



Report on the Faculty Ombuds Office

July 2021 through June 2022

Prepared by Renée Smith, Faculty Ombuds and submitted to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee:

B. Bunton, D. Fribance, W. Dooley; and to Michael Benson, University President.

June 30, 2022

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Executive Summary

This is the thirteenth report from the Faculty Ombuds Office. This is my second report as the Faculty Ombuds; and it is intended to serve as a continuation (yearly activity report) and evaluation of trends and issues affecting faculty and my recommendations for consideration towards positive change for the faculty, campus community, and the Ombuds office. This report and earlier reports can be accessed at <http://www.coastal.edu/ombuds/reports>.

❖ History

The Coastal Carolina University (CCU) Faculty Ombuds Office was established in March 2008 as a pilot at the recommendation of the Faculty Welfare and Development Committee, a standing committee of the University Faculty. Since 2008 the office has offered services to all faculty members. Charmaine Tomczyk was the first person elected to serve as Faculty Ombuds.

In the May 2012 Faculty Senate meeting, the Faculty Ombuds position was approved to become a permanent position effective December 2012. The approved motion, stipulated “the individual serving as Faculty Ombuds would serve no more than two consecutive three-year terms.”

In April 2015, following an internal search conducted by the Faculty, Welfare and Development Committee, voted by the Faculty Senators, and approved by Provost Byington, Steve Madden, professor of communication, was appointed Faculty Ombuds beginning July 2015. Professor Madden retired from the University in July 2020.

The position of Faculty Ombuds was vacant from July 2020 through December 2020.

After a search conducted by the Faculty Welfare committee during the fall of 2020 and by a recommendation of the Faculty Senate, Renée Smith, professor of philosophy, was appointed by the Provost as Faculty Ombuds beginning January 2021.

Previously, the faculty ombuds position administratively reported to the Provost and the Faculty Senate; however, as it now reports to the University President and the Faculty Senate in keeping with International Ombuds Association (IOA) recommendations. The charter has been amended to reflect this change.

The Staff Ombuds position had been vacant since July 2020. Spring 2022, the position was filled by John Dooley.

Ombuds Services at CCU strive to adhere to the International Ombuds Association’s (IOA) [Standards of Practice](https://www.ombudsassociation.org) and [Code of Ethics](https://www.ombudsassociation.org) (<https://www.ombudsassociation.org>). These include the principles of confidentiality, independence, impartiality, and informality. The Faculty Ombuds Office is not a “place of notice” for official university reporting, as stated in its [Charter Agreement](#).

The Office of Ombuds Services fulfills one of the responsibilities in its charter by publishing this annual report to provide **upward feedback** to CCU as an early warning system of potential challenges and risks. In this report, I describe the role and ethical standards of the Office of the Ombuds, the services provided, the activities of the Faculty Ombuds, and the plans for the Faculty Ombuds. I report statistical data on the number and types of cases seen, offer

comparative data for the last five (5) academic years¹, and describe potential costs of associated risks. I also fulfill one of the most specific responsibilities of the Office of the Ombuds: to report systemic organizational trends and make suggestions for promoting positive change at the University.

❖ Ombuds Services

➤ Services of the Ombuds

The Faculty Ombuds is a resource for faculty to address questions, concerns, and conflicts. The Ombuds offers a private and safe place to voice concerns, be listened to, get information, think through difficult situations, identify options, and solve problems. The Ombuds can confidentially gather information on your behalf, provide shuttle diplomacy, and facilitate or mediate communication between parties upon request. **The ombuds does not act as an advocate for any individual, provide legal advice, conduct formal investigations, participate in formal proceedings, or adjudicate, arbitrate, or assign sanctions.**

➤ Ombuds Principles

As an organizational ombuds, the Faculty Ombuds follows four guiding ethical principles established by the International Ombuds Association: Confidentiality, Impartiality, Independence, and Informality.

- **Your contact with the Faculty Ombuds is confidential.** All individual identities, communications, topics, questions, or areas of concern are kept in confidence unless you request that your concern be discussed with another party or in the case of imminent risk or serious harm to any individual or to the University. *Please note that email and voicemail should not be considered confidential communication; thus, no personal or private information should be included in email or voicemail correspondence.*
- **The Faculty Ombuds is impartial.** The Ombuds is not an advocate for any individual or office. Instead, as a designated neutral party, the Ombuds advocates for a fair process. The Ombuds does not act as a decision-making authority, does not make or enforce policy, and does not judge, discipline, or reward any person. When you speak to the Ombuds, you should expect a neutral, objective point of view.
- **The Faculty Ombuds is independent.** While the Faculty Ombuds reports trends and general information about ombuds contacts and activities to the Senate Executive Committee and the University President, and for administrative and budgetary reasons reports to the University President, the Ombuds is not part of the administrative structure of the University.
- **The Faculty Ombuds is informal.** Contact with the Ombuds is not part of any formal procedure or policy. All communication with the Ombuds is “off the record.” When you speak to the Ombuds, you are not putting the University on notice, and the Faculty Ombuds is not a mandatory reporter for Title IX. Instead, the Ombuds can help answer questions and provide information, assist in identifying and reframing issues or concerns, and help you develop a range of options for a desirable outcome.

¹ No data is available for 2019-2020, and the Faculty Ombuds position was vacant Fall 2020.

➤ Upward Feedback

In addition to providing information, coaching, and conflict resolution services, the Office of the Ombuds serves CCU by providing **upward feedback** on themes arising from cases brought to us. In this way, we can alert leadership to potential challenges facing the institution without compromising individuals' confidentiality, and by reporting on themes in the aggregate. By identifying systemic trends in complaints and concerns, the Ombuds provides an "early warning" system to leadership in support of institutional efforts to humanize the work and learning environment at CCU. Upward feedback is delivered at the institutional level and unit level, helping to address a pattern where it can best be addressed. The provision of upward feedback ensures that we not only serve the individuals and groups who make up the institution, but that we serve CCU as a whole.

➤ The Uniqueness of Ombuds Services

Unlike [Human Resources](#), the Office of the Ombuds provides **off-the-record services** and is not an "office of notice" for the University. This means that the Ombuds is not required to report specific information to the administration. Additionally, our **neutrality** allows us to explore all options with visitors. While we recognize the value of formal routes for conflict resolution complaints, such as [HR](#), [Compliance](#), and Faculty Grievance, our services provide the CCU community with an *informal* alternative that may be explored before (or even after) a formal option is exercised, potentially allowing parties to come to a satisfactory resolution among themselves. Through these means, we promote CCU-wide conflict competence, one person, dyad, or team at a time.

