Professional Development Fund Committee.
2. The Committee will be comprised of six members, with two members representing the SBA, two members representing Student Affairs, and two members representing Career Development. The members will be selected by the entity they represent and may be faculty, staff, or students. Committee members will serve a full-year term starting May 15 of one calendar year and ending May 14 of the following calendar year. If needed, replacements for the full remainder of a term may be appointed by the respective entity, but for continuity of decision-making, this should be avoided unless absolutely necessary. Each organization has one vote.
3. Each student requesting funds must submit a completed Student Professional Development Fund Financial Support Application (“Application”). The completed Application must be submitted to the Office of Affairs by the publicized deadline in order to be considered. Although applications will be accepted on a rolling basis, the Office of Student Affairs will make a call for applications at least once a semester and during the summer term. The Committee will have the authority to make a funding decision based solely on the written application. The Committee may ask applicants to provide more information about the request, and may ask to meet (as a committee) with any applicant. The Committee will attempt to announce funding decisions within one week of each meeting date.
4. The Committee may approve, deny, or defer a request, or may request additional documentation or information before making a final decision.
8. All funding decisions of the Committee must conform to the College of Law’s then-current travel reimbursement and business expense policies.

### ***Distribution Limitations***

1. A student will be limited to a total distribution of \$500 per semester, with a maximum distribution of \$1,000 during the student’s educational tenure at Stetson University College of Law.
2. A student may apply for more than one allocation per semester, but may not receive more than two allocations per semester, with a maximum of three allocations during the student’s educational tenure at Stetson University College of Law.
3. The Committee, by unanimous vote, can waive any of the above limitations.

### ***Distribution Eligibility***

1. A student requesting funds must be in good academic standing at the time of the event and at the time of the submission of a completed application.
2. Students are not eligible to submit an Application until after they have successfully completed their first semester at Stetson Law.
3. Visiting students and students who do not pay Activity Fees (such as online students) are not eligible.
4. Students may request funding to attend any event that is in line with the Fund's Mission. The following is a non-exhaustive list of events the Committee will likely fund:
  - a. Scholarly presentations;
  - b. Job interviews;
  - c. Award acceptances;
  - d. Law conferences or symposia (or other relevant conferences or symposia for dual-degree students);
  - e. Other significant law-related events (or other relevant events for dual-degree students).
5. The Committee will consider funding elements of event attendance including, but not limited to, transportation, accommodations, and conference fees. Funding typically will not include meals (unless the event is a meal, i.e. Awards Dinner), tips, entertainment, airport parking, or incidentals such as Internet fees or long-distance phone calls. Applicants are urged to review the College of Law's travel reimbursement and business expense policies online.
6. After attending the approved event, a student must submit a completed Feedback Form that provides details of the event, experiences surrounding the event, and a summary of the expenses incurred. By accepting an allocation, the student consents to his/her feedback being used for publicity purposes. **Failure to submit a completed Feedback Form within two weeks of attending the event will make the student ineligible for further Fund allocations and may result in outstanding reimbursements not being processed.**

### ***Distribution Factors***

The following is a non-exhaustive list of factors the Committee will consider when reviewing applications:

- The nature of the desired event;
- The student's role in the event;
- The benefits to the student, the student body, a student organization, and/or Stetson University College of Law;
- The student's efforts to minimize costs (such as applying for a waiver of conference fee, staying at an economy hotel or with other attendees, etc.);
- The extent to which the student has appropriately utilized the Fund on prior occasions;
- The overall cost for the student to attend the event;
- The ability of the student to secure funding to pay for additional expenses over and above the money allocated;
- The details supplied by the student about the costs to attend the event (such as submitting accurate estimates of travel, accommodation costs, etc.);
- The student's honor and conduct record at the College of Law;
- The College of Law's past experience with the event.
- Generally, the committee will not approve travel expenses for events or job interviews that occur within 100 miles of the College of Law's Gulfport Campus or Tampa Law Center.

### **TIPS FOR STUDENTS REQUESTING FUNDS**

- Do your research before submitting the Application! Find out as much as you can about the costs of the hotel stay, transportation to and from the event, and fees involved.
- Be prepared to justify why you should be funded for the event. You may not receive all the money you ask for. Be sure you can afford to pay for the remainder of the trip and know how much you can reasonably afford before coming to the Committee.
- The Fund is designed to provide seed money for you to attend events, not pay for the entire cost. Please keep this in mind when you are making your request.
- The Committee will only fund accommodations for the length of time it is reasonable for participation in event.
- The more reasonable you are with the amount of funds you request, the more likely your request will be fulfilled. The committee favors applications evidencing a commitment to mitigating expenses.

# Student Professional Development Fund Financial Support Application

(Return completed Application to the Student Affairs office or e-mail to  
studentaffairs@law.stetson.edu)

## STUDENT INFORMATION

Name:	_____	Student ID #:	800 1L / 2L / 3L / 4L / LLM
Email Address:	_____	Classification (circle both):	FT / PT
Phone Number:	_____	Anticipated Graduation Date:	_____

## REQUEST DETAILS

Complete this form with as much detail as possible and submit it to the Office of Student Affairs by the deadline set for the next Hearing Session. Please attach additional sheets if necessary. Incomplete applications might not be considered for funding.

Name of Requested Event:

\_\_\_\_\_

Location of Requested Event:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Requested Event:

\_\_\_\_\_

Why do you want to attend this particular event?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What role, if any, will you play at the event?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is your goal in attending this event? What do you hope to achieve or accomplish?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**How will Stetson University College of Law benefit from supporting your participation?**

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### **Financial Needs**

**Please give as accurate an estimate as possible of all relevant expenses requested. Thorough research of related costs accurate as of the date of submission of this application is required. Incomplete documentation can delay consideration of a funding request. The request for financial support should be limited to the specific need. Detailed supporting documentation should be attached. There is a \$500 maximum distribution per request. Refer to the College of Law's policies and procedures on travel for additional guidance.**

**In what ways are you able to off-set the total expenses of attendance?**

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<b>Elements of Event Participation</b>	<b>Estimated Cost of Element</b>
Event Fees (or related registration/program expenses)	
Travel Expenses (driving reimbursed at \$.445 per mile, flight, etc)	
Accommodations (price of hotel or other lodging)	
<b>Subtotal of Costs of Event:</b>	
Subtract other sources of funding (scholarship, waiver of fees, etc)	
<b>Total Amount Needed for Event:</b>	

**I AFFIRM THAT THE INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS TRUE, CORRECT,  
AND COMPLETE, TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Application submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

**FOR FUND DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE USE ONLY**

**Comments:**