



Report on the Faculty Ombuds Office

January 2021 through June 2021

*Prepared by Renée Smith, Faculty Ombuds and submitted to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee:
B. Bunton, A. Chamberlain, D. Kurlowski; and to Michael Benson, University President.*

June 30, 2021

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Executive Summary

This is the twelfth report from the Faculty Ombuds Office. This is my first report as the current 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 IOA recommendations. The charter has been amended to reflect this change.

Ombuds services at CCU strive to adhere to the International Ombudsman Association’s (IOA) [Standards of Practice](#) and [Code of Ethics](#) (<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 different services provided, the activities of the Faculty Ombuds, and the plans for the Ombuds. I report statistical data on the number and types of cases seen,

offer comparative data for the last four (4) fiscal 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. The Ombuds Survey was conducted for 2020 and is now posted on the Ombuds Services webpage.

➤ 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, Employee Assistance Programs ([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 we refer 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 (the latter position is vacant at the time of this report).

❖ Ombuds Activities

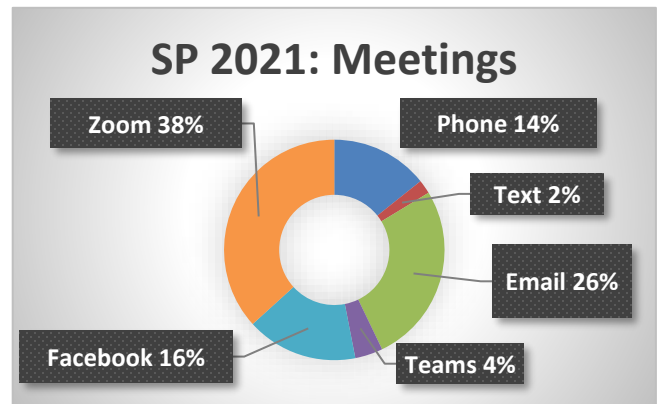
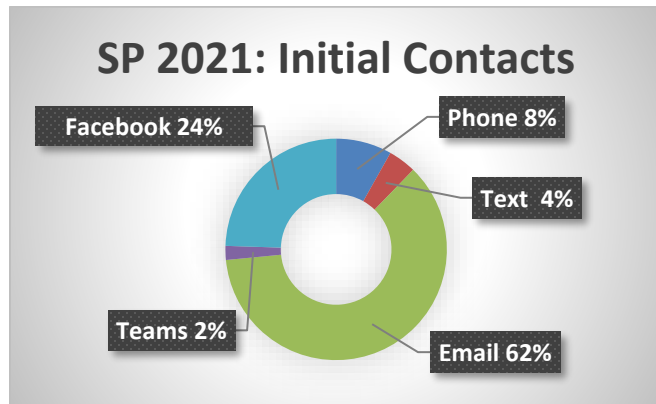
➤ Where: Contacting the Ombuds in 2021

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, at the time of my appointment in January 2021, I announced at the Faculty Senate, and the Provost announced at the Spring 2021 General Faculty meeting, that for the spring of 2021, I could be reached by email or phone message to set up an appointment for a virtual meeting (on Teams or Zoom) or for a telephone meeting. I was assigned office space in Kimbel Library 201, and while I was willing to meet visitors in person in accordance with CDC guidelines for social distancing and mask-wearing, no one requested an in-person meeting.

It was announced at the January general faculty meeting that I could be reached using my office phone number (843-349-2083) and my email (rsmith@coastal.edu).

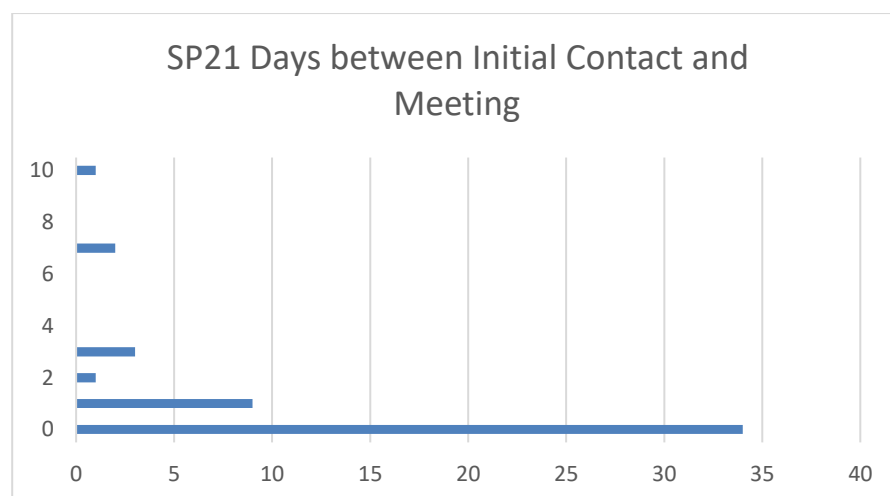
As of May, there is a new email address for the faculty ombuds (facultyombuds@coastal.edu) that can be used to contact the ombuds. And I now have access to the former ombuds' phone number (843-349-2727), which will be office number for the ombuds going forward. *Please remember that email and voicemail should not be considered confidential and should only be used to request an appointment.*