Traditionally, our Employee Assistance Program ([Life Services EAP](#)) provides confidential counseling services for a variety of personal issues such as stress, physical or mental health concerns, and legal questions that may be affecting job performance. The CCU Faculty and Staff Assistance Program (Life Services EAP) is staffed by clinical psychologists, and the Ombuds refers visitors to EAP to receive counseling services.

In contrast, Ombuds offices traditionally address individual, team, or departmental concerns from a conflict management approach that is based on mediation principles of **impartiality**, **confidentiality**, **balance and self-determination**, and **voluntary participation**, consistent with the Ombuds Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. With respect to employees, Life Services EAP serves faculty and staff, the Student Health Service serves our students, while the Faculty Ombuds serves all faculty at CCU, and the Staff Ombuds serves staff members.

❖ Ombuds Activities

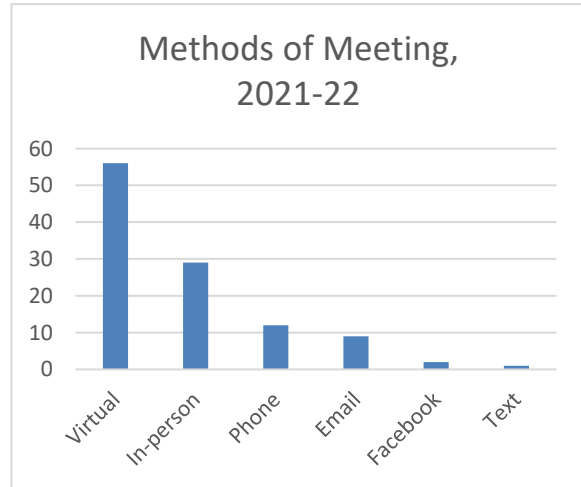
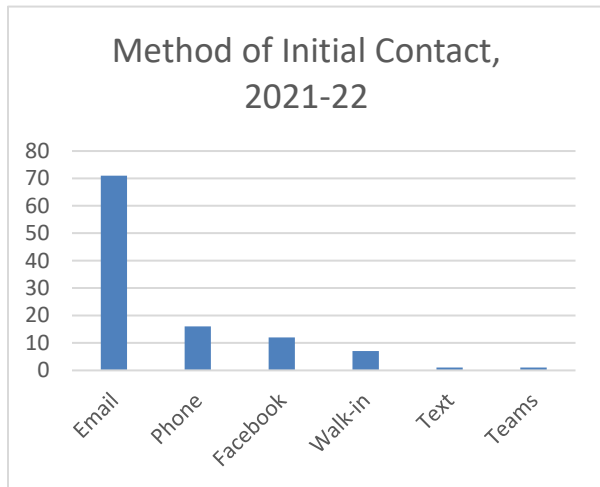
➤ Where: Contacting the Ombuds in 2021-2022

At the Fall 2021 General Faculty Meeting, in an email announcement to the faculty, at the September Faculty Senate meeting, and on the Faculty Ombuds Facebook page, I announced that for the Fall of 2021, I could be reached by email or phone message to set up an appointment for a virtual meetings (on Teams or Zoom), in-person meetings in my Ombuds Office (KLIB 210) or in my faculty office (AOC2 334), or for telephone meetings.

I can be reached using either the Faculty Ombuds email (facultyombuds@coastal.edu) or my email (rsmith@coastal.edu), or by leaving a message on the Faculty Ombuds voicemail (843-349-2727) or on my voicemail (843-349-2083). *Please remember that email and voicemail should not be considered confidential and should only be used to request an appointment.*

From July 2021 to June 2022, **109 visitors** contacted me for Ombuds Services. Visitors' initial contacts were made by email (72), phone (16), Facebook (12), walk-in/stop by (7), text message (1), and Teams message (2). Subsequent meetings were held on Zoom/Teams (56), in-person (29), phone (12), email (9), Facebook messaging (2), text (1).

From January 5 to April 4, I was on FMLA leave, though I continued to meet with visitors virtually, by email, or on the phone.

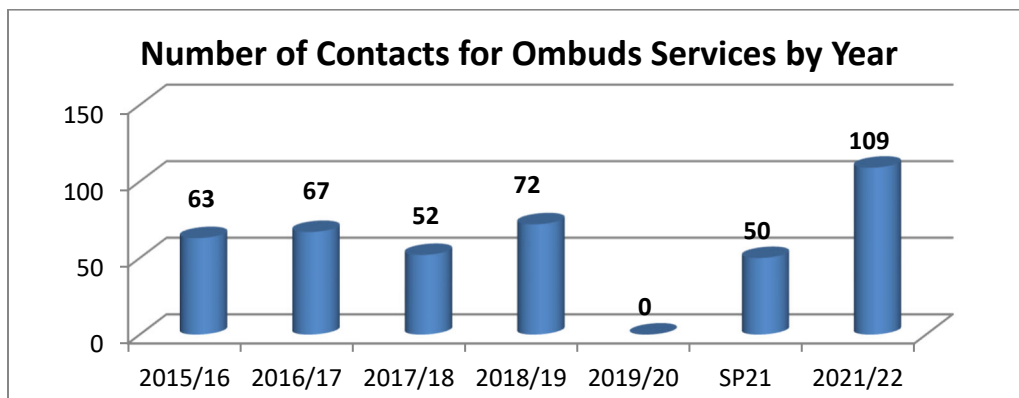


➤ **When: Wait Time to Meet with the Faculty Ombuds**

I was able to respond to most requests for a meeting within 2 hours, and I was usually able to schedule meetings within 2 days of initial contact.

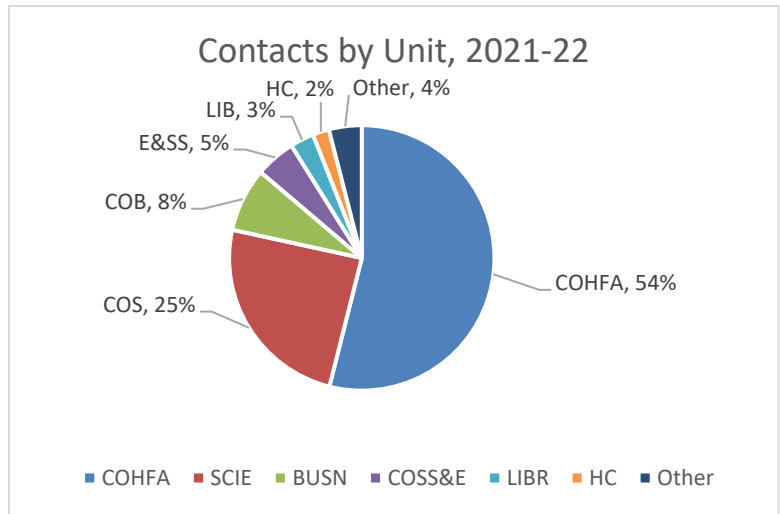
➤ **Who: Visitors to Ombuds Services**

July 1, 2021, through June 15, 2022, **109** contacts were made for Faculty Ombuds Services. The bar graph below illustrates the number of contacts each of the last several years. No records are available from the former Faculty Ombuds for 2019-20, and the position was vacant Fall 2020.



