

Comments on the travel policy

(1) I have less of an issue with the policy itself and more so with just knowing the timeline. I am traveling to a conference in early November that will require more than 200 miles in each direction and just want to know if I will need to go through getting a rental car or if I can go ahead and drive my own car.

I apologize I was not able to be at the faculty meeting on Wednesday and if this was addressed I missed it.

As an aside, something to bring up at your council meeting.....I wonder how the university would handle the rental car situation for a circumstance like this where I will be driving to a conference on Thursday and Friday but will not be returning to Cleveland until Sunday because I am finishing the weekend visiting friends? I know many of my colleagues will take on vacations or personal time following conferences that are "drivable" such as to Michigan, although over the 200 mile mark.

(2) I would like two clarifications. [1] Given the one-size-fits-all mentality of the administration, how does this apply to foreign travel where credit card use, dispensing receipts, etc. may not be the same as here in Cleveland? [2] Does this policy apply to academic study-tours? If so, how? And, if not, then a clear statement that it does not apply would be invaluable because sooner or later the question will arise and our institutional memory is not very long.

(3) Accountability issues- This document cannot be approved until the procedure for deciding numbers missing in this document are included and the procedures for keeping them up to date are included. Ex. "round trip mileage above 200 but less than 400 miles will be reimbursed for gas expenses at the rate of XX per mile." How is this number being calculated? How often will it be calculated? Once a month based on changing gas prices? Once a year? Once a decade?

In addition, if this goes forward with specific dollar amounts included for meals, how often will this be updated? Based on what? By what committee? All of this seems like a lot of work/time, which could be saved as this work is already done for every city in the US and calculated for us if we would continue using the Federal per diem rate for meals.

Having a sit-down meal with colleagues from across the country is one of the main activities a scholar can do at an academic conference to meet people to co-author with, learn from senior scholars, develop mentoring relationships, or network successfully to encourage someone's later willingness to write reference letters for promotion to Associate or Full Professor (now that outside letters are being required). Sub-committee meetings and Award meetings, are often planned at restaurants to facilitate these interactions. None of this is taken into account with these numbers. Faculty members are already limited from spending beyond a given amount on travel each year; micromanaging our every meal will make things very difficult and present more obstacles to success. In general, this policy does not seem written for faculty travel to research conferences. The description "conducting official business on behalf of the University" should not be used if we're discussing faculty presenting research. "University approved travel" makes more sense.

PS - It's not clear how/why the numbers of \$15/15/30 were arrived upon. Because they will need to include an additional 7-9% for sales tax and frequently involve a 15-20% tip for serving staff, all these numbers are functionally reduced by 22-29%. This leaves only about \$10.50-11.50 for lunch, including food and drink, which is not reasonable.

(4) Allow me to show u what had happened to me a month ago when I ask for a per diem for attending a conference (academic presentation).

Forwarded you will what the school limits me to do. The amount they allowed me is below what the IRS per diem rate.

IRS per diem rate in August in Boston can be found: https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates/per-diem-rates-lookup/?action=perdiems_report&state=MA&fiscal_year=2018&zip=&city=Boston

The school cut more than \$60 for lodging per day (lowered from the IRS publication) and \$ 5 dollars on meals per day.

About my travel in August, I brought a female student to present our research at a national meeting in Boston. I asked my wife to come along and act as a chaperone. Therefore, I asked for per diem rate so that I can use some money to cover some of the additional expenses. The travel policy tries to eliminate the per diem request. This will remove the flexibility we now have to deal with a case like mine having a chaperone to travel with.

I understood why the school wanted me to fly but disagree the micro-management and arbitrarily reduced my traveling budget (the approved budget by the dean was \$1800 dollars.)

I spoke at the meeting. I expressed that we should have the right to use our own cars. I feel safer! Using another car takes time to get used to it!

I do not understand why I have to get a P-card. I do not want to carry another credit card. I feel that I should not have the obligation to help the university to earn rebate. Do I get a cut from the rebate?

More importantly, we already submit our travel request each year to the dean, why do I need to get permission again?

I think this will further damage the faculty morale and there is no need for more micromanagement and interference of academic freedom.

(5) I was at the Faculty meeting and approach this issue from my former perspective - as a physician/investigator working with some industry and NIH funding. In brief, faculty will likely need to accept more restrictions and greater documentation for expenses...as industry is required or chooses to follow federal guidelines.

Most agencies also look at the percentage of "exceptions allowed."

A number greater than 5% will likely risk triggering an audit - for non-compliance - usually an experience to be avoided if possible. I appreciate the pockets of frustration that I heard at the faculty meeting. It isn't really an Administration issue. Federal funding of research may be nice - but it comes at the cost of greater use of guidelines and required documentation that none of us really appreciate.

(6) From my perspective, I think there are a couple of issues. One is distance where you can't drive your own car and enterprise has to pick you up at campus. Most people leaving for work trips are not leaving from campus. It puts a lot on our staff that are going to a training in Columbus to have to get a rental car the night before or whatever, too. I feel like that part was not very well thought out. HR contends it's cheaper for an Enterprise three day rental for a one day training than it is to have people drive themselves. OK. It also seems to impact faculty's ability to take students on short trips with any spontaneity. And then obviously the assumption that everyone had a P-card was not correct.