

FACULTY SENATE RESOLUTION 87-7

WHEREAS within any administrative structure there may be problems of understanding and communication, and

WHEREAS there is no centralized office to assist faculty with diverse problems within the University, and

WHEREAS the experiences of other universities demonstrate that some of these problems can be avoided and others resolved through the efforts of an Ombudsman;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate recommend the establishment of a Faculty Ombudsman Office according to the attached guidelines.

ADOPTED: January 20, 1988

GUIDELINES FOR THE OFFICE OF OMBUDSMAN

PURPOSE OF THE OFFICE

The Office of the Ombudsman is designed to assist faculty with problems they may have within the University. The Ombudsman functions as a facilitator and communication link between individual faculty members and administrators or other faculty in the resolution of problems. The Ombudsman provides a more flexible and less adversarial alternative to the other forum for faculty complaints, the Faculty Grievance Committee. The functions of the Ombudsman are based on the following three premises:

Independence - The Ombudsman Office is independent of the usual administration hierarchy. Problems may be addressed directly within any administrative unit of the University.

Impartiality - The Ombudsman assumes a non-aligned role when hearing a complaint. The Ombudsman does not advocate or decide the merits of a case, but is free to propose solutions appropriate to all involved in the problem.

Confidentiality - A faculty member's permission must be obtained before his/her name is used in the investigation of a case. The records, contacts, and communications with the office are also confidential.

DUTIES OF THE OMBUDSMAN

The duties of the Ombudsman include the following:

1. Hearing concerns and complaints of faculty members regarding University policies, procedures, and decisions made by officers of the University which affect the constituent population.
2. Investigating such complaints; the Ombudsman must attempt to verify the information or facts when working with a complainant. One result of the fact verification process may be that the complainant may be urged to change the nature of or drop the complaint (as invalid). The fact verification process protects those against whom invalid or mistaken complaints are made.
3. Referring individuals to University officers and establishing policies or procedures when appropriate.
4. Mediating complaints if usual channels for resolution of the conflict have been exhausted or have failed to work.

5. Preparing an annual report which includes a summary of the year's activities, showing the types of problems that were addressed by the Ombudsman. No individuals will be identified in the report, but areas within the University that need correction should be identified. The Ombudsman may make recommendations for change in procedures. The report will be submitted to the Chancellors and the Faculty Senate.

STRUCTURE OF THE OFFICE

The office shall consist minimally of the Ombudsman and secretarial assistance. The budget of the office shall be determined by the Chancellors upon the recommendation of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

The appointment term of the Ombudsman shall be three years. The Ombudsman may be reappointed by the Chancellors for additional terms contingent upon approval of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. There should be an evaluation of the Ombudsman prior to reappointment.

SELECTION PROCESS

The Ombudsman shall be appointed by the Chancellors of LSU and A&M and the LSU Agricultural Center from a slate of candidates provided by the search committee. The search committee shall be composed of three faculty members (one of whom is appointed Chair of the Committee) appointed by the President of the Faculty Senate with the approval of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and one administrator appointed by each Chancellor, for a total of five members.

Notice of the position shall be advertised and publicized according to approved LSU regulations. Candidates may apply directly or may be nominated.

The search committee shall recommend up to three names in ranked order to the Chancellors. The Chancellors will jointly make the final decision and appointment.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS OF THE OMBUDSMAN

1. The Ombudsman shall be a member of the faculty represented by the LSU Faculty Senate. His/Her academic load shall be reduced accordingly.
2. The Ombudsman should be acquainted with the structure and operation of the University.
3. The Ombudsman should have outstanding interpersonal and communication skills and should be respected by both the faculty and administration.

ADOPTED January 20, 988