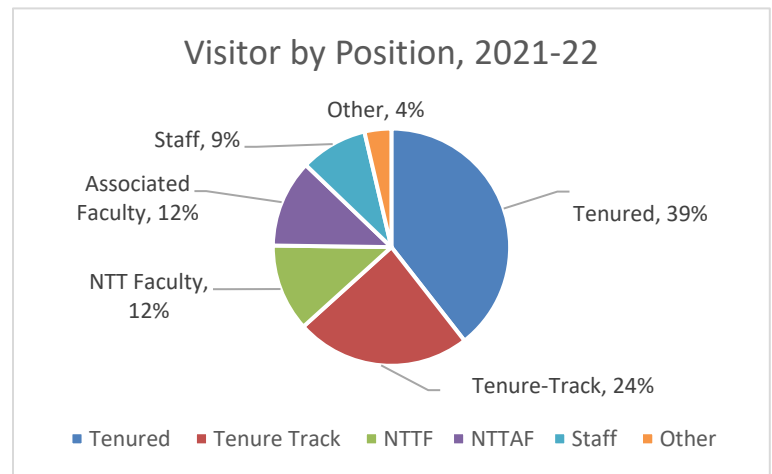
The breakdown by college for 2021-22:

- Humanities & Fine Arts (55)
- Science (25)
- Business (8)
- Education & Social Science (5)
- Library (3)
- Honors (2)
- Other (4)



The breakdown by visitor's position:

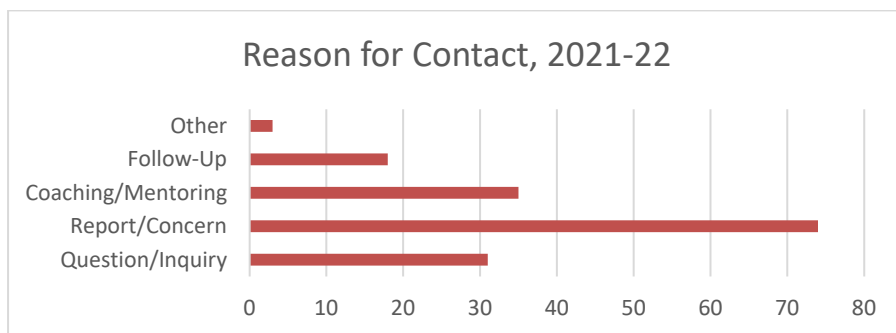
- Tenured Faculty (43)
- Tenure-Track Faculty (26)
- Non-Tenure Track Faculty (13)
- Associated Faculty (13)
- Staff (10)
- Other (4)



➤ Why: Topics of Concern

Reason for Contact

This year, I tracked general categories of the nature of Faculty Ombuds contacts. Most contacts were to report a concern (74), seek coaching, mentoring, or advice (35), or to ask a question about policies or procedures (31). Visitors also reached out to follow up on previous meetings (18) or for other reasons (3).



Uniform Reporting Categories

In keeping with the IOA Principles and Standards, no individual's name, detailed records or notes, or related documents are maintained on any contacts, cases, or issues presented to the Ombuds. Statistics are collected as aggregate data to identify trends or patterns that may demonstrate needs to be addressed in broader contexts.

Concerns raised by visitors to Ombuds Service are classified using the [IOA Uniform Reporting Categories](#). This lists 9 main categories, each having 5-19 sub-categories. I added an additional 10th category for teaching and student-related concerns and will be reviewing and revising these categories to meet the needs of the CCU community.

Visitors may identify multiple concerns that fit into different categories. While listening to visitors, I tried to identify their two primary concerns using the URC. The most frequently presented *categories* of issues for 2021-22 were Evaluative Relationships (55), Career Progression & Development (24), Compensation & Benefits (20), Peer and Colleague Relationships (20), and Services/Administrative Issues (19).

1. Compensation & Benefits - (Presented 20 times)

Defined as: Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about the equity, appropriateness and competitiveness of employee compensation, benefits and other benefit programs.

Most frequent concerns: Benefits (especially FMLA and modified duties not offered or explained); EAP; when to contact HR and payroll; credit for work performed; teaching load calculation; accommodations for disabilities, etc. In most of these cases, visitors were referred to HR or information from HR was sought anonymously on the visitor's behalf.

2. Evaluative Relationships - (Presented 55 times)

Defined as: Questions, concerns, issues, or inquiries arising between people in evaluative relationships (i.e., provost – dean, dean – department chair, department chair – faculty member and peer review groups – faculty member)

Most frequent subcategories: Integrity, respect, and fair treatment; priorities, values, beliefs; communication; bullying and retaliation; work assignments and scheduling; supervisory effectiveness; department climate.

Types of specific concerns: Fairness in teaching loads and teaching assignments; applications and decisions pertaining to scholarly reassignment; communication related to requirements for promotion and tenure; support for career progression and mentoring; unprofessional communication; lack of respect for shared governance; treatment after FMLA and modified duty requests; confidentiality concerns pertaining to re-appointment and P&T; excessive meetings and superfluous work assignments/meetings distracting from regular job duties; subjective interpretations of performance expectations; interference in search procedures.

3. Peer and Colleague Relationships - (Presented 20 times)

Defined as: Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries involving peers or colleagues who do not have a supervisory-employee relationship (e.g., two faculty members within the same department or conflict involving members of a faculty group).

Most frequent subcategories: Respect and treatment; priorities, beliefs, values; reputation; bullying and mobbing.

Types of specific concerns: Concerns about P&T procedure; confidentiality in peer review; reputation compromised/challenged; gossip; lack of communication leading to distrust; loss of cooperation and integrity; disparate service expectations/contributions; bullying; lack of mentoring or support in progress towards P&T; lack of shared governance in departments.

4. Career Progression and Development (Presented 24 times)

Defined as: Questions, concerns, issues, or inquiries about dismissals for cause and non-reappointment or tenure denial, as well as processes and decisions regarding entering and / or leaving a position or added responsibilities, (i.e., nature of and changes in current assignments, job security, and separation).

