



# INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

## No Professional Development Funds: What to Do While Doing Without

Yikes! I'm ready to travel to my favorite conference, but some unwelcome (and unsurprising) news interrupts my plans: no professional development travel funds are available unless the requested travel is "mission critical." Recent years of strained budgets and plummeting enrollments have caused faculty across the nation to hear those infamous words all too often.

After rebounding from the tailspin caused by this disappointing news, I immediately began to think about what I could salvage from this experience. Since using personal funds was not possible, I decided to concentrate on other activities. What can faculty do when there is a lack of funds for professional development?

Contact the conference coordinators. A call to my national office was a great morale booster! They were concerned, sympathetic, and helpful. They kindly suggested that I contact the state office to inquire about scholarships or grants. NISOD also provides scholarships for faculty members to attend their annual conference.

1. Go through archived conference proceedings and view the new conference proceedings as soon as they are published. NISOD posts videos of keynote sessions and special sessions following their annual conference.
2. Talk to your institution's faculty development leader. Ours does an excellent job of hosting and then archiving webinars for us to view on campus. Tell them that you would like to be in the queue when funds become available. In the meantime, attend all pertinent local professional development events.
3. Look for online conferences and webinars provided by your textbook publisher. Many of our affiliate organizations (such as our very own NISOD) also sponsor webinars.
4. Work on your own research projects that you could transform into great proposals for future conference sessions.
5. Reflect on your teaching practice. How will you put what you have learned into practice? These writings make great captions for your portfolio artifacts. Your writings could take various forms in the technological times of today. Consider journal articles, essays, and blogs, or writing that book that all professors have inside just waiting to come

out. Also consider writing an Innovation Abstract for NISOD. How about a grant? Check with other faculty and staff members who have authored grants in your area.

6. Continue to seek and create professional development activities and opportunities. Read about what other professors and institutions are doing. Network with professors at your own institution as well as colleagues you have met at various conferences and meetings.

The conference I missed was in November. Therefore, I decided to use that month to immerse myself in seeking ways to improve my craft as a tribute to my assembled organization, and as a way to demonstrate thanks for the opportunities that I have already enjoyed. Professional development is a mindset, and not just an event. The conferences are not ends unto themselves, but are only one of the many great options for faculty to evolve and reinvent excellence. In times of doing without, the key is to keep doing.

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