

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY FACULTY OMBUDSPERSON FOR  
2015-2016**

The Office of the University Faculty Ombudsperson (ombuds) provides faculty with a prompt and professional way to resolve conflicts, disputes, or complaints beyond turning to their supervisors. The office offers a confidential place to voice concerns, clarify desired outcomes, think through difficult situations, develop options, and problem-solve. Administratively, the ombuds reports to the Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and the Provost.

During the academic year 2015-2016, the faculty ombuds visited with 115 faculty from 13 different colleges or schools representing 43 different departments. Reasons for visiting with the ombuds included to seek help or advice related to promotion and tenure, the comprehensive periodic review, professional conflicts, nonrenewal of appointment, compensation, concerns regarding appropriate procedures being followed, student-related concerns, and help having a difficult conversation. Informal mediation involved assistance from staff in the Office for Inclusion and Equity, the Employee Assistance Program, the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, Legal Affairs, other administrative officials, and faculty colleagues.

The majority of cases were resolved through informal mediation, counseling, and coaching. Ombuds-related activities averaged approximately 10 to 15 hours a week, including regular meetings with the staff and student ombuds. The faculty ombuds also served as chair of the search committee to hire a Student Ombudsperson and Director, Office of the Student Ombuds, and as *ex officio* member of the Council for Racial and Ethnic Equity and Diversity (CREED). Outreach activities included participation in several brown bag lunch sessions for faculty focused on promotion and tenure, effective communication, and having a difficult conversation, hosted by the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Submitted by Mary Steinhardt, faculty ombuds for the September 19, 2016 Faculty Council meeting.

*Mary A. Steinhardt*

Mary A. Steinhardt, EdD, LPC  
Distinguished Teaching Professor



# TEXAS

The University of Texas at Austin

Office of the University Faculty Ombudsperson

Mary Steinhardt, EdD, LPC  
University Faculty Ombuds  
September 19, 2016



# OFFICE OF THE UNIVERSITY FACULTY OMBUDS

*ESTABLISHED SEPT. 2004*

## Purpose

Provide faculty with a prompt and professional way to resolve concerns and conflicts beyond turning to their supervisors.

## International Ombudsman Association

Standards of Practice & Code of Ethics

- ✓ CONFIDENTIAL
- ✓ NEUTRAL
- ✓ INFORMAL
- ✓ INDEPENDENT



## How Can The Faculty Ombuds Help?

- ✓ Listens to concerns
- ✓ Offers a safe place to discuss concerns
- ✓ Explains university policies and procedures
- ✓ Explore and evaluate options
- ✓ Assists in informally resolving a concern or conflict
- ✓ Recommends changes and improvements

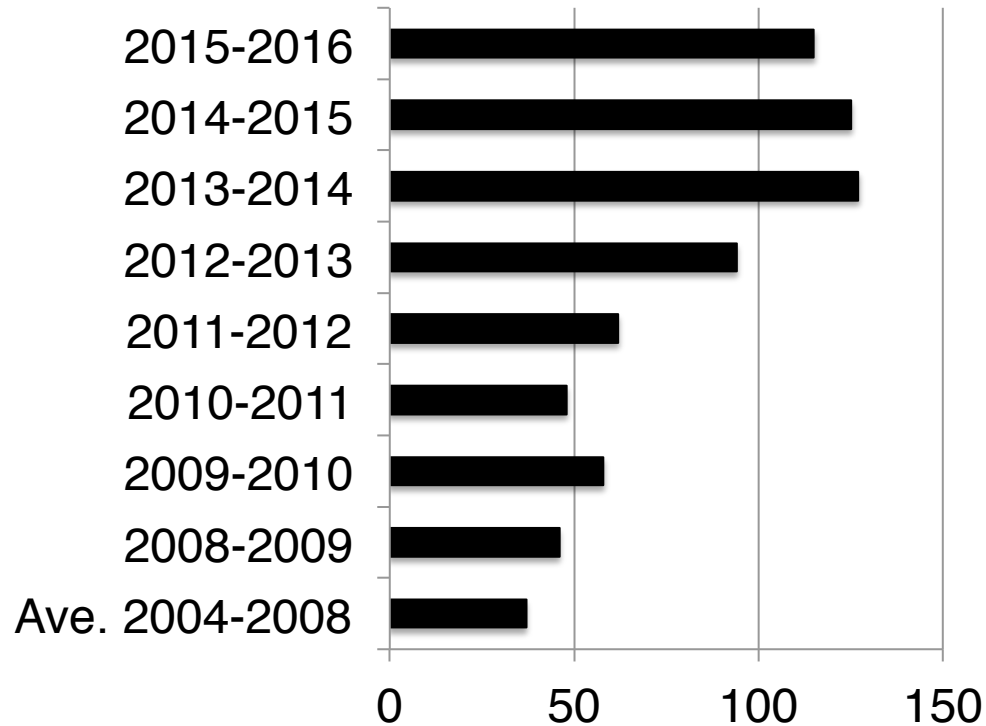


## The Faculty Ombuds DOES NOT:

- ✓ Act as an advocate
- ✓ Set aside a decision of a University official
- ✓ Conduct investigations
- ✓ Take sides in a dispute
- ✓ Tell visitors what to do
- ✓ Provide psychological counseling or therapy
- ✓ Provide legal advice
- ✓ Participate in a formal process