Most frequent subcategories: Career progression; career development, coaching, mentoring; termination and non-re-appointment; tenure and promotion.

Types of specific concerns: Questions about job reclassification and non-reappointment; performance expectations for promotion and tenure; lack of clarity in evaluative rubrics; inconsistent standards for performance ratings; gatekeeping; accommodations for the challenges of teaching during the pandemic; uncertainty about seeking tenure and promotion; requesting coaching pertaining to promotion and tenure; lack of transparency in decision making; financial support for research; taking responsibility for one's own behaviors.

5. Legal, Regulatory, Financial and Compliance (Presented 3 times)

Defined as: Questions, concerns, issues, or inquiries that may create a legal risk (financial, sanctions, etc.) for the organization or its members if not addressed, including issues related to waste, fraud or abuse; federally mandated compliance requirements (such as Title IX, harassment, hostile work environment, active shooter protocol).

Most frequent concerns: Questions about HR policies; inconsistent application of policies, especially FMLA and modified duties; confidentiality in personnel matters.

6. Safety, Health, and Physical Environment (Presented 1 times)

Defined as: Questions, concerns, or issues about Safety, Health and Infrastructure-related issues.

Most frequent concerns: Work-related stress and work-life balance; concerns about physical working conditions.

7. Services/Administrative Issues (Presented 19 times)

Defined as: Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about services or administrative offices including from external parties. (Primarily academic administration and other professional offices at or above the level of dean)

Most frequent concerns: Perceptions of preferential treatment; administrative decisions, e.g., pertaining to scholarly reassignment, reorganization, administrative searches, etc.; desire for shared governance and transparency in decision-making; grades altered or overturned; chairs' workload; non-responsiveness or lack of support from administrative offices.

8. Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related (Presented 8 times)

Defined as: Questions, concerns or issues that relate to the whole or some part of an organization's mission, goals, objectives and/or initiatives.

Most frequent concerns: Wanting transparency in decision-making and administrative appointments and searches; colleges' re-organization; fear that research expectations will be increasing without course-load reductions; changes to scholarly reassignment requirements; lack of shared governance; changes to class size and teaching load.

9. Values, Ethics, and Standards (Presented 10 times)

Defined as: Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about the fairness of organizational values, ethics, and/or standards, the application of related policies and/or procedures, or the need for creation or revision of policies, and/or standards.

Most frequent concerns: Concerns about administrative searches and appointments; questions about reporting violations of Code of Ethical Conduct; lack of accountability; interference in academic/faculty processes by non-academic administration; unfair application of policies; interference in faculty processes (searches, department peer review, and P&T) by academic administrators.

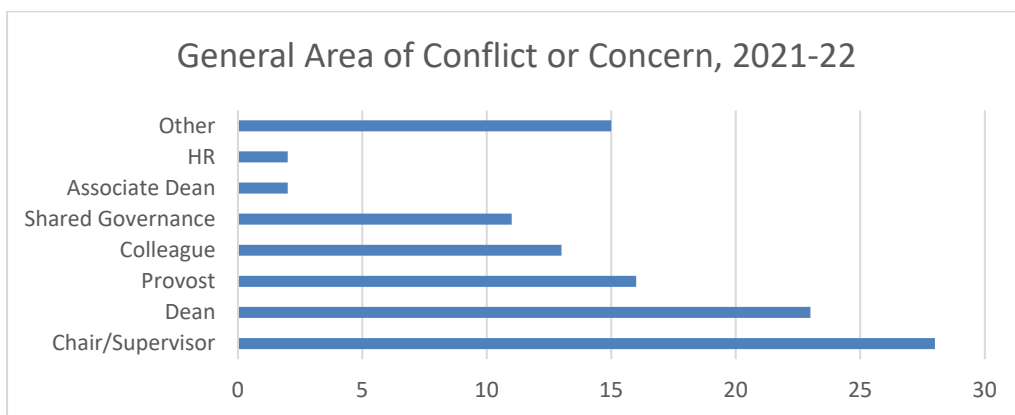
10. Student & Teaching Related (Presented 4 times)

Defined as: Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about treatment as a student or teaching, communication with students or teachers, respect as student or teacher, and other issues.

Most frequent concerns: Administrative grade changes; quality of student services; student misconduct.

General Categories of Concern

In 2021-22, in addition to using the IOA's Uniform Reporting Categories, I tried to identify the general area of perceived concern or conflict specific to the organizational structure of CCU.



➤ How: Types of Ombuds Services Offered

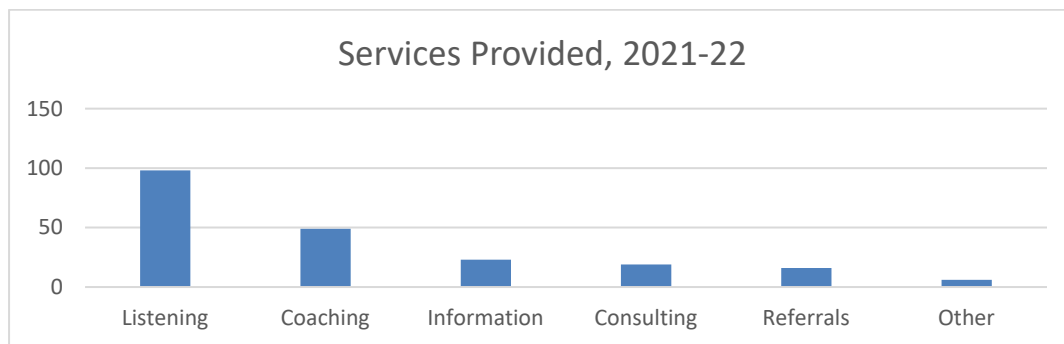
The types of assistance provided by the Faculty Ombuds (in order of prevalence) continued to be:

- **Listening and understanding:** Providing a safe and confidential resource for articulating and clarifying one's concerns and issues.
- **Individual consultations:** Offering strategies and options to help a visitor resolve issues and analyzing the entire scope and ramifications of the issues involved to develop effective strategies and action plans.
- **General information:** Answering questions regarding policy, procedures, and practices or referring faculty to specific departments or policies and procedures relevant to their expressed concerns.
- **Coaching and mentoring:** Listening and providing feedback on professional goals and individual strategies for career progression.
- **Gathering information:** Making inquiries anonymously on behalf of the visitor.

Other types of assistance the Ombuds provides but that was not requested this year include:

- **Shuttle diplomacy:** Serving as an intermediary between parties to facilitate indirect communication.
- **Facilitating communication as a third-party:** Serving as an objective facilitator of direct communication.

For 2021-22, services included listening to concerns (98), coaching/mentoring (49), providing information (23), consulting (19), providing a referral (16), and other (6).



