Faculty Information System (FIS): Distributed Support Model

Introduction

Interfolio is Ohio State's new Faculty Information System (FIS). The Interfolio system is supported by the FIS team in Ohio State's Office of Technology and Digital Innovation (OTDI). Dr. Helen Malone, Vice Provost for Academic Policy and Faculty Resources, leads the Interfolio adoption effort. The FIS team is tasked with providing Interfolio support to all full-time university faculty, plus staff in faculty affairs roles and others who help coordinate academic units' appointment, review, promotion and tenure (APT) processes.

High level expectations and requirements about Ohio State APT processes are codified in Ohio State Bylaws and Rules, and in the Office of Academic Affairs (OAA) Policies and Procedures Handbook. Pattern of Administration (POA) and Appointments, Promotion, and Tenure (APT) governance documents describe administrative processes specific to each college and regional campus, along with University Libraries.

Ohio State's POA and APT documents reflect many differences in how academic units manage their "local" processes to achieve outcomes that align with university-wide standards and requirements. Due to this variation and complexity, and the overall sensitivity and utmost importance of university review, promotion, and tenure, the FIS Distributed Support Model (DSM) gives people responsible for APT oversight, i.e., the associate and assistant deans for faculty affairs and their designees, the ability to align their digital workflows with processes and practices specific to their respective academic units.

Purpose and Goals

The FIS DSM seeks to optimize the faculty experience and maximize each academic unit's success using Interfolio by providing training and support resources, and giving academic units' faculty affairs teams the ability to administer Interfolio access with flexible local workflows. This document outlines options for operationalizing FIS distributed support. The options are a mix of technical and procedural approaches that address needs for managing complicated, high-stakes processes, and delivering high-level support and training to clarify requirements, highlight best practices, advocate for streamlined communications, and either respond to urgent system concerns or escalate these to the Interfolio vendor support team, as needed.

Through the FIS Distributed Support approach, the FIS team will deliver the following resources:
- training sessions (scheduled, ad hoc, and office hours, and "train the trainer" opportunities)
- online resources to support Interfolio use at Ohio State
- templates that clarify OAA requirements for using Interfolio to manage APT processes and document faculty activities, which individual academic units can append to describe local practices and expectations
- ongoing engagement with the Interfolio Steering Group, which will meet monthly to discuss each unit's needs and interests, and provide feedback to the Interfolio adoption project team and FIS team

Associate and assistant deans of faculty affairs and their designees will participate in the FIS Distributed Support approach by:
- identifying one or more people in each academic area who have APT expertise and experience handling that area's APT processes, who will be first points of contact in two key contexts:
  - to faculty and other staff in that academic area, to give guidance with Interfolio as well as APT processes, and to escalate questions as needed, either to the associate and assistant deans of faculty affairs or their designees, or to the FIS team, depending on context
  - to the FIS team for sensitive and urgent concerns, and for co-managing staff Interfolio accounts, e.g., submitting requests for/administering staff members' Interfolio access/removal and role assignments
- nominating people from their unit for faculty and staff membership on the Interfolio Steering Group