From January 2021 to June 2021, 50 visitors contacted me for Ombuds Services. Visitors' initial contacts were made by email (31), Facebook (12), phone (4), voicemail message (4), text message (2), and Teams message (1). Subsequent meetings were held on Zoom (19), email (13), Facebook messaging (8), phone (7), Teams virtual meeting rooms (2), and text (1).



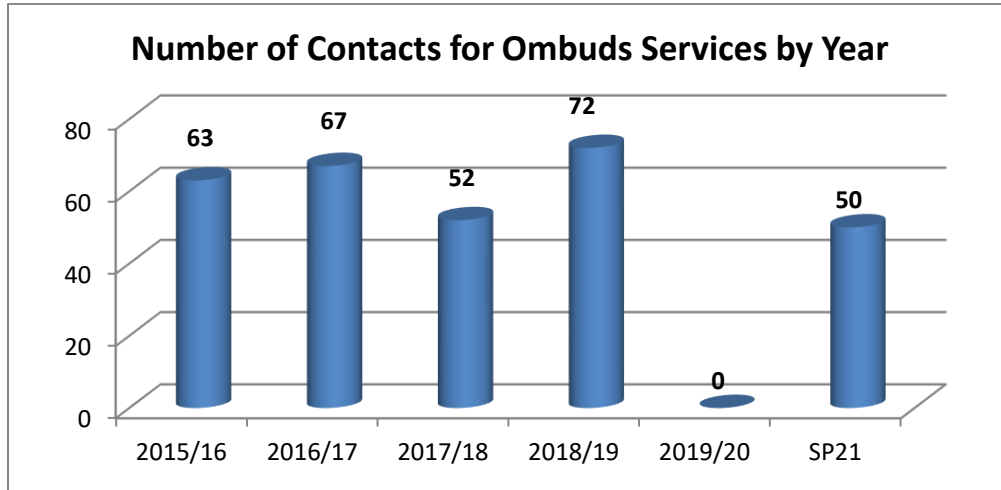
➤ **When: Wait Time to Meet with the Faculty Ombuds**

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.



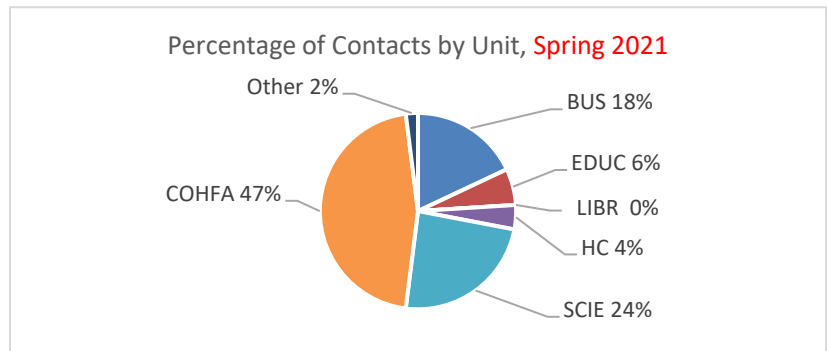
➤ **Who: Visitors to Ombuds Services**

Ombuds services were not available July 2020-December 2020. During the spring of 2021 (January through June) there were 50 contacts made for Ombuds services. The bar graph below illustrates the number of contacts each of the last several years.



