

PhysSec Education Policy on Approval for Travel to Conferences

Purpose

1. As PSV gets bigger, we are increasingly facing a good problem, which is more volunteers interested in attending many events than we can afford to send. This policy aims to provide guidance for PSV leadership in deciding who can attend.

Limits on Attendance

2. For most conferences, PSV will not attend unless the conference provides us sufficient badges free of charge, in addition to reimbursing travel, lodging and shipping expenses if applicable. PSV may elect to attend events that do not cover all of this from time to time. PSV may additionally elect to pay for additional people to attend certain events, beyond how many the event will reimburse.
3. As soon as is practical after a conference or event is confirmed, PSV will put out a call to all potential volunteers asking who is interested in attending, and able to commit the time necessary to do so.
4. If more volunteers are interested and willing to attend than PSV can afford, then PSV leadership shall make a determination of who may and may not attend with full or partial reimbursement. Leadership may elect to ask those under contention to make submissions as to why the factors listed under this policy favour their attendance.
5. This Policy aims to provide guidance to PSV leadership, including the Board, in making these difficult decisions. It is not binding on them, and they are entrusted to make the best decision they can given the particular circumstances.
6. This decision will be appealable to the Board according to the Laws of Canada. Such an appeal does not automatically stay the previous decision or estop travel arrangements from being made, however the relevant decision makers may separately decide and so order that such a stay or estoppel is warranted.

Factors to Consider in Decision

7. The following major factors will work in favour of a volunteer being chosen to attend a given conference or event:
 - a. The volunteer has committed significant time towards preparation for this particular event;

- b. The volunteer will be attending the conference or event regardless (e.g. as a speaker), such that large portions or all of the cost does not need to be covered by PSV;
 - c. The volunteer has a history of going above and beyond at prior events;
 - d. The volunteer has committed significant time towards preparation of displays, talks, etc that will be brought to this event;
 - e. The volunteer has singular knowledge of any aspect of the displays, conference or travel logistics that will be necessary for the event to go smoothly;
 - f. The volunteer has knowledge of any aspect of the displays, conference or travel logistics that will assist with the event;
 - g. The volunteer has committed significant time towards PSV as a whole, not including attendance at conferences or events and not including paid time;
 - h. The volunteer was prevented from attending a previous event due to space or budget constraints;
 - i. The volunteer, if selected, would be the only one who speaks the local language;
 - j. The volunteer speaks the local language;
 - k. The volunteer has a shorter or less costly travel distance, or more flexible schedule, that will cause the cost of travel to be significantly less than that of other potential volunteers;
 - l. The volunteer has visited the location before or otherwise understands the culture, customs, risks, etc in a way that will benefit the entire travelling group or the Village;
 - m. If the event is in driving distance, the volunteer has a vehicle usable for the trip;
 - n. The volunteer has a talk to give that is of particular interest to the event organisers, and that can only be given by that volunteer or is the product of that volunteer's own research or work;
 - o. The volunteer is singularly skilled at delivering talks desired at this event;
 - p. The volunteer has experience particularly well suited to the event audience;
 - q. The volunteer has expressed a preference to personally pay some amount to offset any added costs or risk associated with the factors below that work against that volunteer being selected.
8. The following major factors will work against a volunteer being chosen to attend a given conference or event:
- a. A history of tardiness, absenteeism, or other unreliability at a previous event;
 - b. A history of irresponsible or inappropriate behaviour while travelling, or otherwise acting in a way that brings the Village into disrepute;
 - c. Prior bans or run-ins with the Code of Conduct for this or other events;
 - d. A restrictive schedule that will prevent the volunteer from contributing as much to the Village at the event as others could;

- e. A history of attitude or morale problems, especially while travelling;
 - f. A nontrivial risk of being turned away at the border;
 - g. A major uncertainty in whether the travel will be possible (e.g. due to visa denial or processing delays, work scheduling, etc);
 - h. A restrictive or uncertain schedule that will cause the cost of travel to be greatly in excess of other potential volunteers;
 - i. A longer or more costly travel distance that will cause the cost of travel to be greatly in excess of other potential volunteers;
 - j. Lack of relevant vaccinations for travel to that area;
 - k. The volunteer has dietary or medical needs that will be difficult, expensive or impossible to accommodate in the area of travel;
 - l. An inability to handle the jet lag, physical labour required, or other physical demands of the travel and event;
 - m. Relative inexperience with PSV, or with travel in general, if the event is a logistically demanding one;
 - n. A lack of significant time or effort spent in preparation, displays building, etc - the less glamorous parts of making PSV chug.
9. The following minor factors contribute to cost savings for the Village or small “quality of life” benefits for the travelling group, and will work in favour of a volunteer being chosen to attend a given conference or event:
- a. The volunteer has attended this particular event before (e.g. in a prior year), performed well and will be an asset due to this experience in a major way (this factor should only be applied in clear cut cases so as not to disadvantage those who did not have a chance to attend in past);
 - b. The volunteer has a phone plan, payment card, etc that will continue to work in the area;
 - c. The volunteer has travel perks that they are willing to use to further Village goals, such as hotel upgrades, free checked bags or guest airport lounge access;
 - d. If driving, the volunteer’s vehicle has good fuel economy, good legroom, adequate cargo space, good reliability, etc;
 - e. The volunteer has health or travel insurance covering the trip;
 - f. The volunteer has family or friends local to the area who could provide assistance or contingency help;
 - g. The volunteer knows others who will also be attending the event and can use this network to help PSV assimilate into the community;
10. The following minor factors would incur additional costs for the Village or small “quality of life” problems for the travelling group, and will work against a volunteer being chosen to attend a given conference or event:

- a. The volunteer is unable to join the others in Toronto before and after to pack, unpack and prepare for the trip;
- b. The volunteer is unable or unwilling to carry Village items on the trip (e.g. an extra checked bag);
- c. The volunteer will be the only one in a shared vehicle who does not have a Nexus Card;
- d. The volunteer does not have a driver's licence that will be valid in the area;

Balancing of Factors

11. When balancing the factors above, leadership shall consider both the applicability of the factor to that event, and the how much the factor applies to that volunteer. E.g. speaking the language is very helpful, but the degree of fluency might vary.

Impartiality of Decision

12. Each year, PSV's leadership quickly becomes a tightly knit group of people due to the amount of time and energy spent together on the Village. Accordingly, it is difficult to make decisions with full impartiality to personal relationships. Nonetheless, Leadership shall strive to remain impartial by:
 - a. Maintaining records of all those factors that can be judged objectively (e.g. absenteeism, cost of travel, time spent)
 - b. Recusing themselves where there is a conflict of interest above and beyond the PSV relationship;
 - c. Deferring decisions to a subset of leadership, where appropriate, who have less personal investment in the volunteers under consideration;
 - d. Being as transparent as possible about why decisions under this policy were made as they were, and how volunteers can improve their chances of being selected in future.