

**BYLAWS OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS,
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

Adopted: December 8, 2023

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I. Bylaws

a) **Bylaws:** These bylaws contain the core principles by which the Economics Department has chosen to govern itself. The objective of the Economics Department is to promote excellence in education, research, and community engagement in the field of economics. The Department aims to foster intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and a deep understanding of economic theories, principles, and their applications.

b) **Ratification and Amendment of Bylaws**

These bylaws must be approved by two-thirds of the voting faculty. Amendments to these bylaws may be proposed by any voting member of the Department but require the support of at least five tenured faculty members prior to being brought for a vote by the voting faculty as a whole. The voting members of the Department include all tenure-track and RTPC faculty. The proposed amendment must be circulated prior to being presented for discussion and vote by the entire Department at a meeting, notice of which must be given at least one week in advance. Subsequent amendment of departmental bylaws requires a two-thirds majority of all votes cast, which must be by a secret ballot.

c) **Distribution of Bylaws**

These bylaws will be posted on the departmental website and be universally accessible without restriction.

d) **Effective Date**

These bylaws are in effect as of December 8, 2023, and supersede all previous constitutions and bylaws of the USC Economics Department, except to the extent that any previous set of bylaws or constitution would be controlling for any act or matter occurring while it was still in effect, unless otherwise provided herein.

e) **Separability and Compatibility**

If any portion of these bylaws is adjudged by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgment shall not invalidate the remainder of these bylaws. These bylaws are compatible with and subordinate to the policies and provisions of the USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, the USC Faculty Handbook, and to the authority and policies of the Trustees of the University of Southern California. Any bylaw that deviates from current USC policy should be ignored; and with a lag, it will be removed.

II. Departmental Officers

1. Chair

The Chair is appointed by the Dean in consultation with the faculty within the Department. Under normal circumstances, the Department will hold a vote of confidence in the Chair selected by the Dean. If less than half of the voters indicate their confidence in the selected Chair, the Dean's office will be notified of the results. The Chair serves at the Dean's discretion normally for a term of not more than three years, but with the possibility of renewal. The main responsibilities of the Chair are as follows:

- a) Working with the faculty to design and implement a strategic vision for furthering the Department's research and teaching agenda.
- b) Determining the Department's resource allocation.
- c) Coordinating with the Department's Program Manager to guarantee that there is adequate staffing of all of the Department's scheduled classes in upcoming semesters.
- d) Working with the Deans to coordinate activities related to both the short- and medium-term plans for the Department.
- e) Recruiting new faculty to join the Department and overseeing the hiring process to ensure that it complies with University rules, including ensuring that a diverse slate of candidates is considered.
- f) Serving as the Department's Ambassador in interacting with parents, alumni, local businesses, and policymakers.
- g) Addressing the inevitable challenges that faculty, students, and staff face over the course of the year but always while protecting privacy.
- h) Working with the Department Manager on issues related to Department logistics, the Academic Calendar, accommodating Visiting Scholars, and allocating office space to both faculty and PhD students.
- i) Coordinating faculty governance decisions with the Department's various committees.
- j) Leading faculty meetings.
- k) Appointing faculty to key committee positions. The Chair can replace any incumbent Director as long as the Dean of Social Sciences accepts the Chair's recommendation.

2. Vice Chair

The Chair may nominate, in consultation with the faculty, one faculty member to serve as Vice Chair to assist the Chair and to assume his/her/their place on a temporary basis during the Chair's absence due to illness or travel. The following constitute the main responsibilities of the Vice Chair:

- a) The Vice Chair has no "assigned" responsibilities.

b) The Vice Chair advises the Chair on all of the matters described above and works with the Chair on issues pertaining to faculty promotion reports and faculty recruiting.

3. Director of Undergraduate Studies

The Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) will be appointed by the Chair in consultation with the faculty and serve at the Chair's discretion for a term of 3 years, with the possibility of renewal. He/she/they supervise all matters related to the Department's undergraduates, although it is understood that some responsibilities may be delegated to other faculty or staff, as deemed appropriate, with the approval of the Department Chair.

