

Faculty Ombudsman Report 2016-2017

Covering the period from September 01, 2016 – August 31, 2017

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The office of the faculty ombudsman was established by Faculty Rule 3335-5-45.3 in 2009. I am the second person to have held the office. This is the final report that I will be submitting, having stepped down as faculty ombudsman effective September 01, 2017. It has been my privilege to serve in this unique position.

Responsibilities of the faculty ombudsman are to serve as an advisor to faculty and assist them in determining the viability of their issues, to direct faculty to appropriate offices and policies, to mediate early stage complaints informally, and to present an annual report to Faculty Council. The office operates in keeping with the standards of practice established by the International Ombudsman Association, which are to maintain independence, confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, impartiality/neutrality, and informality. A more detailed description of these principles is available on the ombudsman website. The Ohio State Office of Legal Affairs has determined that the ombudsman must report allegations of sexual harassment or intended violence to self or others. Notes maintained by the ombudsman are not subject to the open records act. Faculty are not required to consult the ombudsman and the ombudsman does not advocate for either the faculty or the administration.

The ombudsman had roughly 76 interactions (meetings, phone calls or emails) with 43 different faculty during the 2016-2017 academic year. Faculty visitors came from 37 different units on campus, 9 different colleges and 2 regional campuses. Most faculty interacted with the ombudsman only once, although several interacted with the ombudsman multiple times over the course of the year. As shown in the accompanying table, the number of interactions increased over last year. Faculty represented all ranks. As in past years, faculty contacted the ombudsman because they:

- a. were seeking information about a university process/policy with which they were engaged or were concerned that the process was flawed;
- b. disagreed with a decision made by a chair, dean or director and wanted information on how to appeal the decision;
- c. wanted assistance in analyzing or discussing options for dealing with a situation or issue.

More specifically, issues or perceived concerns brought to the ombudsman included:

Conflict with Colleagues

- non-collegial behaviors (undermining/impeding faculty efforts)
- research collaborations (authorship/data ownership)

Department/Department Chair Issues:

- working conditions (hostile environment, failure to follow OAA guidelines, chairs reneging on agreements, workload, personal safety, microaggressions, fear of retaliation, lack of respect)
- annual reviews/evaluations (failure to follow OAA guidelines)
- change in work (FTE, non-renewal, workload)
- salary/compensation

- unfair/differential treatment
- unethical behavior (request to “skirt” university rules, harassment, retaliation)

Assistance with University Policies/Guidelines/Rules

- Promotion and Tenure
- Salary Equity Appeals
- Changing Grades
- Faculty Misconduct
- Annual Review
- Whistleblower Policy
- Research Data Policy
- Benefits
- Workplace Violence

In addition, I met with or contacted select university personnel and groups to promote the office of the faculty ombudsman.

The following observation is based on this past years’ service as faculty ombudsman:

1. Several faculty reported that they had been accused of inappropriate behavior and only learned of the allegations when presented with the sanctions; i.e. they had not been asked for their sides of the stories prior to being sanctioned. This would seem to violate the basic tenet of fairness.

Finally I would like to thank the Ohio State Chapter of the AAUP, the Office of Academic Affairs, and the Office of Compliance and Integrity for their assistance this past year.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynne E. Olson
Faculty Ombudsman (2013-17) and Professor Emerita

Comparison of Ombudsman Office Interactions by Year

Reporting Period	Number of Interactions	Number of Faculty Served	Number of Departments/ Units Served	Number of Regional Campuses Served
October 01, 2010 - June 30, 2011 (Rall)	65	35	22	2
July 01, 2011 - June 30, 2012* (Rall)	85	59	30	2
July 01, 2012 - August 31, 2013 (Gerber/Rall)	81	46	29	2
September 01, 2013 - September 15, 2013 (Rall)	0	0	0	0
September 16, 2013 - August 31, 2014 (Olson)	82	61	38	2
September 01, 2014 – August 31, 2015 (Olson)	75	43	35	1
September 01, 2015-August 31, 2016 (Olson)	43	31	24	1
September 01, 2016-August 31, 2016 (Olson) and August 15-31 (Rudmann)	76	43	37	2

* the faculty ombudsman appointment was increased from 9 to 12 months