**The How & Why of PGH & PGI with Tania Anders & Tamra Horton**

**Episode 123**

Tania:

We're looking forward to seeing all of our faculty engaging in professional development and professional growth, because we all are lifelong learners.

Christina:

Hi, I'm Christina Barsi.

Sun:

And I'm Sun Ezell, and you're listening to the Magic Mountie podcast.

Christina:

Our mission is to find ways to keep your ear to the ground, so to speak, by bringing to you the activities and events you may not have time to attend, the resources on campus you might want to know more about, the interesting things your colleagues are creating, and the many ways we can continue to better help and guide our students.

Sun:

We bring to you the voices of Mt. SAC, From the classroom to completion.

Speaker 4:

I know I'm going to achieve my goals, and I know people here are going to help me to do it.

Speaker 5:

She is a sociology major and she's transferring to Cal Poly. Come on down. Psychology major, English major.

Speaker 6:

I'm transforming part-time into full-time.

Speaker 7:

I really like the time that we spent with Julie about how to write a CV and a cover letter.

Christina:

Or just finding time to soak in the campus.

Speaker 8:

I think Of the natural environment around us as a library.

Christina:

We want to keep you informed and connected to all things Mt. SAC. But most importantly, we want to keep you connected with each other. I'm Christina Barsi, Mt. SAC alumni and producer of this podcast.

Sun:

And I'm Sun Ezell, learning assistance faculty and professional learning academy coordinator.

Christina:

And this is the Magic Mountie podcast.

Christina:

Curious about how PGI and PGH work? Tanya Anders sits down with faculty association member Tamara Horton to talk about how to earn your hours, how to submit them and when, and also a brand new system and how to do so that the professional development department, also known as POD, has been working hard to roll out for you. Here's Tanya with her chat with Tamara.

Tania:

Welcome. And thank you for joining us today for another episode of the Magic Mountie podcast. My name is Tania Anders, and I'm joined today by Tamra Horton, faculty member in the department of English, literature and creative writing, as well as an active member of our faculty association. In that role, Tamra has been serving on the faculty professional development council as well as salaries and leaves. In 2019, Tamra developed the professional growth increment project, or PGI project as we call it for short, for which she, by the way, recently received a WHO award, which stands for we honor our own, from the community college faculty association at the state level. So congratulations Tamra, by the way, for that. We're so proud of you. We will be learning more about the PGI project today. So hi, again, Tamra and thank you for being here.

Tamra Horton:

Thank you for having me, Tania.

Tania:

Absolutely. So we, before we talk about the PGI project, could you please be so kind and briefly introduce yourself to our listeners?

Tamra Horton:

I'd be happy to. You said some of the highlights actually. I do teach in the department of English literature and creative writing. This is actually my 21st year at Mt. SAC. I have served as a faculty association director. I have served as an Academic Senate Senator at large, and I'm a current member of the faculty Professional Development Council or a PDC. And I am on the salary and leaves committee. And of course I'm serving as the PGI project coordinator right now.

Tania:

Well, you are one busy lady. So in a nutshell, what is the PGI project?

Tamra Horton:

Okay, well, the executive board of the faculty association approved the PGI project in 2019, and it began June 15 of this last year. Essentially the goal was to increase awareness of the professional growth increment for full-time faculty and the professional growth hourly incentive for part-time faculty. So that's PGI and PGH. And both of these appear in Appendix A of the faculty agreement. So since 2018, part-time faculty have been eligible for six hours of pay per fiscal year at the non-teaching hourly rate for completing Mt. SAC professional development activities that have been approved for PGH. And full-time faculty have earned PGI, which is currently $3,736 per year by accruing 96 hours of professional development activities. So that's what PGH and PGI are.

Tania:

So Tamra, how would a faculty member go about earning PGI or PGA? Yeah, maybe you can give them a few pointers.

Tamra Horton:

Sure. So today, most part-time faculty who earn PGH do so by attending flex day or one of the flex days that we have at Mt. SAC, but many other pod workshops are approved for PGH. Full-time faculty do not accrue hours toward PGI on flex day because they are obligated to complete flex hours under contract. However, the same POD workshops offered throughout the year that are worth PGH are generally worth PGI as well. So some examples from this past semester have included your own sustainability for faculty embedding specific sustainability into your curriculum, which was worth 16 hours towards PGI or PGH. We also have the choral certificates, which are really popular racial equity and education certificates, the academic literacy for equity, introduction to emotional intelligence and diversities. These are worth the last two were six hours, and the sustainability was worth 16 and the racial equity and education certificate is worth 15. So faculty basically accrue those workshops over time.

