

# Proposed Financial Policy: Travel Subsidy for Dean's Attendance at National and Regional Conventions

Submitted by the Finance Committee

For consideration by the Fox Valley AGO Board at the 9 May 2022 Meeting

## Background and Rationale

Each year as convention time approaches, questions recur regarding subsidizing travel for our dean or others to national and regional AGO conventions. To provide consistent reliable guidance on this matter now and in the future, The Finance Committee (FC) presents this policy for the Board's consideration, and the FC *recommends its adoption, effective immediately*. Note: Dean Mark Downey, also an official member of the FC, recused himself from active participation in the committee's deliberations on this matter to avoid any perception of conflict of interest which might result from his direct involvement in shaping a policy that bears directly on the office he holds.

To inform our thinking about this matter several factors were considered.

- AGO National's expectations for chapter deans to attend national conventions
- Our chapter's expectations for deans to attend national and/or regional conventions
- Our chapter's past practice regarding reimbursement of expenses to attend conferences
- Other reasons for encouraging our dean to attend conferences

From conversations with Executive Assistant Eric Birk and Accounting Assistant Erik Eickhoff at AGO National headquarters, we know **AGO National strongly encourages such attendance**. Because financial resources of chapters vary, AGO National does not *require* them to provide this assistance for their dean to attend a convention. AGO National's sample budget for chapters, however, includes a line for dean's travel as a suggestion that chapters, when able, ought to provide support. AGO National indirectly subsidizes activities for deans attending the convention by paying for luncheons at which deans gather in regional groups.

**Our chapter encourages deans to attend conventions, and it has a precedent of providing financial support.** Before the interruption of in-person conventions because of the pandemic, the last such reimbursement for our dean to travel to a regional conference was paid in 2019. Note: Were we to *require* our dean to attend conventions, AGO National recommends that obligation be added to the duties for the dean listed in our chapter's operating procedures.

Both a dean and the chapter stand to benefit from a dean's involvement in conventions. For example, personal professional growth, networking with deans from other chapters, taking advantage of opportunities to meet performing artists, and to experience other organs first-hand ought to enable our dean to bring to the chapter new ideas and a more informed sense of how our chapter contributes to AGO's mission and programs.

At present, decisions about attending conferences reflect our dean's understanding of national and chapter encouragement to share our chapter's voice, ideas, and accomplishments beyond our local region, as well as personal circumstances which enable one to commit to the travel and provide some financial support. Having

realistic expectations about the extent to which the chapter can provide a financial subsidy ought to help making these decisions.

Expenses for national and regional conventions vary widely. On the one hand, a method for calculating the subsidy ought to be clear and flexible enough to cope with this fluctuation. On the other hand, the chapter ought to know the maximum amount of such assistance, especially in years of high convention expenses. Using a percentage for calculations coupled with a maximum total outlay addresses these issues.

### **Financial Policy: Travel Subsidy for Dean's Attendance at National and Regional Conventions**

To encourage and support the dean (or sub-dean as the dean's designee) to attend and participate in national and regional conventions of the AGO, the FVAGO Chapter provides financial support for expenses associated with these events. Up to 70% of eligible expenses for a national or regional convention may be reimbursed up to a maximum subsidy of \$2,000. At a convention, our dean is encouraged to attend events specifically intended for chapter officers, and after the convention, to report on those events to the FV Board and to members (e.g., via *Fanfare*).

The following expenses may be submitted for reimbursement:

- Registration fee for the convention not to exceed an early regular or senior (if applicable) rate.
- Local group transportation provided by convention.
- Lodging during the official days of the convention not to exceed the rate of an official convention hotel.
- Round-trip travel from the traveler's home to the convention city/site not to exceed an advance purchase, economy airfare or the mileage rate established by the IRS for business travel.
- Meals associated with events at the convention and paid as part of the registration fee. Note: Meals at the discretion of the attendee and not paid as part of a registration are the responsibility of the traveler.

Procedure – Prior to the event the traveler submits a preliminary request for financial assistance which includes an itemization of estimated expenses. The Treasurer confirms the extent to which reimbursement will be provided. Upon completion of travel, the traveler submits a final request with documentation to support all expenses claimed.