

## FACULTY OMBUDS POLICY

### BUPP 723

#### **Purpose of the Position:**

The University Faculty Ombudsperson is appointed by the Executive Vice-President and Provost with concurrence of the Faculty Senate and serves to facilitate resolution of problems, questions or disputes for the Faculty in an informal, impartial and confidential manner. The Ombudsperson is not an advocate for the Administration or Faculty, but is an advocate of fair process and impartial mediation. The Ombudsperson operates independently of the University's formal grievance procedures, has no decision-making authority, and is independent of the University's normal academic administration. Above all, the Ombudsperson operates under strict confidentiality, to the extent permitted by law, and serves as an alternative to administrative channels, frequently operating as a place of first resort to resolve concerns, problems and/or disputes related to issues of administrative and faculty rights and responsibilities. The Ombudsperson works with the full cooperation of all University personnel and promotes consistent application of policies and practices with the values of fairness, equity, justice and mutual respect.

#### **Duties of the Faculty Ombudsperson:**

- To promote consistent application of policies and practices with the values of fairness, equity, justice and mutual respect
- To avoid any situation that could create a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest
- To mediate disputes to seek a "win-win" resolution of problems
- To serve as an informal, confidential sounding board for faculty questions, issues, and concerns
- To hold all information confidential unless permission to release information is granted to the extent permitted by law
- To break confidentiality only when permitted or required by law or if there appears to be risk of harm
- To act as resource of information and to explain university policies and procedures
- To direct parties to the appropriate office, department, or organization in the University or the community that might help resolve concerns
- To hear all of the concerned sides in a dispute and help analyze the situation
- To help evaluate various options to address concerns informally
- To recommend an appropriate course of action to resolve the issue and to inform all parties involved in the mediation of those recommendations
- To follow-up to make sure concerns are addressed or responses to expressed concerns are provided
- To make appropriate referrals when informal options do not work
- To give advice on how to maintain formal written records consistent with policy
- To inform the administration of patterns of endemic problems or complaints in periodic meetings and recommend changes

1/9/08

To provide an annual progress report to the Executive Vice-President and Provost and the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate

**Activities Not Part of the Faculty Ombudsperson's Duties:**

- To participate in formal grievance processes
- To serve as an office of record
- To mediate student issues
- To mediate staff issues
- To handle non-university related issues or disputes
- To make policy or administrative decisions
- To assign blame or guilt
- To give legal advice
- To assess sanctions
- To maintain official records
- To hold any other administrative position, sit on any grievance or tenure committees, or serve in the Faculty Senate

**Qualifications:**

- Must be a tenured full professor or full retired professor of the Baylor University Faculty
- Must be a member of the International Ombudsman Association (IOA) and attend at least one training session per year and the annual conference
- Must be committed to the values of fairness, equity and justice
- Must be a person of integrity recognized by both the administration and the faculty
- Must adhere to the International Ombudsman Association code of ethics
- Must be familiar with University policies and procedures, especially those pertaining to academic issues, grievances, faculty and staff personnel, and records.
- Must be able to handle issues confidentially
- Must be willing to participate in conflict resolution training
- Must possess good communication and problem solving skills
- Must possess decision making and strategic thinking skills
- Must demonstrate organizational knowledge and networking skills
- Must be sensitive to issues of genuine diversity
- Must demonstrate diplomatic skills
- Must have good presentation skills
- Must be empathetic

An Ombudsperson Selection Committee shall be composed of three members appointed by the Executive Vice-President and Provost and three members selected by the Faculty Senate. The Committee will solicit applications for the position, will interview candidates and will submit to the Executive Vice-President and Provost and the Faculty Senate recommended candidates for the position. The successful candidate will be nominated by a majority vote of the Faculty Senate and be approved by the Executive Vice-President and Provost.

**Terms of Appointment, Workload and Compensation of the Faculty Ombudsperson**

1/9/08

The Ombudsperson will be appointed for a term of three years and will be eligible for reappointment for a second three-year term with approval of the Executive Vice-President and Provost and a majority vote of the Faculty Senate. However, there shall be no contractual nor tenure right to the duties of Ombudsperson.

The Faculty Ombudsperson will be available for consultation during all academic sessions and will maintain a separate office and records. Ideally this office will be housed in an area near the Ombudspersons for Staff and Students.

The Faculty Ombudsperson will be compensated in the following manner. The Ombudsperson will be entitled to a three hour per semester teaching load reduction during the spring and fall semesters, and half-time (10%) compensation without teaching duties during the summer sessions (the Ombudsperson may take on additional responsibilities, such as teaching or administrative assignments, for additional compensation during the summer). Necessary budgetary expenses for both teaching load reduction and summer salary compensation as well as the expenses for maintaining the Ombudsperson's office including the membership fees of the IOA, attendance at the annual conference and one training seminar per year shall be arranged through the office of the Executive Vice-President and Provost.

Faculty on modified service or retired faculty who are selected for this position will receive compensation equivalent to that stipulated above.

The Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate, in consultation with the Executive Vice-President and Provost, may counsel the Ombudsperson at any time regarding job performance.

The Executive Vice President and Provost may reassign the duties as Ombudsperson with concurrence of a majority vote of Faculty Senate.

Changes made to the duties, compensation, and/or job description of the Faculty Ombudsperson may be done with agreement between the Executive Vice-President and Provost and a majority vote of the Faculty Senate.

Approved: John M. Lilley, President

Date: January 15, 2008