

Making the Ask for Programs & Courses

A practical guide to securing institutional support for your professional development

Introduction

This guide is designed to help you confidently request institutional support to participate in NCFDD programs and courses. Whether you're seeking support for a structured program or a targeted course, the same principles apply: clarity, alignment, and a focus on shared benefit.

Securing support isn't about asking for a favor; it's about making a strong case for an investment that benefits you, your sponsor, and your institution.

1 Start with alignment, not assumptions

Before making the ask, it's important to set aside limiting assumptions, such as:

- "There's no money available."
- "They won't prioritize professional development."
- "Others have been turned down, why would I be approved?"

Instead, adopt a **win-win-win mindset**.

WIN-WIN-WIN MINDSET



A Win for You

Supports your growth, productivity, and sustainability



A Win for Sponsor

Aligns with unit and institutional priorities



A Win for Institution

Impact extends beyond one individual

2 Prepare

Identify Potential Sponsors

Common sponsors include:

- Department Chairs
- Dean's Offices
- Faculty Development or Professional Development Offices
- Provost's Offices
- Centers for Teaching and Learning
- Professional organizations connected to your role

Do Your Homework

Preparation may look slightly different depending on what you're requesting:

- Review NCFDD overview materials
- Identify outcomes that matter to your unit or institution
- Practice articulating your "why" clearly and consistently

Practice Your Pitch

Be ready to describe:

- What the program or course is
- Why it's the right fit right now
- What outcomes you expect
- How it complements existing campus resources
- How the benefits will extend beyond you

3 Create a Meaningful Approach

Start by requesting a meeting, keep your outreach brief, and encourage a face-to-face conversation if possible (a concise email will suffice if scheduling doesn't allow for it).

During the conversation, focus on connection and alignment rather than persuasion.
Be ready to discuss:

- The structure and focus of the program or course
- Why this opportunity meets a current need
- Expected outcomes (skills, habits, deliverables, impact)
- How this investment supports departmental or institutional priorities
- How you'll share what you learn with others

Expect questions or objections related to cost, relevance, or need. These are normal, and they're a chance to reinforce alignment.

Remember: your mindset and energy matter as much as your words.

4 After the Conversation



If they say... "YES"

- Confirm with follow-up email, in writing
- Share materials (program overview, course description, outcomes summary, or NCFDD overview)



If they say... "MAYBE"

- Send a follow-up that formalizes the ask
- Provides additional context or materials



If they say... "NO"

- Thank them for their time.
- Share a general NCFDD resource to build familiarity for a future conversation,
- Move on to the next potential sponsor.

5 Assess, Adjust, Ask Again

Notice patterns in the questions or objections you receive and refine your pitch accordingly.

Remember:

- Support can come from multiple units
- Partial funding is still progress
- Timing matters, what's a "no" today may be a "yes" later

Persistence is part of the process. Many successful requests come after multiple conversations.

Keep going. You're not asking for something extra, you're advocating for what you need to succeed.

Contact Us

If you have questions or would like support preparing for your ask, contact info@ncfdd.org.

We're here to help you make a confident, successful request.

“

**Timing matters.
A no today may be a yes
later.**

”

Downloadable Resources

- [Faculty Success Program Overview](#)
- [Department Chair Success Program Overview](#)
- [Post Tenure Pathfinders Overview](#)
- [Rethinking Your Research Funding Overview](#)
- [Teaching Toolkit in the Age of AI Overview](#)
- [Building Your Publishing Pipeline Overview](#)

Fill-in-the-Blank Pitch Framework

(Works for programs AND courses)

Opening

I'm requesting support to participate in [program or course name], an NCFDD professional development offering focused on [key focus or outcome].

Why now

This opportunity is particularly relevant right now because [current role, challenge, transition, or institutional priority].

What it provides

Through this [program/course], I'll develop [specific skills, habits, or outcomes] that directly support [department/unit/institutional goals].

How it complements existing resources

This offering complements our existing resources by [what it does differently or fills in].

Broader impact

I plan to bring what I learn back by [sharing, mentoring, implementing practices, supporting others], so the benefit extends beyond my individual participation.

Close

I'd appreciate your support in making this investment possible.

Tailor Your Ask: Program vs. Course

When requesting support for a program

Emphasize:

- Structure and accountability
- Sustained behavior change
- Community and peer learning
- Long-term impact

Helpful language:

- “ongoing support”
- “structured accountability”
- “sustained progress”
- “transformational outcomes”

When requesting support for a course

Emphasize:

- Specific skill development
- Immediate application
- Efficiency and focus
- Clear ROI

Helpful language:

- “targeted skill-building”
- “immediate application”
- “practical outcomes”
- “efficient use of time and resources”