➤ What: Observations

Some of the broad themes I observed last Spring, during my first semester as Faculty Ombuds, seemed to be general concerns about reorganization of the colleges, dean searches, and dealing with the effects of the pandemic.

This year, there were fewer reports of concerns of this broad nature. For the most part, many of the people I spoke to were interested in discussing more personal issues such as professional development (promotion, peer review, performance expectations, mentoring, etc.), interpersonal communication (confidentiality, bullying, feedback, gossip, etc.), and personal accountability, responsibility, and well-being (one's own behavior and decisions, benefits and support, workload, stress, etc.).

While visitors still sought me out for information about policies and procedures and for referrals to support offices on campus and reported concerns about shared governance and transparency in decision making (e.g., scholarly reassignment decisions and administrative searches), often visitors were seeking support, empathy, and coaching

and used their interactions with me as an opportunity to reflect, take ownership of their own professional behaviors, develop strategies for managing their own professional lives, their well-being, and their experiences of stress.

Considering all visitors, the top issues reported by visitors for 2021-22 are:

- Communication with and expectations of department chairs and supervisors, especially excessive department-level meetings and communication and inconsistent support for professional development
- Career development and performance expectations
- Shared governance, especially at the department level
- Trust/integrity/respect/fair treatment, especially with colleagues, chairs/supervisors, and deans

Based on visitor data and observations, the Faculty Ombuds reports the following organizational, systemic areas of concern:

- Administrative leadership and professional development in the colleges, especially mentoring and support through the promotion and review process
- Shared governance in departments and in colleges, especially with respect to performance expectations and peer evaluation
- Knowledge about policies and procedures, especially HR and academic policies related to FMLA, FSMD, protocol for interacting with job candidates, including internal job candidates, bullying and retaliation
- Knowledge of the [Code of Ethical Conduct](#) and the Code of Faculty Conduct and Academic Responsibility ([Faculty Manual](#), section 5.1.4), especially the obligations of (1) confidentiality with respect to personnel decisions, including non-reappointment, promotion, tenure, and post-tenure review, and (2) cultivating an atmosphere of fairness and respect.

➤ Risks Avoided

It is difficult to measure the exact outcomes of Ombuds Services; however, the Ombuds survey reflects that visitor were satisfied with their outcomes and they have confidence in the services provided by the Ombuds office. By contacting the Ombuds informally, formal grievances and procedures can be avoided. Successful outcomes have the potential for significant savings to the institution by avoiding the cost of absenteeism, grievances, litigation, staff/faculty turnover, and diminished productivity for individuals and their employment area.

❖ Other Activities

➤ Faculty Development / Informational Events

In addition to reminding faculty of Ombuds Services on the [Ombuds Facebook page](#) and announcing Ombuds Services in email and at Faculty Senate, I gave the following virtual presentations for faculty this year:

- Virtual Presentation, Introduction to the Faculty Ombuds, New Faculty Session, June 24, 2021
- Virtual Presentation, Introduction to the Faculty Ombuds, New Faculty Session, July 29, 2022
- Virtual Presentation, Conflict Resolution, New Faculty Session, October 1, 2021
- Virtual Presentation, What is an ombuds? Faculty Ombuds Spring Series, April 5, 2022

- Virtual Presentation, Bullies, Bystanders, and Mobs, Oh My! Faculty Ombuds Spring Series, April 12, 2022
- Virtual Presentation, People, Personalities, and Professionalism, Faculty Ombuds Spring Series, April 19, 2022

➤ Committee Service

The Faculty Ombuds serves *ex officio* on the Faculty Manual Review Committee and the Non-Tenure Track Faculty Committee. Being on these committees allows the Faculty Ombuds to stay abreast of policies and concerns relating to the faculty and to provide information to committee members, as necessary.

➤ Ombuds Survey

Satisfaction and Confidence

The annual spring Ombuds survey administered by the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Analysis yielded 147 respondents compared to 190 respondents the previous year. The Spring 2022 Ombuds survey reports that 84.2% (n=43) of those people who contacted the Faculty Ombuds were *very satisfied* and 10.5% (n=4) were *satisfied* with the service they were provided.

Other Observations from the Survey

- Promote/increase awareness of Ombuds Services on campus (faculty and department meetings, new faculty orientations)
- Continue virtual and in-person² meetings
- Host ombuds information events
- Promote a better understanding of what an ombuds does, specifically that the Ombuds is meant to be an advocate for a fair process and not an advocate for any individual person or office, the Ombuds cannot serve in any formal capacity or procedure, and the Ombuds cannot make policy. The Ombuds is a confidential resource for gathering information, discussing concerns, examining courses of action, and understanding policy. The Ombuds engages in upward reporting of trends in such a way as to not reveal any personal information or the identities of visitors.
- Continue to build trust and confidence in ombuds services.

The complete results of the 2022 Ombuds Survey are provided in Appendix A of this report.

➤ Ombuds Reporting and Training

Since February 2021, the Faculty Ombuds reports to the Senate Executive Committee and the University President. The Faculty Ombuds meets periodically with the President and the Senate Chair and reports trends, observations, and recommendations to improve the working environment at CCU. No identifying information or specific details of Ombuds contact are revealed to anyone at the University.

The Faculty Ombuds provides a general report to the Faculty Senate at the July meeting.

² January 5 through April 4, 2022, I was on FMLA leave and only offer virtual and phone appointments.

The current Faculty Ombuds attended the following trainings offered by the International Ombuds Association (IOA) during the 202122:

- Social Media for the Organizational Ombuds, IOA Webinar, November 18, 2021
- Disrupting Inequalities: Collaborating with Leadership to Address Systematic Issues, IOA Webinar, September 9, 2021
- IOA Virtual Conference, April 4-6, 2022

Additionally, the Faculty Ombuds attended the following trainings at Coastal Carolina University:

- Autism Awareness Workshop, CeTEAL, July 31, 2021
- Search Committee Training, HR, February 21, 2022

To share and seek information with offices on campus, I have met with the following people and departments:

- Tom Koczara, Kim Sherfese, Lori Cox, Scott Stiller, and Jeniffer Silver, Human Resources
- Brian Bunton, Faculty Senate Chair
- Jim Arendt, Faculty Welfare Chair
- Joseph Fitsanakis, CCU Chapter President, American Association of University Professors

To understand faculty perceptions, experiences, and morale, I conducted *unofficial* surveys on climate and FMLA/FLMD via Facebook. The latter survey was initiated by a faculty member.

Finally, the Faculty Ombuds was matched with a mentor by the IOA, Joshua Canzona, at USC Chapel Hill. The Ombuds meets with the mentor periodically.

