

Protocol for the selection of ombudspersons for the University of Alabama, and a description of their responsibilities:

- 1) Ombudspersons shall be elected by the faculty in conjunction with Faculty Senate elections every year.
- 2) There shall be three ombudspersons.
- 3) The term of office for an ombudsperson shall be three years.
- 4) Terms shall not run concurrently so that one new ombudsperson shall be elected every year as each finishes his or her tenure.
- 5) Candidates shall be as representative of the entire faculty as possible; therefore one ombudsperson shall come from Arts and Sciences, one from Business or Engineering, and one from the other colleges and academic units. Nominations shall be made in regular rotation, from each of these three portions of the University faculty. Ombudspersons shall not represent particular disciplines. Their names shall appear on all Faculty Senate Ballots and their election determined by a vote of the entire faculty.
- 6) If willing candidates can be identified, the total of three ombudspersons shall always include at least one female and one male ombudsperson. Ethnic diversity shall also be considered in determining candidates. If no male or female candidate is available in a given year; or, if no candidate is available from one of the academic units identified above, those who are available shall be nominated and the election held as scheduled. Gender and diversity of candidates or academic unit of their appointment then, shall become a first consideration in the next election.
- 7) Candidates shall have the following qualifications:
 - a) tenure
 - b) rank of associate or full professor
 - c) at least ten years of service as full-time faculty members with teaching and research responsibilities
- 8) Candidates shall not be:
 - a) current members of the Faculty Senate
 - b) current members of the Mediation Committee
 - c) current or former administrators, except former Department Chairpersons
- 9) Any faculty member shall be free to seek the advice and help of any ombudsperson, regardless of the academic unit of either of their appointments, and may seek the help of more than one ombudsperson at any given time.

10) The three ombudspersons shall function as a nominating committee by identifying candidates for election each year. Every effort shall be made to nominate multiple candidates and to rotate representation through the various departments and colleges over a period of time.

11) An initial election shall identify three ombudspersons for one, two, and three years respectively. Nominations, for that election only, shall be made from the floor of the Faculty Senate after the university faculty have had sufficient time to review a well circulated announcement and identify candidates for their representatives. The assignment of one-, two-, or three-year terms, in this initial election, shall be determined by popular vote. That is, the candidate among the three winners in this first election with the largest vote shall be appointed for three years, the candidate with the next largest vote for two years, etc.

12) Ombudspersons shall not succeed themselves but may be nominated for a another term after an interim period of three years or more. In the first election, the candidate who is elected for one year only may be eligible for nomination in a second election leading to a full three-year term after an interim period of one or more years. The candidate who is elected for a term of two years may be eligible for nomination in a second election leading to a full three-year term after an interim period of two years.

13) The names of all ombudspersons shall be filed in the Office of Academic Affairs.

14) The names of all ombudspersons shall be posted prominently on the University web-site, on the Faculty Senate web-site, and in other conspicuous places.

15) In the event that an ombudsperson is unable to fulfill his or her term of office, the existing ombudspersons shall name a successor from the same grouping of the no-longer-serving ombudsperson. The successor shall then stand for election for the remainder of the term, if any, at the next election.

16) Ombudspersons are expected to provide the following services:

Respect the confidentiality of all exchanges with faculty who seek their help; Make themselves easily accessible; Listen carefully to complaints and problems; Help identify and evaluate options and strategies for solving problems; Open channels of communication; Help mediate resolutions to problems; Identify, clarify, and help interpret University policies and procedures; Refer faculty to appropriate campus resources;

When fulfilling the preceding primary roles reveals policies or procedures that seem unfair, outdated, or ineffective, recommend that the Faculty Senate, a University

standing committee, or an appropriate administrator review or make changes in such policies or procedures.

Ombudspersons are not expected to provide the following services:

Legal advice or legal representation; Intervention in a mediation or grievance;

(Of course, ombudspersons may participate in a mediation or grievance if properly invited. This statement is included to point out the fact that ombudspersons do not have the authority to intervene in an ongoing mediation or grievance procedure by their own volition.)

Address non-University related problems or complaints.

Ombudspersons may elect to provide the following additional assistance:

Advocate for a faculty member whose complaint, in their informed judgment, is meritorious and deserving of support. This advocacy may include assistance in forming oral or written arguments by the faculty member, or the provision of additional oral or signed written statements by the ombudsperson supporting a faculty member's appeal for mediation or redress of a grievance.

While fulfilling their normal responsibilities to the fullest, ombudspersons may decline to advocate for a faculty member, but must never advocate against a faculty member. To do so, would compromise the confidentiality and trust essential to the effectiveness of such a relationship.

Adopted by the Senate March 19 2002