Basic Guidelines for Purchasing Under CUNYfirst

1. **ALL purchases must be PRE-APPROVED.** This is true whether you are purchasing goods for the office, services, or food for a meeting. This is true even under circumstances that are considered to be emergencies. You as an individual can NOT procure goods and services directly from a vendor without first obtaining approval from the Purchasing Department. If you purchase without pre-approval you run the risk of not being reimbursed.

2. **The procurement process involves obtaining some form of a PURCHASE ORDER.** The purchase order will be used to purchase goods or services. There are different types of purchase orders. Some are for a specific item. Others cover a portion of the funds in your budget, and are good over the period of a year, allowing you to make multiple smaller purchases as necessary.

   A. **Make large dollar purchases with a Purchase Order:** In ALL cases you will create a **requisition** in CUNYfirst, which will result in the issuance of a **purchase order**, and the latter will be used to make the purchase. The item being purchased will be ordered by the Purchasing Department and delivered to your office. **Honoraria** also require a requisition.

   B. **Make smaller dollar purchases with a P-Card:** The Procurement Card (aka P-Card) is designed to expedite smaller dollar purchases. You can obtain a **blanket purchase order** for the P-Card. This is a purchase order that covers the total amount you estimate will be spent on smaller purchases over the fiscal year. This blanket purchase order will allow you to make small purchases as necessary each month without obtaining an individual purchase order each time you make a purchase.

      - **The Purchasing Department sets limitations on the maximum dollar amount for each transaction and the maximum per month.** This is based on the total amount in the blanket purchase order.

      - **There are published guidelines about what can and cannot be purchased and you will be liable for purchases that are outside of those guidelines.**
• Purchases that can be made with a P-Card include: Conference registration, books and other publications, office supplies.

• Management of the P-Card can be substantial. You will receive electronic monthly statements of the card’s activity. Within 5 business days of receiving each statement receipts for each of the items on the statement have to be submitted (or the item disputed). Repeated failure to meet this time line will result in revocation of the card.

C. Travel expenses can be charged to a Travel Card (T-Card) or a Non-Employee Travel Card (NET Card). T-Cards work essentially like the above P-Cards, except that they are used exclusively for travel.

• Purchases that can be made with a T-Card include: Conference registration, transportation such as airfare, train fare, and transportation to and from airports can be charged. Local transportation (bus, subway), food, and other valid incidental expenses will be reimbursed upon your return. The T-Card holder can only use the card for his or her own travel expenses. The card CANNOT be used to purchase an airline ticket for another faculty member in the program or for a job candidate.

• There is a version of the T-Card called the Non-Employee Travel Card (NET Card). It can be held by the program or department and used to pay for travel by students and job candidates.

3. There are several acceptable ways of making food purchases under CUNYfirst guidelines:

A. Purchase from vendors that are on the state’s Vendor Registration List. Purchases from vendors who are on this list are easily pre-approved and paid by Accounts Payable. If the pizza shop that often delivers for department functions is not already on the list, you can submit a form to CUNY (through the GC Accounts Payable website) to place it on the list. It takes 2-4 weeks to place a new vendor on the list and you are advised to send a copy of the form you submit to the GC Accounts Payable office. The Provost’s Office will maintain a list of area establishments that are frequently used by GC programs and departments and are on the Vender Registration List.
B. **Make out-of-pocket food purchases as an option of last resort.** In general NY State, and by extension CUNYfirst, is trying to eliminate the use of out-of-pocket purchases. However, it continues to be allowed under the following circumstances:

- The total amount of a purchase cannot exceed $200.00. (Do not try to exceed this restriction by splitting an order into several smaller ones because the state tracks receipts and will audit us).

- Alcohol beverages are not covered and will not be reimbursed.

- Taxes will not be reimbursed.

- The event at which the food is served must be a special activity such as a colloquium and an attendance sheet as well as a program or flyer must be provided.

- Gift cards are NOT allowed.

- Gas charges are NOT allowed when personal vehicles are used. Instead, take the mileage and contact Accounts Payable for the current mileage rate.