❖ Recommendations

➤ General Recommendations

The Office of the Ombuds recommends the following to address the challenges in our university environment:

- Re-iterate standards of professional conduct, the Code of Ethical Conduct, and the Code of Faculty Conduct and Academic Responsibility reminding all members of the community of our obligations concerning confidentiality, respect, and fair treatment.
- Create a climate of support and respect for professional development, mentoring, and recognition of the diversity of research, teaching, and service contributions by faculty members.
- Provide on-going training and support for departments chairs and deans to maintain currency with respect to policies and procedures.
- Cultivate a better understanding of and trust in the services of Human Resources in delivering information about employee benefits and resolving personnel problems.
- Practice consensus building, transparency in decision-making, and responsiveness to faculty concerns and inquiries.
- Use consistent terms of evaluation to avoid perceptions of unfairness.
- Improve understanding of and support for shared governance and academic freedom in the colleges.

- Clarify or establish policies pertaining to reporting or notifying faculty, including administration, of policy non-compliance or breaches of codes of conduct (e.g., information-gathering and verbal warnings should precede letters of reprimand or suspensions, hold all members of the university community to these codes of conduct) without fear of retaliation.

Setting new norms requires the development of new skills. Senior administrators, department chairs, and faculty members should lead in establishing norms of transparency, consensus building, workplace civility, confidentiality, productive interpersonal communication, policy competence, and fair treatment.

➤ Other Recommendations to Consider

1. All faculty and administrators should periodically review the [Code of Ethical Conduct](#); the [Faculty Manual](#), including the Code of Faculty Conduct and Academic Responsibility (5.1.4.2), the Statement of Shared Governance (4.2.1), the Functions of the Faculty (4.3), the statement of Academic Freedom (5.2.1), and the University Financial Crisis and Exigent Circumstances Policy (5.2.10); the College Handbooks and Bylaws; and [University Policies](#), including [FAST-238 Workplace and Domestic Violence; Workplace Bullying](#), [UNIV-468 Title IX Policy](#), [UNIV-414 Whistleblower and Retaliation Protections](#), [FAST-243 Family Medical Leave Act](#), and [UNIV-469 Pregnant or Parenting Individuals](#); and the Provost's [Family Support and Modified Duties](#) policy.
2. The campus community should have open discussions about the policies mentioned above, look at case studies, develop courses of action for dealing with breaches of codes of conduct, and think about how to avoid or prevent conduct violations.
3. College and departmental handbooks, bylaws, policies (*especially* concerning promotion, tenure, and review), and procedures should be easily accessible on each college's faculty resources webpage or posted centrally for easy access by all faculty.
4. Ensure that there are fair and equitable performance expectations across colleges and departments, including consideration of the Financial Crisis and Exigent Circumstances policy, FMLA, and family leave and modified duties policy.
5. Clarify the faculty grievance process—both via the administrative chain of command and the faculty grievance committee—as well as grievance reporting and tracking at the department and college level.

While we all recognize the extraordinary work being done at CCU, a commitment to name and address the challenges we face can facilitate alignment with ethical principles that we espouse and support our mission of excellence.

❖ Plans for Developing Ombuds Services at CCU

- Provide information and promote the services provided by the organizational Faculty Ombuds.
- Host discussion groups and virtual meetings pertaining to the codes of conduct, policies, and procedures.
- Create a feedback survey for visitors.
- Revise the categories of reporting to better reflect the needs of the community.
- Continue professional development through the International Ombuds Association.
- Establish lines of communication with university leadership.
- Collaborate with the new Staff Ombuds.

Summary

Activities and services of the Faculty Ombuds Office continue to provide a benefit to CCU faculty and to exercise fairness, respect, integrity, and confidentiality. The 2021-22 Ombuds Faculty Survey confirms the satisfaction of visitors to the office and its programs. Faculty contacting the Ombuds Office primarily expressed concerns over evaluative relationships, colleague interactions, policies and procedures, and professional development. Monitoring related campus climate issues from employees' viewpoints should be measured regularly through reliable surveys and other methods.

Serving as Faculty Ombuds, I am appreciative of the support from the Faculty Senate executive committee and the President in making ombuds services available to all faculty and for the recent appointment of the Staff Ombuds, John Dooley. I look forward to opportunities to work with both the faculty and the administration to promote and contribute to a well-functioning university. It is my sincere hope that the office's services will be sustained, utilized, and expanded based on the needs of the faculty, staff, and students. With this comprehensive model, evident at many academic institutions, the CCU community will gain the advantages of ombuds services and extend service equitably to all its members.

Respectfully submitted by Renée Smith, June 30, 2022

❖ Appendix A: Spring 2022 Ombuds Survey Results

Faculty Ombuds Survey

Spring 2022



Faculty Ombuds Survey Spring 2022

Response Rate, Faculty:	
# Invited	672
# Responded	147
% Response Rate	21.9%

Response Rate, Staff:	
# Invited	987
# Responded	246
% Response Rate	24.9%

Faculty Respondents, Faculty Type	All Faculty	Faculty	Associated Faculty
TOTAL	147	109	38
Business	23 15.6%	17 15.6%	6 15.8%
Education & Social Sciences	13 8.8%	9 8.3%	4 10.5%
Humanities & Fine Arts	48 32.7%	34 31.2%	14 36.8%
Science	51 34.7%	37 33.9%	14 36.8%
Honors	4 2.7%	4 3.7%	- -
Library	8 5.4%	8 7.3%	- -
Other	1 0.7%	- -	1 2.6%

Faculty Respondents, Tenure Status	All Colleges	Tenured	Tenure-Track	Non Tenure-Track
TOTAL	147	61	32	54
Business	23 15.6%	8 13.1%	6 18.8%	9 16.7%
Education & Social Sciences	13 8.8%	5 8.2%	4 12.5%	4 7.4%
Humanities & Fine Arts	48 32.7%	20 32.8%	8 25.0%	20 37.0%
Science	51 34.7%	22 36.1%	8 25.0%	21 38.9%
Honors	4 2.7%	1 1.6%	3 9.4%	- -
Library	8 5.4%	5 8.2%	3 9.4%	- -
Other	1 0.7%	- -	- -	1 1.9%

Faculty Ombuds Survey Spring 2022

These questions were asked of faculty only.

