MUNFA

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND FACULTY ASSOCIATION

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To: All MUNFA Members

From: The MUNFA Executive Committee

Date: November 19, 2013

Subject: Professional Development and Travel Expense Reimbursement (PDTER) Fund

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As the result of the settlement of a number of grievances dating as far back as 2011, MUN and MUNFA have recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that makes smart phones and any accompanying service plans an eligible expense under the Professional Development and Travel Expense Reimbursement (PDTER) Fund provisions of Clause 31.54 in the Collective Agreement.

Effective April 1, 2013 the purchase of any "internet enabled communications device (e.g. tablets, smart phones, Blackberries, iPhones, etc.)" is an allowed expense under Clause 31.54 of the Collective Agreement. Like other computer-related equipment referenced in Clause 31.54 (a), the device will remain the property of MUN.

The MOU then goes on to describe how the PDTER Fund will cover a percentage of a monthly service plan that an ASM declares was used for professional development for a device such as a smart phone. In short, the university will not reimburse any portion of a monthly service plan that is for personal use. If an ASM claims that the smart phone usage was 100% professional, MUN will reimburse 100%; if an ASM claims the device was used only 50% of the time for professional development, the university will only reimburse 50%. The most important limitation to note is that MUN will only reimburse the requisite percentage of the monthly basic service amount. MUN [apparently guided by Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) limits] will not reimburse extra charges, such as extra data downloads, or other accessories such as voice mail, text messaging, etc., that are ad hoc additions to a monthly plan.

The challenge for any ASMs wishing to avail of this new option under the PDTER Fund, therefore, is to ensure that they only agree to a basic service contract that addresses all their needs into the foreseeable future. In other words, be sure to consider what might be sufficient data download limits, and other features such as text messaging and voice mail necessary for your professional development. The employer is willing to reimburse an ASM under Clause 31.54 only if these features are used for professional purposes, and are aspects of a monthly plan, but not if they are for personal use, or extra charges in any one month.

The university has developed a form to aid ASMs in reporting PDTER Fund reimbursement claims for service contracts. While use of such a form is not mandatory, ASMs should be able to obtain an example from their Dean or Administrative Head.

If you have any further questions on this issue, please contact the MUNFA Office at munfa@mun.ca or 864-8642.