ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY FACULTY OMBUDSPERSON FOR 2017-2018

The annual report of the University Faculty Ombudsperson for 2017-18 is reproduced below.

Alan W. Friedman, Secretary of the General Faculty and Faculty Council
The University of Texas at Austin
Arthur J. Thaman and Wilhelmina Doré Thaman Professor of English and Comparative Literature

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The Office of the University Faculty Ombudsperson (ombuds) provides faculty with a prompt and professional way to resolve conflicts, disputes, or complaints beyond turning to their supervisors. The office offers a private place to voice concerns, clarify desired outcomes, think through difficult situations, develop options, and problem-solve. Administratively, the faculty ombuds reports to the Provost through the Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, meeting monthly to discuss any areas of concern and ideas for positive change across campus.

During the academic year 2017-2018, the faculty ombuds visited with 121 faculty from 11 different colleges or schools representing 41 different departments. Reasons for visiting with the ombuds included to seek advice related to professional conflicts, nonrenewal of appointment, student-related concerns, help having a difficult conversation, disciplinary actions, issues related to Title IX, compensation, concerns regarding appropriate procedures being followed, promotion and tenure, and annual, mid-probationary or comprehensive periodic reviews. Informal mediation involved assistance from staff in the Office for Inclusion and Equity, the Employee Assistance Program, the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, Legal Affairs, the Research Integrity Officer, the Student Ombuds, the Staff Ombuds, other administrative officials, and faculty colleagues. The vast majority of cases were resolved through informal mediation, informational counseling, and coaching. Ombuds-related activities averaged approximately ten hours a week during the fall and spring semesters and during the summer.

In addition to the activities noted above, ombuds-related work included numerous telephone conferences with various University officials, faculty, and staff to seek help or clarification of University policies, and consultations with other Universities regarding their current or planned ombuds office. Outreach activities included facilitating department retreats or trainings, participating in several brown bag lunch sessions for faculty focused on promotion and tenure and hosted by the Office of the Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, and conducting focus group sessions for faculty women to capture ideas for positive change across campus and document any areas of concern, sponsored by the Faculty Women’s Organization. The faculty ombuds also works closely with the student ombuds and staff ombuds, and serves as ex officio member of the Council for Racial and Ethnic Equity and Diversity, the Title IX Task Force, the University Compliance Leadership Group, and the Non-Tenure Track Task Force.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Submitted by Mary Steinhardt for the November 12, 2018 Faculty Council meeting.

Mary A. Steinhardt, EdD, LPC
Distinguished Teaching Professor

Distributed through the Faculty Council Wiki site

Mary Steinhardt
Professor and Faculty Ombuds
Faculty Council Meeting, 11.12.18

**Office of the University Faculty Ombuds**
*Established Sept. 2004*

**Purpose**
Provide faculty with a prompt and professional way to resolve concerns and conflicts beyond turning to their supervisors.

**International Ombudsman Association**
Standards of Practice & Code of Ethics

- CONFIDENTIAL (private)
- NEUTRAL
- INFORMAL
- INDEPENDENT
How Can The Faculty Ombuds Help?

- Listens to concerns
- Offers a safe place to discuss concerns
- Explains university policies and procedures
- Explore and evaluate options
- Assists in informally resolving a concern or conflict
- Recommends changes and improvements

The Faculty Ombuds DOES NOT:

- Act as an advocate
- Set aside a decision of a University official
- Conduct investigations
- Take sides in a dispute
- Tell visitors what to do
- Provide psychological counseling or therapy
- Provide legal advice
- Participate in a formal process
Number of Faculty Meeting With Ombuds

2017-2018 Academic Year

- Total of 121 Visitors
- From 11 Colleges/Schools including 41 Departments
  - 25 Lecturer (or equivalent); 5 Senior/Distinguished Senior Lecturer (or equivalent)
  - 14 Assist Prof; 22 Assoc Prof; 33 Prof
  - 14 Chair/Director; 8 Dean/Assoc Dean
  - 70 Female; 51 Male
- Extraordinary cooperation from the Office for Inclusion and Equity, Employee Assistance Program, Legal Affairs, other administrators, and faculty colleagues
- Faculty ombuds works approximately 10 hrs/wk fall, spring, and summer
- 2 faculty grievances completed from previous year
Faculty Grievances from 1998-2018

Total number of grievances filed from 1998-2018: 24

- grievances from 1998-2004: 17
- faculty ombuds office established Sept. 2004
- grievances from 2004-2018: 7

What happened?

- never reached a hearing: 4
- hearing panel and president against grievant: 9
- hearing panel and president for grievant: 1
- hearing panel for grievant and president against grievant: 4
- unknown: 6

Issues Discussed With Faculty Ombuds

Policy Interpretations: [Bar Graph]
Conflict Resolution: [Bar Graph]
Dealing With Difficult People: [Bar Graph]
Departmental Issues: [Bar Graph]
Faculty Evaluation: [Bar Graph]
Curriculum Issues: [Bar Graph]
Compensation: [Bar Graph]
NTT Concerns: [Bar Graph]
Student Concerns: [Bar Graph]
Research Issues: [Bar Graph]
Faculty Recruitment: [Bar Graph]
Title IX OIE: [Bar Graph]
Retirement/Well-being: [Bar Graph]
Areas for Continued Growth

✓ Mentoring and greater integration / promotion opportunities for NTT faculty
✓ Receipt of training: Title IX; diversity
✓ Receipt of training: Incivility, bullying and aggressive workplace behaviors
✓ To change the world, we all must Dare to Lead; look for ways to give more Gold Stars to students
✓ Everyone wants to feel valued / contribute; enhance our culture of support and empathy; have tough conversations with our whole hearts

Generalizations...

✓ Choose actions that best demonstrate fairness and respect, and where appropriate, advocacy for rewards.
✓ ...nonetheless, conflicts will arise (well-meaning bright people sometimes disagree), and most can be resolved amicably.

(Prof. Roux, 1st UT faculty ombuds)

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