Are you familiar with the Faculty Ombuds and the services they provide?	
Yes	123 83.7%
No	24 16.3%

How did you learn about the Faculty Ombuds at CCU?	
Email	51 41.5%
Website	3 2.4%
Information session	22 17.9%
Colleague	27 22.0%
Other	20 16.3%

In what other way did you learn about the Ombuds?
knew the former ambuds person
during an all-faculty meeting years ago
I was on Faculty Senate when the position was created
Fliers
The endless promotion of the office at meetings (by the previous ombuds)
Faculty Senate
I don't remember. I've worked here longer than we've had an Ombuds. I think we're on the fourth one now.
Faculty Senate, I think--many years ago.
fac senate
I'm neighbors with the Ombuds.
From a former obbuds
I don't recall
Working in academia in general
I've known the dif. Ombuds for the past 10+ years
When Ombuds position was originated at CCU.
Charmaine Tomczyk was the first. I've been here awhile
General understanding of how university system works

Faculty Ombuds Survey Spring 2022

[If familiar] The Faculty Ombuds...	Mean	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
Can be trusted to maintain confidentiality.	4.24	65 52.8%	33 26.8%	18 14.6%	4 3.3%	3 2.4%
Is a resource to which I would encourage colleagues to access.	4.21	64 52.0%	33 26.8%	18 14.6%	4 3.3%	4 3.3%
Is a resource I would access myself if needed in the future.	4.20	65 52.8%	36 29.3%	8 6.5%	9 7.3%	5 4.1%

These questions were asked of faculty and staff.

Did you contact Ombuds Services in the 2021-2022 academic year?	
Yes	51 16.4%
No	260 83.6%

Did you see the Faculty Ombuds (Renée Smith), the Staff Ombuds (John Dooley), or both?	
Faculty Ombuds	41 80.4%
Staff Ombuds	8 15.7%
Both the Faculty and Staff Ombuds	2 3.9%

These questions were asked of those (whether faculty or staff) who met with the Faculty Ombuds.

How did you meet with the Faculty Ombuds?	
Virtual	23 53.5%
In person	12 27.9%
Phone call	6 14.0%
Other	2 4.7%

In what other way did you meet with the Ombuds?	
Email	
confidential	

Faculty Ombuds Survey Spring 2022

FACULTY [If met with Faculty Ombuds]	
Overall, how satisfied are you with the service the Faculty Ombuds provided you?	
Very Satisfied	32 84.2%
Satisfied	4 10.5%
Neutral	1 2.6%
Dissatisfied	1 2.6%
Very Dissatisfied	- -
Mean	4.76

STAFF [If met with Faculty Ombuds]	
Overall, how satisfied are you with the service the Faculty Ombuds provided you?	
Very Satisfied	4 80.0%
Satisfied	1 20.0%
Neutral	- -
Dissatisfied	- -
Very Dissatisfied	- -
Mean	4.80

Faculty Ombuds Survey Spring 2022

FACULTY [If met with Faculty Ombuds] Thinking about your interaction in the 2021-2022 academic year, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements about the Faculty Ombuds:						
	Mean	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
Gave me the opportunity to express my concerns.	4.89	34 89.5%	4 10.5%	- -	- -	- -
Was knowledgeable about relevant institutional policies and procedures.	4.89	34 89.5%	4 10.5%	- -	- -	- -
Provided me with valuable information to help me make my decisions.	4.79	32 84.2%	5 13.2%	- -	1 2.6%	- -
Understood the situation.	4.92	35 92.1%	3 7.9%	- -	- -	- -
Helped me identify my options.	4.79	32 84.2%	5 13.2%	- -	1 2.6%	- -
Helped me evaluate my options.	4.79	32 84.2%	5 13.2%	- -	1 2.6%	- -
Was courteous and respectful.	4.84	34 89.5%	3 7.9%	- -	1 2.6%	- -
Was neutral.	4.71	31 81.6%	5 13.2%	1 2.6%	- -	1 2.6%
Was unbiased.	4.74	32 84.2%	4 10.5%	1 2.6%	- -	1 2.6%
Was fair.	4.76	33 86.8%	3 7.9%	1 2.6%	- -	1 2.6%
Helped me develop skills that might help resolve future issues.	4.41	23 62.2%	8 21.6%	5 13.5%	- -	1 2.7%
Helped me learn approaches that might help resolve future issues.	4.49	25 67.6%	7 18.9%	4 10.8%	- -	1 2.7%
Was available for an appointment promptly after contact.	4.79	32 84.2%	4 10.5%	2 5.3%	- -	- -
Was able to meet with me for a reasonable amount of time.	4.87	34 89.5%	3 7.9%	1 2.6%	- -	- -

Faculty Ombuds Survey Spring 2022

STAFF [If met with Faculty Ombuds]

Thinking about your interaction in the 2021-2022 academic year, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements about the Faculty Ombuds:

	Mean	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
Gave me the opportunity to express my concerns.	4.80	4 80.0%	1 20.0%	-	-	-
Was knowledgeable about relevant institutional policies and procedures.	4.60	3 60.0%	2 40.0%	-	-	-
Provided me with valuable information to help me make my decisions.	4.60	3 60.0%	2 40.0%	-	-	-
Understood the situation.	4.80	4 80.0%	1 20.0%	-	-	-
Helped me identify my options.	4.80	4 80.0%	1 20.0%	-	-	-
Helped me evaluate my options.	4.75	3 75.0%	1 25.0%	-	-	-
Was courteous and respectful.	4.80	4 80.0%	1 20.0%	-	-	-
Was neutral.	4.80	4 80.0%	1 20.0%	-	-	-
Was unbiased.	4.80	4 80.0%	1 20.0%	-	-	-
Was fair.	4.80	4 80.0%	1 20.0%	-	-	-
Helped me develop skills that might help resolve future issues.	4.40	3 60.0%	1 20.0%	1 20.0%	-	-
Helped me learn approaches that might help resolve future issues.	4.40	3 60.0%	1 20.0%	1 20.0%	-	-
Was available for an appointment promptly after contact.	4.50	2 50.0%	2 50.0%	-	-	-
Was able to meet with me for a reasonable amount of time.	4.60	3 60.0%	2 40.0%	-	-	-

If you had not contacted the Faculty Ombuds, what would you have done regarding this issue?

I would not have talked to anyone about the issue	10 24.4%
I would not have brought the issue up as quickly	4 9.8%
I would have brought the issue up through a formal channel	14 34.1%
I would have left the University	4 9.8%
Other	9 22.0%

Faculty Ombuds Survey Spring 2022

What other action would you have taken?

I would have spoken to my department chair,. I trust my chair and am certain they would have been supportive. However, I am happy to have resolved the issue otherwise without potentially putting my chair in the middle of a difficult situation.

spoken with colleagues

I did talk to my department chair who let me know about the Ombuds office and Renee Smith at that time.