Tania:

And what's really wonderful about all these offerings too is that they really address a lot of the things that our campus feels so strongly about, right? Like one of the overarching goals is that we all learn more about sustainability, that we all are trained in equity. And so the courses you just mentioned, they certainly fulfill all of that. So yeah, I definitely encourage folks to get engaged with them. So could you please give us some clarification for what type of professional development activities overall count towards PGI and PGH? What does a faculty member have to look for? Because not everything is approved for that. And as you mentioned already, some things faculty full-time faculty for example, have to do for their flex day obligation. So how would a faculty member recognize those, basically?

Tamra Horton:

Okay. Absolutely. First it's important to distinguish between PGH and PGI because PGH is for our part-time faculty and PGI is for our full-time faculty. So part-time faculty earn PGH for Mt. SAC activities only. So they can't complete professional development activities at another campus and apply for PGH. And as mentioned earlier, most part-timers earn their six hours of PGH by attending one of the flex days. However, there's the wealth of the other POD workshops throughout the year that are either approved or pending approval for PGH. And how do we find those? We find them on the POD calendar, and there are a lot of activities listed on the POD calendar. So what faculty will want to do is go in and click on the workshop activity and look, usually it's written in red, but look and see if it says, "This activity is eligible for six hours of PGH, PGI," or, "This activity is pending six hours of PGH/PGI."

Tamra Horton:

That's typically where our part-time faculty will find their opportunities to earn PGH. The full-time faculty as well can take those activities and start earning their PGI. When they do so they will be accruing and they are working towards a 96 hour total that will make them eligible for PGI. But full-time faculty have another opportunity to earn hours towards PGI. They can earn hours by completing off campus professional development activities. So this would include things like professional conferences or professional workshops necessary to maintain one's license. So such activities can be submitted to the salary and leaves committee for pre-approval towards PGI. And this way they can determine if the activity will count prior to paying the registration or other related fees. So one more thing I would want to note for the full-time faculty, it is important that if full-time faculty apply for reimbursement, for any expenses related to these professional development activities, they understand that the activities then no longer count towards PGI because the faculty member has essentially already been paid for the activity.

Tania:

I'm glad you mentioned all of those things because when I was working towards my PGI, that is part of what I did. I submitted an external training that I did, and I made sure to apply beforehand, get salaries and leaves approval before I chose do this course. And yes, any expenses would be on my own then. And it's really great that you mentioned that because people want to be careful about that if they ask for funding for say, a workshop that they're attending before or after a conference they go to then that they would have to pay for that themselves. Yes, did you want to add anything else?

Tamra Horton:

I would. So a faculty, if they have attended a conference in the past, they shouldn't worry that they did not receive pre-approval. So they can submit it for approval through salary [inaduible] and the salary [inaudible 00:09:30] would say was no, that we're not going to prove this, but ultimately you can submit it for pre-approval or you could submit it for post-approval.

Tania:

Okay. Well, that's wonderful to know, yeah. So I'm wondering, is there a deadline for earning PGI or PGH? How would a faculty member go about submitting that paperwork for PGI and PGH? What are the steps that they need to take for that?

Tamra Horton:

It's actually kind of complicated, but we're working really hard to make it a lot easier. And again, I would distinguish between PGH for part-time faculty and PGI. So let's talk about PGH first. Because part-time faculty are eligible for six hours per fiscal year, the deadline to complete the hours is June 30 each year. And I want to emphasize that is to complete the hours. So any hours completed during that fiscal year can be submitted for PGH.

Tamra Horton:

However, that is not a deadline for asking for the payment of the hours. In fact, part-time faculty can submit workshops completed in previous fiscal years for PGH even. So we are working to streamline the process and in fact, shortly, there's going to be a Smartsheet that's going to go live and all adjunct faculty are going to receive an announcement of this Smartsheet. And they're going to have an opportunity to apply for this year, for the PGH hours they might've accumulated and for the past years through 2018, because that's when they started receiving PGH. So that's in a nutshell, how it works.

