

## Faculty Bylaws for the Republic of Panama Campus at Florida State University

These are the faculty bylaws for the Republic of Panama (ROP or Panama) Campus at Florida State University. These bylaws were last approved on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024 by a majority of the applicable voting members of the ROP faculty and on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2024 by the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement.

This document will be reviewed and renewed at least once every ten years. If it is not reaffirmed or revised within ten years of the latest approval date above, this document will expire in 2034.

### I. Bylaws

**A. Adherence with Other Governing Documents.** Campus and faculty policy shall adhere to and be consistent with Panamanian laws, Florida laws and regulations, university policies, and procedural memorandums issued by the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement.

Additionally, operations of the Republic of Panama campus are bound by the Memorandum of Agreement between FSU and the FSU Panama Board of Directors. This document states:

“2.f. Both parties acknowledge that FSU-ROP operates under the laws of the Republic of Panama. Where feasible and not contradictory to Panamanian law, FSU-ROP will follow relevant laws, regulations, and rules governing FSU Tallahassee campus unless specifically prohibited by applicable Panamanian law. FSU-ROP will endeavor to follow the spirit of the laws, regulations, and/or rules governing the FSU Tallahassee campus without compromising Panamanian compliance.

3.b. Panamanian laws govern labor situations and issues related to employee selection, appointments, salaries, benefits, promotion and tenure, and contracting for local services.”

**B. Bylaws Revision.** An amendment to these Bylaws may be proposed on written request of the majority of voting faculty or on request of the Rector. The amendment shall be discussed at a general meeting of the campus faculty and may itself be amended by majority vote at that meeting if a quorum is present. The proposed amendment shall be made available to all voting members of the FSU-ROP faculty at least two weeks in advance of the meeting at which it will be discussed. In order for the amendment to pass, a majority of the voting faculty (as defined in II.C) must participate in the election and a simple majority of the voters present in the meeting must be in favor of the amendments.

**C. Substantive Change Statement.** FSU-ROP is dependent on accreditation of FSU in its entirety, not as a separate campus. Faculty and staff members are expected to be familiar with and follow the Florida State University Substantive Change Policy as found on the university web site <https://sacs.fsu.edu/substantive-change-policy/>

## II. Membership and Voting Rights

**A. Faculty Membership.** The faculty of the ROP campus shall consist of those persons holding regular full-time appointments at the rank of Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor as defined by Republic of Panama campus employment contracts. All faculty positions at the FSU-ROP campus are non-tenure earning.

**B. Unit Membership.** In addition to the faculty defined in II.A above, the following are members of the campus: staff, adjunct instructors, and any other person with direct assignment to the ROP Campus.

**C. Faculty Voting Rights.** All members of the campus faculty, as defined by II.A, shall be considered to have faculty governance voting rights at the branch campus.

## III. Unit Organization and Governance

### A. Jurisdiction.

1. The basic faculty decision-making body of the ROP campus shall consist of the voting faculty of the campus, defined in II.A above as full-time regular faculty. This body shall have authority to establish faculty committees that support the mission of the branch campus, recommend changes to and participate in the faculty evaluation process, and address general academic matters of concern to the campus.
2. The voting faculty may comment on any issue of general interest to the campus and make recommendations to the appropriate officer or body.

**B. Faculty Meetings.** At least one faculty meeting will take place in the first three weeks of every semester. All regular and adjunct ROP faculty are invited to the meeting, but regular faculty are expected to attend. The Rector calls for the first meeting of each semester and faculty may suggest agenda items. The agenda is circulated prior to the meeting and detailed minutes are kept during the meeting, which are then circulated to all faculty for corrections and approval. Additional faculty meetings may be called later in the semester when the need for a decision or discussion arises. A meeting that is for regular faculty only may be called if there are matters to discuss that concern only regular faculty members.

**C. Campus Leadership.** The FSU-ROP campus leadership is composed of the following positions:

1. Rector: Chief executive and administrative officer of the branch campus.
2. Vice Rector for Academic Affairs: The highest academic authority on campus and shall ordinarily have those powers and duties delegated to him/her by the FSU Panama Board of Directors and by the Rector.
3. Other members of the branch campus administrative team include, but are not limited to, the Vice Rector for University Relations, the Vice Rector for

Finance and Administration, the Director of Admissions and Records, and the Director of Student Affairs.

**D. Campus Committees.** The only committee that is required to exist is the Faculty Evaluation Committee. All regular full-time faculty are expected to be members of at least two committees. Adjunct faculty are encouraged but not required to serve on committees. In some cases, the committee's mission or focus limits membership to those faculty members in a given academic area. Each committee consists of 5-6 members and is chaired by a convener who is elected by the committee unless otherwise designated by the committee structure below.