The DUS:

- a) Determines staffing for undergraduate courses, in consultation with the Department Chair, and serves on the RTPC Recruitment Committee.
- b) Administrates undergraduate program policies and proposes updates to the Undergraduate Program Committee.
- c) Works to maintain a modern, effective, and challenging curriculum, and proposes curriculum revisions or new programs to the Undergraduate Program Committee.
- d) Evaluates and monitors teaching effectiveness, supports instructors in the undergraduate program, and mentors new instructors.
- e) Oversees the training of PhD students who serve as Teaching Assistants in our undergraduate classes.
- f) Supervises undergraduate academic advisors.
- g) Supports undergraduate student groups.
- h) Supervises the Department's career development programs for undergraduates.
- i) Acts as liaison with the Dornsife College Dean of Undergraduate Education, and the Dean's officers, and participates in Dornsife DUS faculty meetings.

4. Director of PhD Graduate Studies

The Director of PhD Graduate Studies (DGS) will be appointed by the Chair in consultation with the faculty and serves at the Chair's discretion for a term of 3 years, with the possibility of renewal. He/she/they supervise all matters related to the Department's PhD graduate students, although it is understood that some responsibilities may be delegated to other faculty or staff, as deemed appropriate, with the approval of the Department Chair. This oversight includes:

- a) Working with the PhD Admissions Committee to attract applications from a large number of students from both the US and around the world.
- b) Working with the faculty who teach first-year and second-year PhD classes to deliver a curriculum that trains our students in modern economics of high quality.

- c) The DGS, in conjunction with the PhD Program Committee and the faculty in micro theory, macro, and econometrics, determines how to structure and staff the first-year's PhD classes.
- d) Monitoring both the writing and the grading process for the core exam in such a way as to guarantee a fair and timely grading process.
- e) Monitoring student progress in forming a thesis committee and in writing high-quality second-year and third-year papers.
- f) Checking in with the thesis committees to identify students at risk of not completing their dissertations.
- g) Acting as an "umpire" in cases where disagreements arise between students and faculty mentors.
- h) Working with the PhD job market placement committee to help students find employment upon graduation.

5. Director of Masters Graduate Studies

The Director of Masters Graduate Studies (DMGS) will be appointed by the Chair in consultation with the faculty and serve at the Chair's discretion for a term of 3 years, with the possibility of renewal. He/she/they supervise all matters related to the Department's graduate students in the Department's Masters of Science in Applied Economics and Econometrics (MSAEE) program, although it is understood that some responsibilities may be delegated to other faculty or staff, as appropriate, with the approval of the Department Chair. This oversight includes:

- a) Working with the Masters Admissions Committee to attract and admit a high-quality entering class.
- b) Working with the faculty who teach in the Masters Program and serve on the Masters Program Committee in order to design a high-quality curriculum.
- c) Monitoring the quality of our teaching in this program and identifying new courses that could improve the quality of the educational experience in our Masters program and to cater to changing needs in the market for our students.
- d) Helping our students to network and to pursue their job placement opportunities.
- e) Cultivating an external network of corporate contacts.
- f) Determining staffing for MSAEE courses, in consultation with the Department Chair, and serving on the RTPC Recruitment Committee.

6. Directors of New Programs

If the Department creates, on its own or jointly with other academic departments within USC, a new academic program, outside of the jurisdiction of the three director positions, as described above, the Economics Department Chair may appoint a director of said program, in consultation with the faculty. This may include modifying the responsibilities of existing departmental officers to accommodate these new positions.

7. Roles of Departmental Officers

The Chair has the discretion to modify the roles and responsibilities of departmental officers in accordance with shifting departmental needs.