Tania:

Right? And that's wonderful. And that's why I like to remind our part-timers it is so important when they come to our flex days, we always have sign-in sheets for, well, when it's in person right? Or when it's online, you have to sign in and that way you have evidence for your attendance and you could basically get those six hours within a day.

Tamra Horton:

Absolutely. And in the future, it looks like what they'll do is instead of dealing with all of that paperwork and having to sign it in in that manner, when they get into the workshop, hopefully the workshop presenter at that point will remind them if you're a part timer go ahead and sign on and register for your PGH for this activity.

Tania:

Right, wonderful. So let's turn then to the PGI for the full-time faculty.

Tamra Horton:

Okay, so that is a little bit more complicated, but we are also working on a Smartsheet. And when I say we, I should acknowledge who's doing that. There is a task force out of the salary of these committee that is working to bring together POD, salary and leaves, HR and payroll all behind the scenes to make the process easier. So right now, basically the paperwork entails several different forms. And that's because POD verifies the hours that are completed POD workshops. Salary and leaves approves the hours for PGI. HR is the one that processes the hours for PGI. And then of course payroll would be involved in how we get the money. What the Smartsheet has done for part-time faculty and then should be doing for full-time faculty shortly is that there will only be one place where faculty will submit their hours and behind the scenes, those four entities will work to approve everything so that faculty don't have to go to each place and file a different piece of paper to accumulate the 96 hours necessary for PGI credit.

Tania:

Wow, that sounds like a much more streamlined process. That is wonderful that your task force is working on that because yeah, that was a lot of paperwork. And especially if you collect an hour here, an hour there, right? Then it really becomes quite a long list of professional growth hours that people accumulate. So I'm wondering, is there a deadline for earning PGI or PGH? How would a faculty member go about submitting for PGI or PGH? And maybe we can start with the part-timers right? So the part-timers, the PGH, so how would they go about it?

Tamra Horton:

Because part-time faculty are eligible for six hours per fiscal year, and so fiscal year goes from July 1 to June 30. The deadline to complete ours is June 30 each year. And that is to complete the hours, so to complete the POD workshops. However, that is not a deadline for submitting payment for the hours. In fact, part-time faculty can submit workshops completed in previous fiscal years for PGH. And that is a slot available on the new Smartsheet.

Tania:

That's wonderful. Okay. And then, so for the full-time faculty and they have to accumulate a lot more hours, right? The 96 hours. So how would they go about that? What is their deadline? And what's the process for them?

Tamra Horton:

Okay. So there really is no deadline for full-time faculty. They can earn PGI anytime in their career. I encourage them to do so as early as possible because you earn it throughout your entire career. And it actually affects retirement as well. So they just accumulate the hours. Some of them do it very slowly over three or four years, and some of them do it in a summer. And of course, because they can do outside activities and Mt. SAC activities, they can accumulate more in a shorter period of time in that regard.

Tania:

Right. And like you said, it's a process that people can go back to. I think the FA negotiated all the way back to 2010, right? That faculty can use whatever hours they accumulated to get to those 96 hours.

Tamra Horton:

Right. That distinction is important. Currently faculty can use hours up to July 1, 2010 and request that they count towards PGI. However, at the very end of the semester, I think that would be about June 14, they will no longer be able to reach back that far. In fact, they will only be able to reach back to July 1, 2016. And that will be the case from here on out.

Tania:

Out. Yeah. So there's, there's a motivation for folks who are close to that, to still finish collecting some of those hours that they may need. And like you already mentioned, it's quite amazing because it is a salary bump that stays on your salary for the rest of your career at Mt. SAC. And I think it's actually relatively new that they rolled it into also counting towards the retirement. So it's definitely something worth working on. So having said that, can faculty earn a second PGI, the full-timers? Or more than six hours of PGH for the part-timers?

Tamra Horton:

So currently the contract specifically states only one PGI during their career and only six PGH hours during a fiscal year. But I would say that the Faculty Association is always trying to negotiate more hours for both, a second PGI and more PGH hours. I know recently there has been a big emphasis on campus to include more professional development for diversity, equity and inclusion for faculty. And so that would definitely be something that would be on the Faculty Association;s radar, I would think is to encourage us to have maybe PGI that was focused on that.

