# UMKC Faculty Ombudsperson PRELIMINARY Annual Report 2016

## Nancy E. Day, Faculty Ombudsperson

This academic year is my sixth as UMKC Faculty Ombudsperson. This preliminary report is submitted to the Faculty Senate’s March 15 All Faculty Meeting.

## 2015-2016 Ombuds Activities

***Assisting visitors:*** To date, I have seen 9 faculty visitors from four different colleges/schools. Most years, there’s a “surge” towards the end of the academic year, so I anticipate this number will be higher. Interactions included emails, telephone and face-to-face meetings, and researching cases, referrals, or conferring with other professionals. Several visitors requested multiple meetings. Prior year counts are:

2014-2015: 9 visitors, 5 units

2013-2014: 13 visitors, 7 units

2012-2013: 24 visitors, 9 units

2011-2012: 14 visitors, 6 units

2010-2011: 6 visitors, 5 units

***Promoting ombuds activities:*** The main focus of ombuds promotions this year was on the following:

* I started a blog featuring ombuds-related articles on such topics relevant to workplace conflict, communication, etc.
* Every year I offer to do a short presentation of ombuds services at faculty meetings via emails to deans. This year I presented to two different academic units.

***Education and networking***

I am chair of the Academy of Management’s Ombudsperson Committee, which seeks to assist Academy members. AOM is a 15,000-member academic association for scholars in the management field. I frequently network with the two other trained faculty ombudspersons on the committee. I will also attend the International Ombudsman Association conference in April of this year.

### *Visitors’ Issues*

While personal identities and affiliations of visitors and other specifics of ombuds visits are confidential, the following themes were raised most often. These issues recur from year to year.

* Most visitors’ issues relate to conflicts and communication problems with faculty supervisors, particularly regarding decisions about performance evaluations, promotion and tenure review, or the five-year post-tenure review process. This continues to be the most frequently presented category in the last four years.
* Difficult relationships with colleagues also showed itself as an issue. Often this related to a lack of communication and/or under-developed communication skills.

### *Recommendations for University/School/Department/Faculty Responses*

The following recommendations carry over from previous years and are still relevant:

* A ***faculty-focused e-communication vehicle*** should be developed to provide a forum for discussion of issues.
* *Department chairs and other faculty supervisors should receive full, ongoing* ***supervisory training***.
* ***Conflict management and communication training for all faculty*** would enhance our working environment.
* ***All Schools/College/Departments to ensure their bylaws and policies are clear, updated, and complete***.