1. Faculty Evaluation Committee: Composed of three members of the regular full-time faculty who are elected by the voting members of the faculty to serve a three-year term. The committee is convened and chaired by its longest serving member. Each January, the longest serving member of the committee will stand down and a new committee member will be elected by the regular faculty. Any faculty member who plans to apply for promotion in that academic year will not be eligible to be elected to the committee and should recuse themselves from this election. Those who have served on the committee are ineligible for election in the year that they stand down, and the following two years.
2. *Ad Hoc* Faculty Promotion Committee: At the first meeting in January, when candidates for promotion recuse themselves from the Faculty Evaluation Committee, the Rector will appoint an Ad Hoc Promotion Committee for that year. This committee will have three members, all of whom will have a rank either equal to or higher than the highest rank for which any of the candidates aspire to be promoted. Members of this committee are not required to serve on the Faculty Evaluation Committee as well. The Faculty Promotion Committee will elect its own chair. When the committee has submitted a report on all candidates, it will be dissolved.
3. Academic Standards Committee: Reviews academic policies and procedures and makes recommendations for changes or additions to procedures for the branch campus. Committee members participate in Academic Honor Policy appeal cases, Academic Grievances, and Grade Appeal processes.
4. Faculty Development Committee: Identifies opportunities and areas of improvement related to faculty development; recommends faculty development activities, seminars or training; and reviews requests for faculty development funding. The committee will coordinate with the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs on guidelines for faculty development leave consistent with the OFDA guidelines, to the extent possible, and review requests by eligible faculty prior to consideration for approval by the Rector.
5. Library Committee: Reviews and makes recommendations for enhancements related to library policies, practices, and collections.
6. Campus Life Committee: Reviews and recommends social activities for students, faculty, staff and alumni in order to strengthen the sense of community and the interaction among its members.

7. Curriculum Committee: Reviews aspects of academic curriculum for current and planned courses in collaboration with the Tallahassee campus. Recommends areas for expansion of the curriculum based on the needs of the branch campus, the university, and current degree offerings. Makes recommendations related to course scheduling and sequencing, breadth of course offerings, degree program offerings, special topics classes, and other ways of enriching academic offerings at the branch campus.
8. Graduate Committee: Reviews aspects related to the master's in international Affairs, including but not limited to admissions appeals, graduate scholarship applications, and makes recommendations related to curricular offerings based on existing FSU courses. The committee is chaired by the Director of the International Affairs program, and its members are faculty members teaching in the graduate program.
9. English Composition Committee: Coordinates content, learning outcomes, and instructional methodologies in collaboration with the Department of English at the Tallahassee campus. Oversees the teaching of ENC classes at the branch campus; identifies areas of improvement, tools, and resources; and determines activities that enhance or support student performance. Its members include regular faculty in English composition as well as any adjunct instructors in the same area. The committee is chaired by one of the regular full-time faculty in English composition.
10. The faculty can determine if additional committees are needed to address the priorities of the faculty.

### **E. Faculty Representation**

1. The faculty will choose a Faculty Representative to the Board of Directors in the manner set out by the Board of Directors. This Faculty Representative will communicate in writing (e.g. by email) with all faculty members before the meeting of the Board of Directors to find out about faculty concerns, and after the meeting of the Board of Directors to indicate how, if at all, those concerns were addressed and share any other information from the meeting that may be of interest to faculty.
2. When a new Rector is to be appointed, faculty will elect a representative who will serve on the Search Committee.

**F. Faculty Recruitment and Appointment.** The faculty recruitment and appointment process generally consists of the following major steps:

1. Identification of the need for new faculty to fulfill teaching obligations.
2. Announcement of position availability, made via local and international media and describes in full the position available, as well as the position's academic and labor requirements.
3. Designation of a search committee, including FSU-ROP faculty, to review the credentials of each prospective faculty member and participate in interviews. Applicants may be invited to teach a sample class. The search committee will

- submit a recommendation for appointment to the Rector in the case of regular full-time faculty and to the Vice Rector in the case of adjunct faculty.
4. To assure that academic standards are maintained in accordance with the standards set by Florida State University, every teaching appointment at the ROP campus must be approved by the appropriate academic unit in Tallahassee. Each faculty member must also be credentialed and approved through the OFDA Instructor Credentialing System.
  5. Appointment by the Rector is finalized when a labor contract is agreed upon and signed by both the Rector and applicant. For regular faculty candidates being recognized with time in rank from a prior position or institution, that time must be specified in the appointment letter. In the case of adjunct positions, the Vice Rector presents his or her selection to the Rector for appointment.
  6. Regular and adjunct faculty have courtesy appointments at FSU-Tallahassee, providing them with appropriate access to information technology resources.