I would have asked colleagues their opinion

I would have kept talking to trusted colleagues and friends instead but that is more like just venting (helpful in a psychological support sense but not in a practical action sense usually). It was good to hear validation that I am experiencing a real problem and helpful to get suggestions on real actions I could take to try to make my situation better for myself.

I would have tried to address the concerns through Faculty Senate and/or the Office of the Provost.

Continued cynicism about the CCU administration

I would have continued to try to solve the issue

I would have been less able to understand and resolve the situation.

This question was asked of faculty only.

Do you have suggestions for improvement in Faculty Ombuds and/or conflict resolution services on campus?

No, but any services that is affiliated with the university would be tricky to use if I actually needed to have a conflict resolved with an administrator.

No - Renee is an incredible ombuds. Her extensive knowledge of policies and institutional history, as well as her compassion and clear logic, make her an incredible resource.

I feel it's unreal and unfair that faculty do not have sick days during our first year. It's not under our control to feel sick and especially during covid we may feel sick or have health issues going on that require us to have sick days. In my first semester at CCU I had a health emergency that required me undergo a surgery and be sick in hospital for a week. I am still dealing with HR issues because I didn't have sick days. Also, during the first month and a half, we do not have health insurance. Again, being covid times, and even just because life can get real, it's unfair to not have insurance for a month and a half. It's a simple thing to take care of workers and faculty.

None

I am grateful for Renee and her guidance. Being in the environment we are in, I'm sure she is not utilized nearly as much as she should be and I'm sure there are some faculty that choose to leave over trying to resolve the issue they are encountering.

Not everyone has access to a private office so it's important that the ombuds be available on campus. I would have made an appointment in the spring if an on-campus option were possible.

I appreciate the availability and support of the ombuds, and felt particularly comfortable reaching out to Renee who I trust to be a strong faculty advocate.

Renee was very helpful and a good listener. She reminded me of some important basic concepts (ex empathy) and also empathized with my situation. However, in empathizing with my situation, she let down her guard and showed some biases and personal "beef"

Get the word out! New and new-ish faculty probably do not know what an ombuds does nor when is appropriate to contact them.

none at this time

Groups have been working on modifications to the faculty grievance procedure for years now. Perhaps a working group consisting of a member of the Faculty Grievance Committee, Faculty Welfare, UPTC, and the Faculty Ombuds can get together to determine how we should expand what is grievable, and delineate the steps for each type of grievance, whether that be retaliation, suspension, procedural errors in evaluation, etc. Faculty Ombuds has "heard it all" so would be a key ally in providing direction during the modification discussions, while also ensuring confidentiality by anonymizing any shared anecdotal info.

N/A

Faculty Ombuds Survey Spring 2022

Do you have suggestions for improvement in Faculty Ombuds and/or conflict resolution services on campus?

Most of us do not have confidence in the current ombuds; also she has no power whatsoever, so it would be a waste of time and energy to contact her

unfortunately, there are many issues involving Dan Ennis that have not been handled by the current president. the ombuds cannot make the provost do his job respectfully and no-one else in campus apparently cares to correct these poor behaviors and decisions.

none

Please keep this service going!

I wish that the ombuds could do training for those in roles to supervise faculty, just to make sure they are aware of how shared governance works and an awareness of the faculty manual and other processes they need to know.

The Faculty Ombudsman Office has been so beneficial to work through issues before they escalate and I found the Ombudsman to be more receptive than formal channels. She is very knowledgeable about CCU policies and practices, which makes her a tremendous resource for faculty. I could not have asked for a better representative.

An ombud is supposed to be neutral so he/she should not post political leanings on anything other members of the university can see.

Perhaps a ticketing system like ITS through which faculty or staff can track the status of their inquiry. My experience in sharing my concern was positive, but I never heard back re: a resolution (or at least a response to my inquiry).

NA

Keep being visible at meetings and events so people know who you are and they'll be more likely to come to you if they feel they need you!

I have not used the Office in many years. I wish that the Ombuds at the time had simply referred me to HREO for the help I needed. My issues could have been resolved much better if HR had been my first contact. I didn't know they were the answer until years later. This is in no way against current ombuds, it is simply to say that it is imperative that the person in this position make the appropriate referrals.

Unfortunately, the lack of appropriate communication and professionalism from the Provost is not something the Ombuds could fix but it would go a long way in conflict resolution. So, I guess continuing strategies on how to tackle such conflicts is helpful

Not at this time - I have never visited the Ombuds office during my tenure here at CCU

Not at this time.

Keep the administration off their backs. Administrators (including the president) made many inappropriate decisions during this situation. The ombuds may have helped offset a potential serious lawsuit.

Renee was very knowledgeable, approachable and understanding. She really helped me understand the situation and offered me professional and unbiased advice. I really appreciate having her as our ombud.

no

I was very disappointed in how the faculty Ombudsman responded to an in-person inquiry several years ago. I did not feel I was welcome. The response I received was unhelpful. The interaction leads me to believe there is little benefit to faculty from having this office or this role. Let's spend the money on salaries for staff positions that have a clear value.

I have no recommendations at this time.

The Ombuds is great help! It would also be helpful to expand the scope of the Faculty Grievance Committee to be able to respond to all faculty concerns without the committee needing to be evoked by the President and for only special circumstances and to also have a dedicated HR executive that is knowledgeable on faculty issues to give faculty additional outlets/support for successfully challenging injustices experienced.

Not sure

Faculty Ombuds Survey Spring 2022

Do you have suggestions for improvement in Faculty Ombuds and/or conflict resolution services on campus?

Thanks for your service and advocating faculty. Perhaps adding a section in the university faculty manual or college bylaws that the Faculty Ombuds will provide help, instead of faculty should feel free to consult with the Faculty Ombuds. The way it is stated implies that the help is not guaranteed. My colleagues would like to see your office take leads in faculty governance to advocate faculty. We are often in a vulnerable position when there is a conflict (and the conflict potentially could result in a decision that impacts us). Faculty don't believe in admin's abilities to advocate faculty governance. So it is hard to seek for help from this office when the office doesn't assure us that it won't take passive approaches to conflicts on campus. I would suggest to regain faculty's trust would be a good starting point.

Not at this time.

No.

Keep up the great work!

I would love to see a benchmark report comparing CCU faculty work load and compensation to similarly situated schools like UNCW.

No

-

No. Renee' has made a number of "Announcements" regarding the position and the protocol.

Not at this time.

Not at this time

I don't have suggestions. I understand from speaking with colleagues who have accessed the Faculty/Ombuds that the services professionally delivered.

No

The Faculty Ombuds is fantastic, she really helped to sort out more than one situation for me

None!

I have no suggestions at this time.

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