GUIDELINES FOR NON-INSTRUCTIONAL ASSIGNMENT (NIA) GRANTS

The purpose of the NIA grant is to relieve faculty members from all faculty duties for one semester at full pay (12 hours reassigned time) or for one academic year at half pay (6 hours reassigned time per semester) in order to pursue research, publication, or creative activity opportunities. The committee encourages applicants to submit proposals that involve on-campus or off-campus research, creative activity, internships, and fellowships in order to broaden the body of knowledge available to MTSU faculty and through them, to MTSU students and the wider community.

Please bear in mind as you decide whether or not to apply that this is a competition among very thoughtful and well written scholarly and creative research projects. As such, there are no guarantees and outcomes may be successful or unsuccessful. Evaluation, as we all know, is a highly subjective process. Our commitment, however, is to be thorough, consistent, fair and as objective as possible in reviewing the submissions. Please note that the Non-Instructional Assignment (NIA) Committee is composed of volunteers from each college who have responded to the Faculty Senate’s call for membership.

The NIA committee will evaluate and recommend for approval applications for non-instructional assignments. The committee will use the three part committee charge as the foundation of their review and assessment of proposals. The three part charge states that “The purposes of non-instructional assignments are: (1) to contribute to the professional growth of the faculty; (2) to improve the teaching and curriculum across the University; and (3) to enhance scholarship and academic excellence of the University in ways that cannot be accomplished under the constraints of regular workload assignments.” See the policy at http://www.mtsu.edu/policies/general-policies/I-01-02.php.

To be eligible for a Non-Instructional Assignment Grant, an applicant must:

A. Be a tenured member of the full-time teaching faculty, including department chairpersons;
B. Have completed seven (7) consecutive years of employment at Middle Tennessee State University;
C. Be an Associate or Full Professor.

Applications should include the following:

A. A description of the specific project, its objectives, and end product. Sufficient detail to clearly connect and/or show the proposal’s compatibility with the statement of purposes listed above;
B. An anticipated schedule of progress during the Non-Instructional Assignment;
C. A copy of the applicant’s vita over the last 7 years;
D. Proof of acceptance by cooperating university (ies) and/or other entity, or approval by granting agency (ies), if applicable;
E. A letter from the Middle Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approving the project, if the project involves research with human subjects;*
F. Sources of internal and external funding to supplement the grant (if applicable); and
G. If the applicant was awarded a Non-Instructional Assignment Grant in a prior period, a written report of the completed activity related to the prior award should be included in the proposal.

*The committee will accept and consider proposals for which final IRB approval has not yet been received but funding will not be recommended until all necessary approvals have been submitted.

While each applicant is free to design and describe the project to best suit the field of study, it is strongly suggested that the proposal clearly address the stated purposes of a NIA. An application cover/approval page with the signatures of the department chairperson and dean is required.

The Non-Instructional Assignment Committee will evaluate all applications that have been received on or before the announced NIA deadline. The committee will
then make recommendations for approval of the current year NIA proposals to the University Provost.

If a participant receives a full academic year NIA, a mid-year performance review will be administered to ensure that stated goals are being met. This performance review will be completed by the department chairperson and shared with the NIA committee as well as the University Provost. At the end of the NIA time period, each participant will submit a written review of the NIA activity to the University Provost and forward copies to the appropriate dean, chairperson, and the Office of the University Provost. This review should include a written report indicating the degree to which the objectives of the proposal were accomplished. The report should include concrete evidence of work completed such as a copy of or online access to the final product, whichever is most reasonable.

Acceptance of a NIA requires that the faculty member agree to return to MTSU for minimum of two semesters immediately following the NIA. Summer sessions are not included. In the event the faculty member is unwilling to agree to these conditions, the NIA will not be granted and may become available to other faculty.

If materials are published as a result of the assignment, recipients should acknowledge Middle Tennessee State University in the article, book, or creative product. All grant recipients are subject to University policies concerning patents, copyrights, and royalties. Refer to MTSU policy II:01:08.

There must be a period of seven (7) years between Non-Instructional Assignments for the same faculty member. A recipient may apply seven (7) years after approval of the first NIA. For example a 2014-15 NIA recipient, who applied during the 2013-14 academic year, will be eligible to apply again during the 2020-21 academic year for a NIA to take place during 2021-2022.

Eligible faculty members who are interested in applying for a NIA should follow the guidelines stated above for preparing the proposal. The application cover form can be found at http://www.mtsu.edu/provost/awards.php.