During the selection process, the emphasis is on identifying applicants who demonstrate the best academic qualifications and teaching experience compatible with the level of the position and the needs and instructional focus of the branch campus.

If there is a sudden and unexpected faculty vacancy, the Rector or Vice Rector may appoint a suitable candidate to an adjunct position until a search can be conducted.

**G. Unit Reorganization.** If unit reorganization becomes necessary or desirable and those changes impact instruction, faculty within the affected unit(s) will have the opportunity to share feedback before such reorganization takes place.

## IV. Curriculum and Degree Approval

**A. Curriculum Review and Course Approval.** Academic programs offered at FSU-ROP must participate in regular review process consistent with the Quality Enhancement Review process at FSU-Tallahassee. The Curriculum Committee reviews proposals by ROP faculty for new courses and works with the Vice Rector of Academics to determine the feasibility of those proposals based on campus needs, fiscal considerations, and faculty credentials. If those proposals are accepted at the campus level, the ROP faculty proposing the new courses must apply through the appropriate college and the University Curriculum Committee in Tallahassee. If ROP faculty wish to offer courses within the existing FSU main campus curriculum at ROP, they must work with the Vice Rector for Academics to seek main campus approval.

**B. Degree Approval.** FSU-Tallahassee must agree to and approve all existing degree programs to be offered at the FSU-ROP campus. New program proposals must originate through the curriculum committee processes at FSU-Tallahassee. The termination of any degree programs offered must comply with applicable laws, policies, and accreditation standards for a “teach out” to ensure fair treatment of students pursuing the degree. The official list of which FSU degree programs have been approved to be offered at FSU-ROP is maintained in the FSU Degree Program Inventory accessible on the Institutional Research website. New FSU-ROP degree

offerings of existing or new FSU programs are considered only when deemed fiscally sound and consistent with the needs and mission of the branch campus by the ROP Faculty Curriculum Committee, the Rector, and the FSU-ROP Board of Directors.

## V. Annual Evaluation of Faculty on Performance

**A. Peer Involvement in Annual Performance Evaluation.** Each regular faculty member's performance will be evaluated annually relative to his or her assigned duties using the following university rating scale:

- Substantially Exceeds FSU's High Expectations
- Exceeds FSU's High Expectations
- Meets FSU's High Expectations
- Official Concern
- Does Not Meet FSU's High Expectations

All regular faculty submit an annual self-evaluation report describing their teaching (including complete copies of all teaching evaluations), scholarly activity, service to the university and to the community. This will be submitted to the Faculty Evaluation Committee by the 31<sup>st</sup> of August. The Faculty Evaluation Committee will review this material and write a report on each faculty member. The report evaluates the performance of duties and may include suggestions for professional growth and progress toward promotion. The report must include an overall rating of performance, and all those faculty who meet or exceed expectations for overall performance in a given academic year will be awarded one year of time in rank toward the promotion process as documented in the report. The report may also include a recommendation about a salary increase. This report is submitted to the Rector for final action.

## B. Criteria for Evaluation of Regular Faculty

1. **Teaching.** All faculty are expected to maintain the highest standards in their teaching. In faculty evaluations, the committee will consider the results of the student evaluations along with information submitted by faculty about innovations in their teaching and any improvements they intend to take in light of the evaluations. The annual evaluation also includes information about the total number of classes taught, the total number of students, and the total number of preps. Regular faculty with smaller teaching loads are expected to use their time to make larger contributions outside of the classroom.
2. **Service to the University.** All regular faculty are expected to serve on committees and at times take on other administrative tasks within the campus and university. In the annual evaluation, faculty should provide details about tasks that have contributed to the campus and university outside of the classroom.
3. **Service to the Community.** Many faculty have professional skills that can be used to contribute to the community outside of campus. Faculty also sometimes organize projects that provide other members of the campus with an opportunity to contribute to the community. All such activity should be

reported in the annual evaluation. However, faculty who can demonstrate that their time has been taken up with other tasks are not required to provide evidence of community service.

4. **Scholarly Activity.** Although ROP campus faculty are not assigned standard research loads, many faculty do engage in research or activity that is related to research, such as attending conferences, supporting professional organizations or engaging in further study. All such activity should be reported in the annual evaluation.

