



Faculty Senate Archives

Role and Function of the Ombudsperson

Additional information: Digitized by University Libraries Technical Services and archived in SOAR: Shocker Open Access Repository at:
<http://soar.wichita.edu/handle/10057/16736>



WICHITA STATE
UNIVERSITY

Faculty Senate

Ombudsperson

The Ombudsperson's role is to resolve concerns and disputes that arise within the University, and as such, may facilitate a satisfactory settlement of the dispute without necessitating the filing of a grievance. Faculty Senate Ombudspersons are available to provide assistance to faculty members in the identification or articulation of internal disputes that arise within the University. A list of the current Ombudspersons shall be posted on the Faculty Senate's website. Faculty members are encouraged to contact an Ombudsperson before filing a grievance. The president-elect of the Faculty Senate shall assist the faculty member in connecting with an Ombudsperson if necessary.

For the names and contact information of current ombudspersons, click here (</academics/facultysenate/Ombudspeople.php>) .

Role and Function

Adapted from: <http://www.ombudsassociation.org/Resources/Frequently-Asked-Questions.aspx>

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The primary duties of the faculty ombudsman are to work with individuals and groups at the University to explore and assist them in determining options to help resolve conflicts, problematic issues or concerns. The Ombudsman provides confidential, informal, and impartial assistance. S/he does not advocate for individuals or groups, but rather for the principles of fairness and equity. The Ombudsman does not play a role in formal processes or conduct any investigations. The Ombudsman may bring systemic concerns to the attention of the University administration for resolution.

What does an Ombuds Do?

Adapted from: http://www.siue.edu/ugov/faculty/welfarecouncil/ombuds_service_policy.shtml

<http://www.ombuds.ku.edu/do.shtml>

An Ombuds role includes:

- Facilitating Conflict Resolution
- Providing constituents with safe and informal opportunities to be heard;
- Listening and discussing questions, concerns and complaints
(Issues might include but are not limited to professional tensions, personal differences, misunderstandings, and conflict over resources.)
- Assisting in identifying options for managing or resolving concerns
- Assisting in evaluating possible options
- Informally facilitating communication between individuals in conflict
- Seeking a "win-win" resolution of problem

- Providing Information
- Seeking answers to questions or helping find others who can
- Explaining University policy and procedure
- Making appropriate referrals when informal options do not work
- Discussing formal options that are available

What does an Ombuds NOT Do?

Faculty Senate Ombudsperson *Adapted from <http://www.ombuds.ku.edu/do.shtml>* (<http://www.ombuds.ku.edu/do.shtml>)

- Advocate for specific outcomes
- Breach confidentiality
- Determine "guilt" or "innocence"
- Make binding or administrative decisions
- Participate in formal grievance procedues
- Testimony in any court initiated proceeding
- Phsyhological counseling or therapy
- Make university policy
- Maintain official records
- Give legal advice

Reason for Engaging in the Ombuds Process

- Recognition that Faculty Senate Ombudsperson conflict is an inevitable part of organizational life and that conflict can harm organizational unity when it is silenced, ignored, or denied. Not all conflict needs to be resolved through a formal greivance process, but it should be addressed for the health of the organization.
- Helps organizations reduce costs related to conflict by resolving disputes informally and helping to avoid the waste of resources, time and energy of parties in formal grievance processes and litigation.
- Directs individuals toward appropriate formal processes and resources within the University as appropriate.