

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA ASHEVILLE
FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number 2720S
Date of Senate Approval 04/09/20

Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

FWDC 3: **Revise ([SD5019S](#)) Faculty Ombuds**
Faculty Handbook [Section 10.5.13](#)

Effective Date: Immediately

Summary: This document allows the members of the Ombuds team to serve a six year term instead of a 3 year term. This document also updates the Handbook to the fact that the Ombuds team also reports to the Chancellor.

Rationale:

Extending the term of each Faculty Ombuds Team member, from 3 years to 6 years (staggered by 3 years), will provide a more appropriate amount of time for ombuds team members to attend foundational training, learn about the activities on UNCA's campus, and to become established in the role. The additional years also will provide the opportunity for faculty members to learn who the Ombuds Team members are, and will reduce the frequency of transitions that faculty members need to follow. Finally, with longer terms, there will be fewer ombuds team members who know information about a faculty member during their time at UNCA, likely reducing the number of other faculty members who know confidential information.

Revise 10.5.13. as follows:

Purpose

The Ombuds Team will consist of 2 tenured faculty members selected by the Provost, in consultation with the Faculty Welfare and Development Committee **and current Ombuds members**. Ensuring diversity on the Ombuds Team will be a priority. ~~Initially, one faculty member will be appointed for a term of 4 years, while the second member will be appointed for a term of 3 years. This staggering of terms is intended to promote continuity. Subsequently, the standard term will be 3 years, with potential for one renewal.~~ **Each term will be 6 years and be staggered so that a new Ombud member will be appointed every 3 years.**

The Faculty Ombuds will attend a 3-day training ("Foundations of Organizational Ombudsman Practice") offered by the International Ombudsman Association (IOA) within 12 months of being appointed, and will participate in ongoing, relevant professional development opportunities,

including IOA conferences and consultation with the Title IX Office as necessary. Support for training and related travel will be provided by the Office of the Provost.

In cases where faculty have concerns related to workplace behaviors including but not limited to interpersonal conflicts, discrimination, harassment, or bullying, but may not (yet) wish to file a formal grievance, they may contact either member of the Ombuds Team to initiate a conversation. Concerns may or may not pertain to protected class categories such as race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual identity, disability, age, and/or religion. The ombuds will listen impartially and offer an environment that is conducive to problem solving. In addition, the ombuds may discuss multiple options for conflict resolution, including appropriate resource referrals and applicable university policies. The Ombuds cannot provide legal advice or representation at any grievance, disciplinary, or judicial procedure including court testimony and non-university related issues. Any concerns related to sexual harassment or sexual misconduct should be taken directly to the university Title IX coordinator, not to the Ombuds Team. Any instances of workplace violence should be taken directly to the Manager of Employee Relations.

Although the faculty ombuds report annually to the Faculty Senate, ~~and~~ Office of the Provost, **and the Chancellor**, the Ombuds Team functions independently of all university offices, and neither represents the university administration nor any individual. The Ombuds Team operates in accordance with the International Ombudsman Association standards of practice: https://www.ombudsassociation.org/assets/docs/IOA_Standards_of_Practice_Oct09.pdf

What the Ombuds May Do:

- Offer an environment conducive to problem resolution and impartially listen to concerns or problems
- Maintain confidentiality of information, except in instances where there is a legal obligation to report
- Gather information
- Discuss options for resolution of your problem or concern
- Discuss University policies and procedures that may be applicable to your problem or concern
- Make referrals to appropriate resources
- Facilitate difficult conversations

What the Ombuds Won't Do:

- Provide legal advice or representation
- Represent or advocate for you at any grievance, disciplinary, or judicial procedure
- Testify in formal university grievance proceedings
- Assist with non-university related issues

Due to the sensitive nature of their work, Ombuds team members will be ineligible to serve on the Committee of Tenured Faculty, the Post-Tenure Review Committee, the Faculty Hearings Committee, the Faculty Grievance Committee, the Faculty Senate, and the Academic Appeals Board during the time period covered by their terms and the following year. An additional year's leave of absence from service on any of these committees may be requested by contacting FWDC at least 5 days prior to the relevant election(s). When considering an Ombuds team member for appointment to any other committee or service assignment, including department chair or program director, FWDC and the Provost should carefully consider both the confidential nature of the Ombuds work and the potential for a high workload.