

DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

2010-2011 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY FACULTY OMBUDSPERSON

The annual report of the University Faculty Ombudsperson for 2010-11 is reproduced below.



Sue Alexander Greninger, Secretary
General Faculty and Faculty Council

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The Office of the University Faculty Ombudsperson (Ombuds) was established in 2004 to provide faculty with a prompt and professional way to resolve conflicts, disputes, or complaints beyond turning to their supervisors. Beginning in the fall of 2010, the Faculty Ombuds also began officially seeing visitors holding postdoctoral fellowship appointments. The Ombuds Office provides a confidential place for faculty and post-docs to voice concerns, develop options, and problem-solve. Administratively, the Ombuds reports directly to the Provost of the University with respect to faculty and to the Vice President for Research with respect to post-docs.

During the academic year 2010-11, forty-eight faculty members and two post-docs from eight different colleges or schools contacted the Faculty Ombuds to seek help or advice on concerns involving the tenure process, denial of promotion and tenure, salary/gender equity, professional conflicts, help having a difficult conversation, or concerns regarding appropriate procedures. Informal mediation involved meetings with two deans/associate deans, thirteen departmental chairs, the Chair of the Faculty Grievance Committee, and several staff in the legal affairs office.

The majority of cases were resolved through informational mediation, counseling, and coaching, although a few are still in process. One case was referred to the Faculty Grievance Committee. An additional eight contacts requested information only or referral to the appropriate office and no further action was needed. Ombuds-related activities averaged seven to nine hours per week during the fall and spring semesters, and five to seven hours per week during the summer.

In addition to the activities noted above, faculty outreach included two tenure and promotion faculty discussion sessions attended by eighteen faculty members, a few presentations on campus regarding the purpose of the University Faculty Ombuds office, quarterly meetings with the professional group, Ombuds of Texas, and consultations with other universities regarding their current or planned ombuds offices. The Faculty Ombuds also served on the search committee to select the first Staff Ombudsperson for The University of Texas at Austin.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Submitted by Mary Steinhardt, Faculty Ombuds for the October 31, 2011, Faculty Council meeting.



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Posted on the Faculty Council website (<http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/>) on October 26, 2011.