III. Vote of No Confidence in Departmental Officers

The voting members of the Department of Economics may take a vote of no confidence in any departmental officer, including the Chair, the Vice Chair, the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), the Director of Masters Graduate Studies (DMGS), or the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) under the following procedures:

i. Petition. Sixty percent of the tenured, tenure-track, and RTPC faculty members must send a written petition to the Department Manager, setting forth the grounds for a vote of no confidence.

ii. Notice of Petition and Meeting. After the petition is filed, the Department must notify the officer named in the petition, who may voluntarily step down. If the officer does not step down, he/she/they may send a written response to the Department Chair. The Department Chair then schedules and presides over a meeting of the voting members to discuss the petition for a vote of no confidence and its response. The meeting should be scheduled so as to maximize the participation of voting members. Officers subject to such a vote may present arguments at the outset of the meeting and answer questions from the faculty. After their presentation, the officer/s named in the petition will leave the meeting to allow the faculty to discuss and deliberate confidentially. If the petition deals with the Chair, the Vice Chair replaces the Chair in the Petition process outlined above. If both the Chair and Vice Chair are under petitions for votes of no confidence, then the most senior member of the Departmental officers will replace the Chair in the Petition process outlined above. If there is no such available Departmental Officer, the most senior tenured member of the Department who is available will replace the Chair in the Petition process outlined above.

iii. Petition Approval. Votes will be counted by the Department Manager, who will inform both the subject of the petition and the general membership of the Department of

Economics of the result. The voting faculty members are the Tenured Professors. If a vote of no confidence receives votes from two-thirds majority of all votes cast by the eligible faculty, the Department Manager will inform the Dean of USC Dornsife College. The ultimate authority over removal of the Chair is the Dean. The Chair has authority to remove other departmental officers in response to a vote of no confidence.

IV. Standing Committees

The Department's standing committees include: the Faculty Recruitment Committee, the RTPC Recruitment Committee, the PhD Program Committee, the Masters Program Committee, the Undergraduate Education Committee, the Finance Committee, the Executive Committee, the RTPC Evaluation Committee, and the MA and PhD Admissions Committees. While the committees will be appointed each year by the Chair, faculty members will also be consulted for the committees that they would be most interested in serving on.

Name of the Committee: Faculty Recruitment Committee

- a) Purpose: This Committee recruits new tenured and tenure-track faculty to join the Department.
- b) Committee Composition: The Department Chair assigns a Committee Chair and the rest of the committee.
- c) Duties and Responsibilities: This Committee works to recruit new faculty who help the Department to meet our research and teaching goals. The Committee creates an advertisement to widely circulate the job opening and reads the application files. The Committee decides who will be brought to campus for job talks. The entire faculty then participates in the process of meeting the candidates and providing feedback to the Committee. The Committee meets and votes on making a recommendation. A report is written and this report is circulated to the faculty and a faculty meeting is called for. At this meeting, the Chair of the Recruitment Committee presents the report and the faculty discusses the case. A secret vote is then held among the eligible faculty. For example, for a tenure-track Assistant Professor candidate, all tenure-track faculty can vote. The Department Chair is in charge of contacting the successful candidate and negotiating with the candidate. If the candidate turns down the offer, then the recruiting process continues.

Name of the Committee: RTPC Recruitment Committee

- a) Purpose: This Committee recruits RTPC faculty to join the Department.
- b) Committee Composition: The Department Chair assigns a Committee Chair and the rest of the committee.
- c) Duties and Responsibilities: This Committee works to recruit new RTPC faculty who help the Department to meet our teaching and curriculum goals. The Committee

creates an advertisement to be used in widely circulating for any job opening and then reads the applicants' files. The Committee decides which candidates to interview and may invite candidates to give sample lectures or submit links to video lectures, as deemed necessary. The Committee meets and votes on making any such recommendation. A report is written and this report is circulated to the faculty and a faculty meeting is called. At this meeting, the Chair of the Recruitment Committee presents the report and the faculty discusses the case. A secret vote is then held among the eligible faculty. The Department Chair coordinates with the Committee Chair to contact the successful candidate. The Department Chair is in charge of negotiating the terms of the candidate's employment.

Name of the Committee: PhD Program Committee

- a) Purpose: This Committee works with the Director of PhD Graduate Studies to address the challenges and take advantage of new opportunities related to the program.
- b) Committee Composition: The Department Chair assigns a Committee Chair and the rest of the committee.
- c) Duties and Responsibilities: This Committee works to continually upgrade every phase of the PhD student experience from applying to the program, coursework, core exams, initial research exploration, technical training, PhD committee formation, thesis writing, and thesis defense to the student's job search, ultimate placement, and even alumni networking.

