

DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY FACULTY OMBUDSPERSON FOR 2011-2012

The annual report of the University Faculty Ombudsperson for 2011-12 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. In 2010, the faculty ombuds also began officially seeing visitors holding postdoctoral fellowship appointments. The ombuds office provides a confidential place for faculty and post-doctoral fellows (post-docs) to voice concerns, clarify desired outcomes, think through difficult situations, 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 2011-12, sixty-five visitors (sixty-two faculty and three post-docs) from ten different colleges or schools contacted the faculty ombuds to seek help or advice on concerns involving the tenure process, denial of promotion and tenure, post-tenure review, salary/gender equity, professional conflicts, concerns regarding appropriate procedures being followed, and help having a difficult conversation. Informal mediation involved meetings with three deans/associate deans, eight departmental chairs, and several staff of the Office of Legal Affairs.

The majority of cases were resolved through informational mediation, counseling, and coaching, although several are still in process. An additional twelve contacts requested information only or referral to the appropriate office and no further action was needed. Ombuds-related activities averaged approximately seven to ten hours a week during the fall and spring semesters, and twelve to fifteen hours a week during the summer.

In addition to the activities noted above, faculty outreach included several presentations on campus regarding the purpose of the University faculty ombuds office, a collaborative survey project with the Office of the Vice President for Research to see how the University could better serve post-docs ($n=211$ surveys completed), quarterly meetings with the professional group *Ombuds of Texas*, regular meetings with the University staff ombuds and student ombuds, and consultations with other universities regarding their current or planned ombuds office.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Submitted by Mary Steinhardt, University faculty ombuds for the October 15, 2012, Faculty Council meeting.



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Posted on the Faculty Council website (<http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/>) on October 18, 2012.