### **C. Criteria for Evaluation of Adjunct Faculty**

1. All adjunct faculty are evaluated by the Vice Rector or other designated individual at the end of each semester they have been appointed to teach a course, in accordance with university policy. Adjunct faculty are expected to maintain the highest standards in their teaching. In faculty evaluations, the reviewer may consider teaching observations, student performance, and the results of the student evaluations. The reviewer will address strengths, offer constructive feedback, and indicate eligibility for re-hire.
2. Committee service and other university activities or professional development undertaken by adjunct faculty during the appointment period may be factored into the evaluation.

## **VI. Promotion Process for Regular Faculty**

### **A. Peer Involvement in Evaluation of Promotion of Faculty.**

At the first faculty meeting in January, faculty members who intend to apply for promotion are asked to announce their candidacy, and an Ad Hoc Promotion Committee is formed, as set out in III E 2.

Candidates will be required to submit teaching evaluations for all classes that they have taught since their last promotion (or, if this is their first promotion, since their initial appointment). The committee will specify the precise format in which this data is to be submitted.

Candidates will be required to submit contact details of at least three referees, one of whom may be a regular employee of FSU-Panama who is knowledgeable of the candidate's teaching and committee service but does not serve on the Evaluation Committee at the time. One reference may come from a former student, but the student must already have graduated. Candidates must communicate with the committee in a timely manner if any of the referees have limited availability.

Candidates will also submit a statement about their teaching philosophy and how it has been implemented, as well as detailed summary of any scholarly activity, service to the university, and service to the community that they have carried out in the period since their last promotion (or, if this is their first promotion, since their appointment).

In order to get more information about teaching than can be gained from student evaluations, the *Ad Hoc* Promotion Committee will conduct at least one teaching evaluation with each candidate for promotion, the results of which will be considered in the promotion process. In preparation, the candidate will submit information about their pedagogical techniques and teaching philosophy. In some cases, based on differences between academic disciplines, candidates may consider that the members of the Faculty Evaluation Committee lack the expertise to evaluate their teaching. In that case, they will inform the committee at the earliest possible stage that they would like their teaching evaluated by faculty from the main campus if possible. In that case, the Committee will request that suitable faculty from the main campus review a video or videos of the candidate's teaching (or simply attend a class remotely). If this cannot be arranged, the observation will have to be carried out by a member or members of the committee. Whoever carries out the observation, the goal is to see whether the candidate successfully implements the method that they have described. Candidates will be informed in advance which classes will be observed.

The promotion application is submitted by the end of June, before the end of the summer semester.

The *Ad Hoc* Promotions Committee documents its recommendation in a report for each promotion candidate and submits to the Rector. After review, the Rector will prepare a recommendation on the promotion of each candidate to the FSU-ROP Board of Directors to be considered on the agenda of a regular or special meeting. Following discussion of that agenda item, the Board of Directors votes to approve or deny the promotion for each candidate on the agenda.

## **B. Criteria for Promotion of Regular Faculty**

Faculty whose highest qualification is a master's degree are initially appointed at the level of Instructor, and faculty with a Ph.D. are initially appointed as Assistant Professor. Faculty members who have experience working in other universities when they are appointed may be appointed at a rank equivalent to that which they had in their previous institution, and some or all the time that they served at that rank may be counted towards their next promotion. In that case, a written statement to this effect should be stated in the initial appointment letter and kept in their employment file.

During the sixth year in rank as Instructor, a faculty member is eligible to apply for promotion to Assistant Professor. After six years of service in the rank of Assistant Professor, a faculty member is eligible to apply for promotion to the rank of Associate Professor. After five years of service in the rank of Associate Professor, a faculty member is eligible to apply for promotion to the rank of Professor. Being eligible to apply for promotion does not guarantee successful promotion.

The calendar year in which a faculty member is appointed counts as their first year of service even if the appointment is not in January. Promotions are usually made in October; years towards the next promotion application are then counted starting with January of the following year. For example, someone appointed as Instructor at any

point in 2020 is eligible to apply for promotion in 2025. They would declare their candidacy in January 2025, submit their application by June 2025 and could expect a decision by November 2025. If they received a promotion to the rank of Assistant Professor in 2025, they would be eligible to apply for their next promotion in 2031.

Candidates for promotion must demonstrate that they have maintained excellent standards of teaching and been diligent in performing administrative duties required by the campus, including service and service on committees. In addition, faculty must demonstrate that they have kept up to date with new pedagogical techniques and developments within their academic field and used their professional skills either to serve the campus community, the wider community, or to engage in scholarly activity connected with their discipline, or some combination of these.