Name of the Committee: PhD Core Theory Examination Committee

- a) Purpose: This Committee is responsible for setting and evaluating the screening ("core") examination for students in the PhD degree program. The screening examination is held twice during the summer of the first year of each PhD cohort.
- b) Committee Composition: The Department Chair assigns a Committee Chair and the rest of the committee. Typically, the rest of the committee will include faculty members teaching in the first-year core theory courses.
- c) Duties and Responsibilities: This Committee sets questions for the screening examination in microeconomic and macroeconomic theory. It is responsible for grading the completed examinations and communicating the results to the Chair.

Name of the Committee: Masters Program Committee

- a) Purpose: This Committee works with the Director of Masters Graduate Studies to address the challenges in, and new opportunities for, the MSAEE program.
- b) Committee Composition: The Department Chair assigns a Committee Chair and the rest of the committee.
- c) Duties and Responsibilities: This Committee works to continually upgrade every

phase of the Masters student experience from applying to the program, coursework, job placement, and even alumni networking.

Name of the Committee: Undergraduate Education Committee

- a) Purpose: This Committee works with the DUS and focuses on how to improve our undergraduate educational experience.
- b) Committee Composition: The Department Chair assigns a Committee Chair and the rest of the committee.
- c) Duties and Responsibilities: This Committee works to continually upgrade every phase of the undergraduate student experience both in the classroom and outside of the classroom, including guidance to further study and/or employment after graduation.

Name of the Committee: Finance Committee

- a) Purpose: This Committee is briefed by the Department Chair and the Department's Managing Officer on issues regarding the Department's finances. This committee meets at least once a semester. This committee provides the Department Chair with the opportunity to discuss fiscal challenges and opportunities that the Department faces and to receive feedback on the Department's direction. This Committee allows the entire Department to provide feedback on how to maintain an efficient general resource allocation process.
- b) Committee Composition: The Department Chair assigns tenured faculty to serve. The Chair has the discretion to add Departmental Officers to the committee.
- c) Duties and Responsibilities: Under the Dornsife Dean's rules, the Department Chair is in charge of the allocation of fiscal resources within the Department. This Finance Committee serves as an advisory committee to the Chair. The Department Chair and the Department's Program Manager share broad budget information with this Committee. This oversight committee ensures accountability with respect to the Department's finances based on aggregate statistics. Such aggregated data protects the privacy of individual faculty member's contract information.

Name of the Committee: Executive Committee

- a) Purpose: This Committee evaluates the teaching, research, and service of those faculty members who are up for a merit review.
- b) Committee Composition: The Department Chair nominates faculty and the Department's tenured and tenure-track faculty vote on their appointment.

Name of the Committee: RTPC Evaluation Committee

- a) Purpose: This Committee completes merit evaluations of RTPC faculty members scheduled for review or who choose to be reviewed, in accordance with the policies of USC

Dornsife.

- b) Committee Composition: The Department Chair assigns a Committee Chair and the rest of the committee.

Name of the Committee: PhD Admissions Committee

- a) Purpose: This Committee selects applicants to the PhD program for offers of admission.
- b) Committee Composition: The Department Chair assigns a Committee Chair or Co-Chairs and the rest of the committee.
- c) Duties and Responsibilities: This Committee works to select a high-quality group of PhD students.

Name of the Committee: Masters Admissions Committee

- a) Purpose: This Committee selects applicants to the Masters program for offers of admission.
- b) Committee Composition: The Department Chair assigns a Committee Chair or Co-Chairs and the rest of the committee.
- c) Duties and Responsibilities: This Committee works to select a high-quality group of students for the Masters program.

V. Other Committees

The Department Chair may create additional standing or ad hoc committees as necessary in consultation with the Dean of Social Sciences. It is understood that new program committees may be required as the Department creates additional academic programs.

Departmental Officers or Standing Committee Chairs may create ad hoc advisory or exploratory committees to make recommendations or report findings to an officer or Committee Chair, as appropriate.

