New shape of PSC-CUNY Awards

Deadline this year is January 28

By CLARION STAFF

CUNY and the PSC have finalized agreement on new guidelines for the PSC-CUNY Research Awards, which will govern a three-year pilot program beginning this year.

The application deadline for this cycle of awards is January 28, 2011. In future years, the deadline will be January 15. For more information about PSC-CUNY Research Awards, see article below. If you know a junior faculty member who is unaware of the application deadline, please forward them. Senior faculty are also eligible to apply.

A new application process expands opportunity.

Faculty members like Carlos Moriles (above), an associate professor of physics at CCNY, will be able to apply for larger PSC-CUNY Research Awards starting in 2011.

As established in Article 26 of the PSC-CUNY Constitution, the Research Awards are available at tinyurl.com/PSC-CUNYawards and are available at tinyurl.com/PSC-CUNYawards. Details on the online application process are available at tinyurl.com/PSC-CUNYawards. Apply.

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The most competitive category is expected to be the Enhanced Awards, of up to $3,500, and can be applied for in the Traditional A category. In addition, the total income limit for summer salary applicants has been raised to $88,418 for the 2010-11 academic year.

During the three-year pilot program, tenured faculty may not receive more than two awards, and only one of these may be an Enhanced Award.

“Enhanced Awards are available to all full-time members of the instruction staff represented by the PSC, and to untenured faculty in particular. Part-time faculty and professional staff should note that the PSC has negotiated additional professional development funds for which they can apply. Information and applications for the HEO/CLT Professional Development Fund and the Adjunct Professional Development Fund are on the PSC website (psc-cuny.org/HEOCLTProtDev.htm and psc-cuny.org/AdjunctContinuingEdDev.htm, respectively).”

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The biggest question for many faculty applying for the restructured PSC-CUNY Research Awards will probably be under which category to apply. In a meeting about the new program, one junior faculty member said, “I don’t like to gamble, and this feels like a gamble to me.” It should be borne in mind, however, that while the average award in the past was less than $3,500, many applicants asked for almost twice that amount, expecting that their budget request would be reduced. Because selection panels will no longer reduce requested budgets, this part of the application process will be more clear-cut.

“Trusty” one guideline in choosing the category for your application might be: if you believe you can do your project well for $3,500 or less, apply for that amount – and note that the largest allocation of funds will be in the Traditional A category. If you feel your project is truly not possible with less than, say, $5,000 in support, then apply for a Traditional B Award. And if you feel that your project cannot be done unless you receive more than $6,000 in funding, apply for one of up to 40 Enhanced Awards, bearing in mind that there are fewer of these grants and that they involve more extensive review.

“Our goal in revamping the program on a pilot basis was to open it up to as many members as possible – particularly to junior faculty – and to recognize that different kinds of projects can require substantially different amounts of funding,” said PSC President Bowen. “I know from my own experience that $3,500 can jump-start a research project, but that amount is not meaningful for certain other projects – for example, those that require more expensive equipment or more staff.

“I launched a lot of my own research through PSC-CUNY Awards, spending several memorable summers doing archival work in the British Library,” Bowen added. “I was armed with an early Zenith laptop that weighed about 20 pounds, purchased through a PSC-CUNY grant, and assisted by a CUNY undergraduate who went on to earn a doctorate in English. I am a huge advocate of these awards, and I want them to work for our members.”