

## Faculty Ombudsman Report 2015-2016

Covering the period from September 01, 2015 – August 31, 2016

Lynne E Olson, PhD

The office of the faculty ombudsman was established by Faculty Rule 3335-5-45.3 in 2009. I am the second person to hold the office.

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 43 interactions (meetings, phone calls or emails) with 31 different faculty during the 2015-2016 academic year. Faculty visitors came from 24 different units on campus and 10 different colleges. 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, these numbers are lower to those seen in past. Faculty represented all ranks, excepting lecturer. 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, threatened retaliation)
- research collaborations (authorship/data ownership)

### Department/Department Chair Issues:

- working conditions (space assignments, lack of respect/courtesy, poor communication, interfering with faculty work, failure to follow OAA guidelines, parking)
- annual reviews/evaluations (failure to follow OAA guidelines, differential treatment)
- change or lack of change in work (FTE, teaching/service load, non-renewal, research faculty being “required” to teach)
- salary/compensation
- unfair/differential treatment

## Assistance with University Policies/Guidelines

- Promotion and Tenure
- Salary Equity Appeals
- Prior Service Credit
- Student Misconduct
- Faculty Misconduct
- Workplace Violence
- Annual Review

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

The following observations are based on this past years' service as faculty ombudsman:

1. It is important that faculty who are recruited to sit on committees receive training in how to apply university rules and policies fairly and consistently. This is particularly important for high-stakes committees that are not convened regularly, such as Committees of Investigation.
2. More than one faculty member had concerns regarding the annual review process. Several faculty reported either not receiving annual reviews or not receiving follow-up letters that met the OAA guidelines for content. In some cases timeliness was an issue. In other cases, faculty were concerned about differential/inequitable treatment. More than one faculty member commented that achievements seemed to be ignored, with letters focusing almost exclusively on short-comings, which was perceived to be demoralizing.

Finally I would like to once again thank the Ohio State Chapter of the AAUP, the Office of Academic Affairs, Human Resources and the University Senate for their assistance this past year.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lynne E. Olson  
Faculty Ombudsman and Professor Emerita

<b>Comparison of Ombudsman Office Interactions by Year</b>				
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

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