Tania:

Yeah, absolutely. And so I'm sure that a number of our listeners are now really eager to learn even more about PGI and PGH and where can they find out more about it?

Tamra Horton:

So I would highly encourage people to go to the POD website and if they go down and they'll see for faculty, they'll see down there where it talks about PGI and PGH. It has a link and there's a page that provides all kinds of information. There's a column on PGH there's a column on PGI and there's a column on column crossover. POD has done a great job of putting all that information together in one place. The salary and leaves committee also has a website and on that website, there are links specifically to PGI and PGH, but the new Smartsheet for PGH is available there.

Tamra Horton:

We're testing it right now. But as I mentioned earlier, it should be rolled out shortly and that's where that link is located. And the Faculty Association website would be a good place to go to learn anything more that faculty might want to know about the Faculty Association and activities that they're offering, including the PGI project. And I would encourage faculty to email me at thorton@mtsac.edu because I can send them a link to set up an appointment for a PGI consultation and shortly we'll be offering column crossover consultations, and we will also help our part-time faculty with PGH consultations. So faculty could get that link from me.

Tania:

Well, that's wonderful. And again, you received an award. There was a reason for it because you have helped so many faculty, I think since we started. And you said it really rolled out in June of last year, so we're getting close to the one year anniversary. How many faculty have you done your consultations with and how many are now earning PGI or PGH because you've kind of helped them navigate the process of it?

Tamra Horton:

Well, we focused on PGI at the beginning of this project, and now we're just rolling over into PGH in the latter half of it. But with PGI, I've had well over 250 appointments with faculty, some of them more than once, because it is a cumbersome process once they start filling out the paperwork. I only get updates about every three months as to how many people are left to earn PGI. But at the beginning of the project, there were 293 faculty who were eligible for PGI and had [inaudible 00:19:30] it. I believe in March, we had 75 of those who had earned it out of the 293. As far as PGH, I think that we're going to see our numbers go up now. So mostly the faculty that have attending flex day have been earning their PGH. But now that we're going to roll out the Smartsheet, I think that it'll encourage faculty for instance, who couldn't attend flex day because they have other obligations at other campuses now they'll know how to file paperwork to get that money.

Tania:

That is really fantastic. And I'll mention also you brought up the POD calendar. So when faculty go on POD Connect and look up activities, usually those that are already approved for PGI, that's mentioned there. And as you mentioned earlier, some of them are pending because salary and leaves has a process of approving all of these activities, but that's a way that faculty can also target and find activities that will give them a certain amount of hours. We really don't want that to be the driving force of why people do professional development, right? Really we are all educators, we are all professionals, we are lifelong learners and really that should be our motivation, but it is a listed on the POD calendar. And so people can certainly look for that as well.

Tamra Horton:

No doubt. I would say that most of the professional development activities that we offer at Mt. SAC include PGH and PGI. So they're kind of correlated. The PGI project created a tremendous amount of work for our staff at Mt. SAC in the POD office, in the HR office, and in the VPI office. And those folks have been tremendous in processing all of the paperwork that they have suddenly received from our faculty. And so I really appreciate the work that they've been doing, and I hope as faculty are working with the various people in these offices that are helping them earn PGI and PGH that they give them a big thank you.

Tania:

Thank you so much for mentioning that absolutely. Because it is quite a process, right? And so like, in my case, for example, I did a number of what I would call big ticket items that earned a lot of hours of per event. But again, it could be that someone submits 70 different things, right? An hour here, an hour there. And so you're absolutely right, that involves a lot of help from these various departments. And we are certainly very, very grateful for that.

Tania:

Well, this was great Tamra. So thank you so, so much for visiting with me today, taking time out of your busy schedule, and we are looking forward to having more and more people work towards their PGI and PGH, but most importantly, we're looking forward to seeing all of our faculty engaging in professional development and professional growth. Because as I said earlier, we all are lifelong learners. So thank you so much, Tamra. And I'll see you soon on campus, I guess at some point, right?

Tamra Horton:

Hopefully soon Tania, and thank you as well.

Sun:

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