

University of Memphis Faculty Ombudsperson

Summary of Duties:

The University of Memphis Faculty Ombudsperson is an independent, confidential and impartial resource available to the faculty to facilitate cooperation and consensus through education and mediation. The Ombudsperson seeks to engender awareness and skill development in the areas of conflict resolution, communication, team building and civility. In a neutral and impartial role, the Ombudsperson assists all tenured, tenure-track, clinical, research, one-year and part-time instructors and teaching assistants to resolve complaints with the goal of promoting alternatives to adversarial processes. The Ombudsperson receives and seeks to resolve complaints, explains relevant policies and procedures, conducts or directs research and fact-finding, makes referrals to appropriate campus and community resources, makes recommendations for change, attempts to open avenues of communication among parties, and mediates between conflicting parties. As needed, the Ombudsperson makes recommendations to the Provost concerning policy and/or procedural changes that arise as a result of conflicts that have occurred.

The Ombudsperson should maintain a collaborative relationship with other University offices (e.g., Academic Affairs, Human Resources, Affirmative Action, Student Affairs). However, when legal and/or disciplinary issues arise, the Ombudsperson has responsibility for referring any pending matters to the appropriate unit of the University. Moreover, the ombudsperson's activities are restricted to the faculty and to teaching assistants; staff and student conflicts should be directed to the Department of Human Resources and the Office of Student Affairs respectively.

Qualifications Include:

Successful experience conducting, coordinating, and directing inquiries and informal investigations of the widest possible range and achieving solutions with highly sensitive issues that require confidentiality; experience in managing conflict, mediation, or intervention; experience in investigative principles and practices; excellent verbal communication and listening skills; effective interpersonal skills; skills to assess problems; knowledge of the university's policies and procedures; knowledge of human resource principles and practices; the ability to gain the trust and confidence of individuals at all organizational levels; exemplary personal and professional ethics.

The Ombudsperson reports to the Provost, and has offices in the suite of offices reserved for the Faculty Senate.