

Career Center Professional Development Funding for Students

Cultural Competence & Social Justice Practices Award

The Career Center provides fiscal support for undergraduate and graduate students to engage in professional development that furthers their cultural competence. Students may apply for funding to support professional and career development designed to enhance their knowledge, perspective, and skills in cultural competence, anti-bias education, and social justice practices. Students are encouraged to plan how these experiences can be applied to their educational and professional communities.

What is Cultural Competency?

Cultural competence is the ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures. Cultural competence encompasses humility, awareness, and responsibility towards your own world view, developing positive attitudes towards cultural differences, gaining knowledge of different cultural practices and world views, and developing skills for communication and interaction across cultures.¹ [Global and intercultural fluency](#) is a key competency for graduates that want to be competitive in the job market.

Developing cultural competence includes developing awareness of systemic injustice, racism, exclusion, and inequity. Although, cultural proficiency “requires more than becoming culturally aware or practicing tolerance.”² Developing your own cultural competency requires seeking out different experiences, finding spaces for intentional dialogue, and reflecting deeply on your own identities, knowledge, and behaviors. Cultural competency is not a destination or achievement to obtain, but rather an ongoing and messy process of personal development and critical reflection, working towards better ways of being in the world.³

Cultural Competency & Social Justice Professional Development funding supports:

1. Attending or presenting at a scholarly and/or professional event.
 - e.g., a virtual conference, seminar, lecture, exhibition, or performance.
 - Students must follow all current state and TU Business Office travel guidelines.
2. Paying part or all of student dues to join a professional association.
3. Other professional development funding to help students gain access to intellectual material or technological resources that can benefit students in their professional endeavors and development of cultural competency.
 - Other types of experiences that would apply to professional development would include, but are not limited to, additional courses offered through professional associations to gain certification in a particular skill, gaining access to discipline-specific technological resources, and subscriptions to websites/databases.

Applying for Funding

Undergraduate and graduate students who are currently enrolled (at least half-time or greater) in degree-seeking programs and are in good academic standing are eligible to apply for this award. Cultural Competence & Social Justice Professional Development funding may be awarded up to \$200 maximum per academic year.

Email Sidney Pink at spink@towson.edu you have any questions.

Notification, Award Distribution & Final Report

All students will be notified by email after the application due date regarding the committee's decision.

In some cases, the Career Center may be able to directly pay registration or fees for students, while other situations might require students paying out of pocket and requesting reimbursement. If you receive an award the Career Center staff will review payment options.

All students will be required to submit a brief final report (50-100 words) reflecting on the impacts of their experiences.

Additional Guidelines

Cultural Competence Professional Development funding may be awarded up to \$200 maximum per academic year. Completing an application for funding does not guarantee receipt of funding. All applications are reviewed by Career Center Awarding Committee. Funding is granted based on the stated purpose and alignment with the above guidelines. Funding amounts are based on available funds. Notification of receiving funding is required prior to using the requested money.

Students may not use the funding for projects, in-person or virtual conferences, seminars, lectures, events, or materials that occur after they have graduated from their academic program. In an academic year, a student may only receive one approved Cultural Competence Professional Development funding award.

Sources

1. Framework for School Age Care in Australia p15; Early Years Learning Framework p16
2. SNAICC 2012 Consultation Overview on Cultural Competence in Early Childhood Education and Care Services
3. Cultural Competence and the Higher Education Sector p32-34