VI. Department Meetings

- a) The Department is expected to hold at least four faculty meetings per year. The date of each such meeting shall be announced at least one week prior to the meeting and the agenda for each meeting announced at least one day before the meeting. The Department Chair leads the meeting.
- b) All tenure-track faculty and RTPC faculty are invited to the meetings. If there are certain matters that must be discussed with a subset of the faculty, then the other faculty members will be politely asked to step out.

VII. Voting

a) For the purposes of departmental decision making, eligibility to vote depends on the matter at hand. RTPC faculty are eligible to vote on matters pertaining to RTPC faculty appointments and promotions (subject to the rules established by USC Dornsife) and on matters related to the Undergraduate and Masters Students curriculum. Otherwise, the voting faculty shall consist of all full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty with primary appointments in the Economics Department.

b) Voting and voting procedures: A vote may be called after the Department Chair has distributed a written memo or after a faculty meeting has been held. Voting outcomes on appointments are determined by majority rule. Voting takes place by secret ballot sent to the Department’s Program Manager. Rules on recusal and conflict of interest shall follow those in the USC Faculty Handbook section 3-H (1) “Conflict of interest.”

c) Voting rights: Faculty shall vote on personnel actions according to their rank as shown in the chart below. Faculty on leave and/or not in residence are entitled to the same voting rights as faculty in residence.

	All tenure-track faculty	Associate + full	Full	RTPC faculty
RTPC faculty appointments	X			X, if at or above appointment rank
Tenured appointments		X		
Full professor appointments			X	
Actions regarding untenured faculty	X			
Actions regarding tenured faculty		X		
Vote of confidence for the Chairperson or departmental officers		X		
Decisions regarding existing academic programs	X			X, on appropriate matters for the undergraduate and Master’s programs
Bylaw amendments	X			X
Courtesy appointments	X			

VIII. Procedures Related to Faculty Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure

Please see Chapter 4 (“Faculty Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure”) of the USC Faculty Handbook and Chapter 2 (“Appointments, Promotions, and Tenure”) of the Dornsife Policy Handbook. Specific departmental considerations may include:

The Department Chair forms faculty search committees. Each such Search or Recruiting Committee has the authority to identify an appropriate itinerary for each job candidate’s visit, or to open up the slots to the faculty as a whole to sign up.

a) Department-specific procedures related to Joint Appointments:

Any tenured or tenure-track member of the faculty can nominate a USC faculty member to hold a joint appointment with the Economics Department. The nominator will write up a report that will be distributed prior to the faculty meeting at which this item will be discussed. This report will include the rationale for the appointment. A secret vote will take place after the meeting and the outcome will be decided by majority rule.

b) Department-specific procedures for the recommendation of Emeriti status:

The Chair calls on the Department to vote on any such recommendation and subsequently confers with the Divisional Dean.

c) Promotion Committees play a very important role in the evaluation of candidates up for promotion to both tenure at the Associate Professor and Full Professor levels.

But each candidate for promotion is expected to have received appropriate mentoring before that and to have benefitted from the review committees identified below. Each promotion committee is to be headed by a Chair and is to include two other tenured faculty members. It should involve consultation with other members of the faculty and letters from relevant faculty at other institutions with expertise in the faculty member's areas of specialization.

d) Department-specific procedures related to the review of Assistant Professors on the tenure track:

Tenure-track faculty at the rank of Assistant Professor are each assigned a tenured faculty mentor. The Department should provide continuous feedback to our junior faculty concerning their performance with regard to research, teaching, and service. Formal evaluations of each such faculty member should normally be conducted during that member's second, third, and fifth years in the Department.

e) Department-specific procedures related to the second-, third-, and fifth-year reviews of Assistant Professors on the tenure track:

During each review year of the junior faculty member, the Chair assigns a reading committee consisting of tenured faculty to evaluate the Assistant Professor's research, teaching, and service contributions. The committee writes a report that is shared with both the Department Chair and the candidate. The Chair of the review committee meets with the Assistant Professor to answer questions and to offer further guidance.