## Number of Faculty Meeting With Ombuds



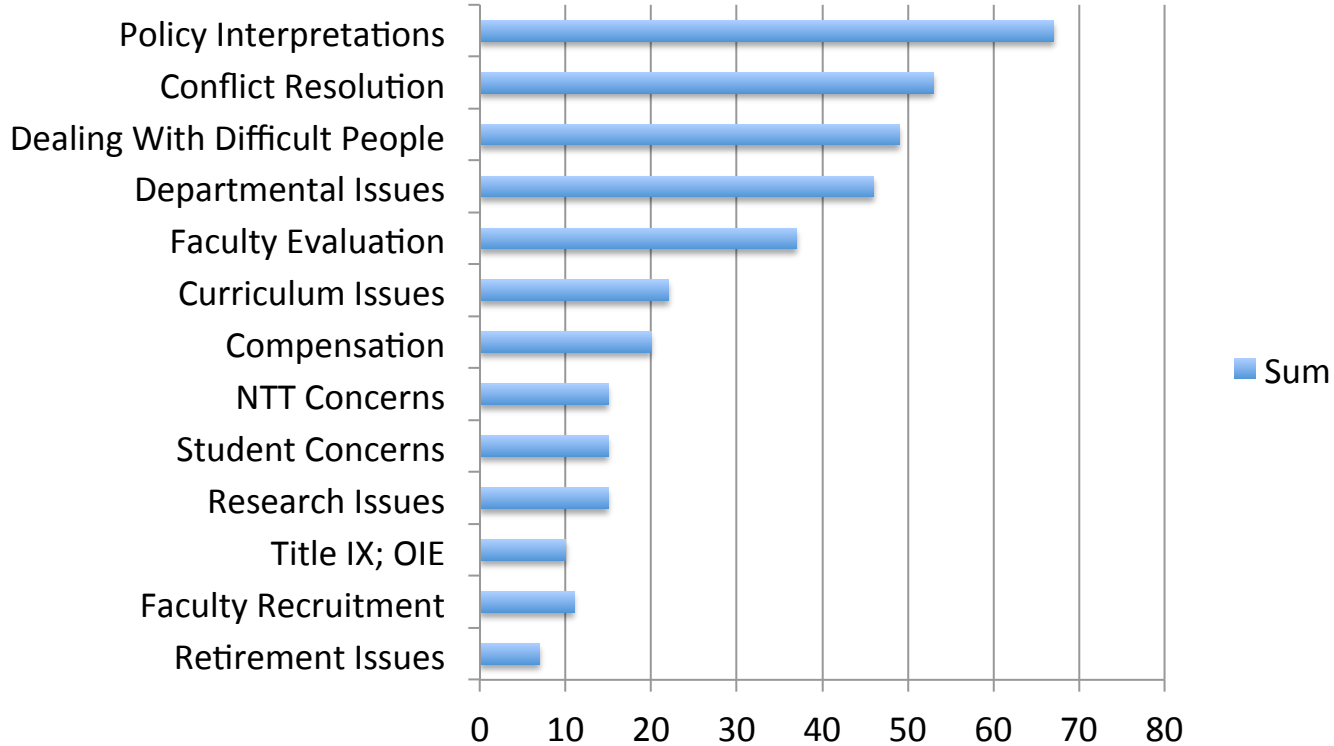


## 2015-2016 Academic Year

- ✓ Total of 115 Visitors
- ✓ From 13 Colleges/Schools including 43 Departments
  - 10 Lecturer/Senior Lecturer; 6 Clinical/Specialist/Research Positions
  - 16 Assist Prof; 27 Assoc Prof; 36 Prof; 2 Retired Prof
  - 13 Dept Chairs/Directors; 5 Deans or Assist/Assoc Deans
  - 67 Female; 48 Male
- ✓ Extraordinary cooperation from colleagues in the Office for Inclusion and Equity, Employee Assistance Program, Legal Affairs, other administrative officials, and faculty colleagues
- ✓ Faculty ombuds works approximately 10-15 hrs/wk
- ✓ Most cases resolved without initiating grievance process



## Issues Discussed With Faculty Ombuds







## Other Activities of the Faculty Ombuds

- ✓ Assistant and Associate Professor brown bag promotion/tenure sessions
- ✓ Chair of Search Committee that hired Student Ombuds and Director
- ✓ Attended Sexual Misconduct Investigation Training
- ✓ Presented at the New Administrator Workshop
- ✓ Serve as *ex officio* member, Council for Racial and Ethnic Equity and Diversity (CREED)
- ✓ Serve in advisory capacity as needed (e.g., FGC and CCAFR)
- ✓ Participate in monthly faculty ombuds professional support group



## Generalizations... *(Prof. Stan Roux, 1<sup>st</sup> UT faculty ombuds)*

- ✓ Choose actions that best demonstrate **fairness** and **respect**, and where appropriate, advocacy for rewards.
- ✓ ...nonetheless, conflicts will arise (well-meaning bright people sometimes disagree), and most can be resolved amicably.

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