

# Notice of Availability of Faculty Ombudsperson Position

## Faculty Ombudsperson

**Position Overview** – The faculty ombudsperson assists faculty members with issues in which the usual means of communication between faculty or between the faculty and the administration are not functioning effectively. The Ombudsperson acts as a neutral agent in faculty disputes and assists in resolving concerns or problems related to faculty academic rights, responsibilities, and working environment and seeks to secure expeditious and impartial resolution.

### Description of activities/responsibilities

The Faculty Ombudsperson:

- May assist faculty members with matters involving compensation, appointments, reviews and promotions, policies and procedures, and nonrenewals when issues and complaints regarding these matters are not resolved through normal means of communication.
- Acts as an informal resource of information; facilitates communication; reviews complaints and facilitates the resolution of disputes. When called upon by the provost, the Ombudsperson will conduct informal reviews and will recommend appropriate action.
- Assists the parties to determine the overall context of the difference of opinion, concern or problem, and if the matter should be pursued.
- Directs the parties to the appropriate office, department, or organization – even if the Ombudsperson does not become directly involved in the matter.
- Establishes simple, orderly processes for receiving complaints and for striving to keep records provided to the Ombudsperson confidential, unless disclosure is required by law or University policy.
- Recommends changes to existing policies or the development of new policies related to these matters.

### Principles

- The Ombudsperson will promote the values of fairness, equity, equality of opportunity and mutual respect, and will adhere to the principle of impartiality.
- The Ombudsperson must respect the private and confidential nature of issues brought to his or her attention.

### Relationship to Other Offices

- During his or her two-year term, the Ombudsperson will not be under the control of UMKC's academic administration or Faculty Senate, but will be subject to all of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri.
- The duties of the Ombudsperson complement and enhance existing UMKC offices or programs of adjudication, dispute resolution, internal review, nonrenewal or discipline, academic freedom, and grievance.
- The Faculty Ombudsperson may not simultaneously serve on any personnel, grievance or tenure committee during his or her term as Ombudsperson, and will avoid any issue in which there may be a conflict of interest on his or her part.
- For certain complaints, the Ombudsperson may work with the Grievance Resolution Panel or the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity; however, the Ombudsperson will not be a formal member of these groups.

- The ombudsperson may refer individuals to the UMKC Mediation Services.
- When investigating a complaint or question, the Ombudsperson shall have access to all records ordinarily available to UMKC administrators. University officials and employees involved in a case shall cooperate with the investigation in good faith and in a timely manner.
- The Faculty Ombudsperson may request a written statement from the grievant, administrators, chairpersons, and faculty committees. The Ombudsperson may decline to deal with any case considered to be inappropriate for the office or postpone consideration until a final decision resulting from a referral to another UMKC entity is made.

### **Qualifications**

- The nominated Ombudsperson must be a full-time, tenured UMKC faculty member or a retired UMKC faculty member who held a tenured, full time position.
- The Ombudsperson must have the respect of colleagues and be a person of integrity with an understanding of the principles of justice.
- The Ombudsperson must be familiar with UMKC policies and procedures, especially those pertaining to academic issues, grievances, faculty and staff personnel, and records, and must be willing to participate in conflict resolution training.
- He or she must exhibit the highest ethical standards and possess strong written and oral communication skills, effective interpersonal skills, and have the ability to objectively evaluate the facts of a given situation.

### **Selection**

- Applicants/nominees must submit to the Provost the following information:
  - Background, qualifications, and outlook the applicant would bring to the position.
  - A comprehensive vita.
  - The names and contact information of at least three references.
- The individual selected for this position must have the full confidence and support of the faculty and the administration. A search committee will be appointed consisting of three faculty senate representatives and three members appointed by the Provost. The finalist will be appointed by the Provost upon the approval of the Faculty Senate.
- The Faculty Ombudsperson will serve a term of two years and is eligible for reappointment for additional two-year terms with the approval of the Faculty Senate and the Provost.
- The Faculty Ombudsperson must be committed to ongoing professional training and development relevant to their new role.

### **Compensation**

- The Ombudsperson will receive at least 25% release time from other responsibilities and a modest stipend; additional release time may be negotiated dependent on the ongoing workload.

Nominations for appointees to this position should be sent to Vice Provost Ronald MacQuarrie ([macquarrier@umkc.edu](mailto:macquarrier@umkc.edu) or 342 Administrative Center)