f) Procedure for promotion to the rank of full professor:

For promotions to the rank of full professor, and consistent with the rules from the USC Handbook, the voting body will consist of all existing full professors in the Department. Cases for promotion are assembled by the Promotion Committee in collaboration with the Department Chair. They should select appropriate external references and the Chair should

solicit letters from these outside references, which should then be incorporated into a promotion dossier along with a frank discussion of the candidate's research, teaching, and service for submission to the full professors in the Department and subsequently voted upon by them.

g) Department-specific procedures related to the promotion of RTPC faculty:

The Department devotes considerable effort to the screening and hiring of new RTPC faculty and to helping them to excel in the classroom. Per USC Dornsife policy, RTPC faculty are supervised by the Department Chair. The Chair, however, may appoint a Department-level RTPC coordinator to address RTPC concerns, mentor RTPC, and help them prepare for promotion. RTPC faculty confer with the Department-level coordinator (if designated) and the Chair to determine whether they are on track for promotion based on Dornsife's RTPC promotion criteria.

IX. Student Engagement

Attracting, motivating, monitoring, and placing students, both undergraduate and graduate, are crucial to the success of USC's Department of Economics. Each faculty member is encouraged to play an active role in advising and mentoring students and, where relevant, interacting with student organizations and recommending student participation in relevant committees and organizations both on campus and elsewhere. Students should be encouraged to take part in relevant conferences and employment opportunities.

X. PhD Student Committees

PhD student committees shall be appointed by the PhD students and serve one-year terms beginning in January for each calendar year.

Name of the Committee: PhD Student Executive Committee

- a) Purpose: This Committee works with the Director of PhD Graduate Studies and the PhD Program Committee to provide feedback on the student experience and address the challenges and opportunities related to the program.
- b) Committee Composition: Each cohort assigns one representative to the committee.
- c) The Committee Chair is chosen by the committee members from among those students on the Committee.
- d) Duties and Responsibilities: This Committee works in tandem with the Director of PhD Graduate Studies and the PhD Program Committee to formalize the integration of student feedback into their efforts and to ensure that upgrades to the program are prioritized and instituted in the most impactful manner. The Committee collects and organizes input

from the PhD students and delivers this to the Director of PhD Graduate Studies and the PhD Program Committee on a scheduled basis. The Committee works with the PhD Program Advisor to communicate program upgrades to the student community through a combination of written correspondence and informational sessions in order to address any questions or concerns directly. The Committee works with the Director of PhD Graduate Studies to determine a feasible schedule of course offerings that best suit the current students' needs and fields of interest in each academic year. The Committee works with the Department's Program Manager to coordinate the assignment of Teaching Assistant responsibilities and ensure equitable distribution and appropriate matching across the student community. In the event that any formal complaints against any student or disciplinary issues should arise, the Committee can support and represent any such student at that student's discretion.

Name of the Committee: PhD Student Programming Committee

- a) Purpose: This Committee works with the Director of PhD Graduate Studies, the Department's Program Manager, and the PhD Program Advisor to organize a program of events and seminars that will encourage the inclusion of the student community within the Department and serve as enrichment to the existing educational opportunities.
- b) Committee Composition: Each cohort assigns one representative to the committee.
- c) The Committee Chair is chosen by the committee members from among those students on the committee.
- d) Duties and Responsibilities: This Committee works with the Department's Program Manager to determine an allocated budget for student-organized events for each academic year. The Committee has discretion over these resources and designs an appropriate schedule of events to provide the student community with opportunities to foster deeper connections both within and across cohorts and with faculty and to encourage their educational and research advancement. Such events may include, but are not limited to, on-campus conferences, speaker panels, and social gatherings and shall be subject to the Director of PhD Graduate Studies' approval. The Committee works with the PhD Program Advisor to secure appropriate on-campus facilities as needed and to ensure the inclusion of all relevant Department members.

XI. Ethics

All faculty are expected to interact with each other, both within and outside Department meetings, and with students, staff, and other members of the USC community in an ethical way, following USC bylaws and mission statements, at <https://www.usc.edu/policies/#chapter=university-policies>.