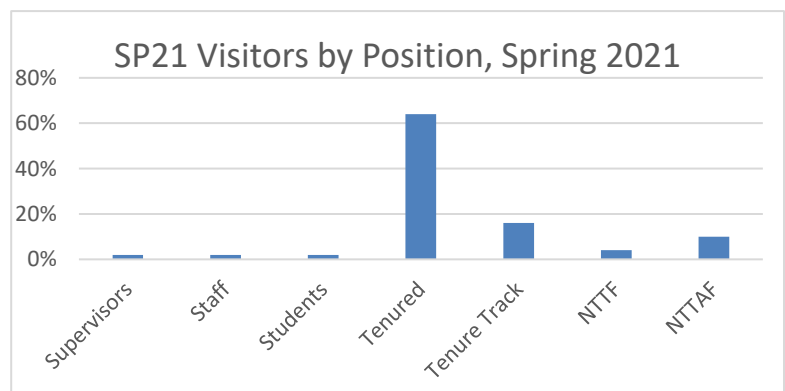
The breakdown by college for spring 2021:

- Humanities & Fine Arts 45%
- Science 24%
- Business 18%
- Education 6%
- Honors 2%



The breakdown by visitor position:

- Tenured Faculty 64%
- Tenure-Track Faculty 16%
- Non-Tenure Track Faculty 4%
- Associated Faculty 10%
- Staff 2%
- Students 2%



➤ Why: Topics of Concern

Uniform Reporting Categories

In keeping with the IOA Principles and Standards, no individuals' names, 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 four most frequently presented *categories* of issues for Spring 2021 were Evaluative Relationships, Career Progression & Development, Compensation & Benefits, and Services/Administrative Issues.²

1. Compensation & Benefits - (Presented 12 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: The decompression formula and amounts; the effects of furlough on compensation, furlough communication ambiguities, and benefits (especially FMLA and modified duties not offered or explained); the compensation plan and raises associated with promotion and post-tenure review.

2. Evaluative Relationships - (Presented 19 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 concerns: Fairness in teaching loads and teaching assignments; access to and support for grants; communication related to requirements for promotion and tenure; trust, integrity, respect, and fair treatment; wanting support for career progression; communication; shared governance; support for the extra efforts required (e.g., supporting family members and students, changing course formats and delivery, remote working, etc.) for teaching during the pandemic.

3. Peer and Colleague Relationships - (Presented 6 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).

² This represents a change from trends in past years which can be attributed to at least two factors: as a new Faculty Ombuds, (1) I began meeting clients before completing the IOA training on how to use the classification system, and (2) I interpreted, counted, and categorized concerns differently than the former Ombuds. It is also worth noting that while my predecessors' reports noted bullying and mobbing with some frequency, I rarely had reports of this nature.

Most frequent concerns: Concerns about P&T procedure; reputation compromised/challenged; lack of communication leading to distrust; loss of cooperation and integrity; disparate service expectations/contributions; productivity of committees.

4. Career Progression and Development (Presented 16 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 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; accommodations for the challenges of teaching during the pandemic; uncertainty about seeking tenure and promotion after the pandemic; the effects of alternative instructional methods on evaluation of teaching.

5. Legal, Regulatory, Financial and Compliance (Presented 2 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; questions about Title IX, pandemic policies, and compliance; confidentiality in personnel matters; grading practices.

6. Safety, Health, and Physical Environment (Presented 7 times)

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

Most frequent concerns: Work-related stress and work-life balance due to a pattern of unprofessional treatment and/or the demands of teaching during the pandemic; stress dealing with the challenges of working remotely or live streaming, using new technology, converting classes; concerns about physical working conditions; mask and vaccine policies.

7. Services/Administrative Issues (Presented 12 times)

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

Most frequent concerns: Perceptions of preferential treatment; administrative decisions; desire for shared governance and transparency in decision-making; grades altered or overturned; chairs' workload; non-responsiveness.

8. Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related (Presented 6 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; colleges' re-organization; increased workload due to COVID and loss of credit weighting; fear that research expectations will be increasing without course-load reductions; changes to scholarly reassignment requirements.

9. Values, Ethics, and Standards (Presented 5 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; no apparent process for reporting violations of Code of Ethical Conduct; lack of accountability; concerns about social media posts from university offices; interference in academic/faculty processes by non-academic administration; unfair application of policies.

10. Student & Teaching Related (Presented 3 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: Poor communication and non-responsiveness of faculty and advisors; dealing with students' behavior in streaming classes; lack of appreciation for the difficulty of teaching and advising during the pandemic.

➤ **How: Types of Ombuds Services Offered**

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

- 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.
- Listening and understanding: Providing a safe and confidential resource for articulating and clarifying one's concerns and issues.
- 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.

➤ What: Observations

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

- Organizational change management and communication
- Career development and performance expectations
- The effects of the pandemic on workload and performance expectations
- Benefits and compensation
- Policy compliance and questions
- Communication
- Shared governance
- Trust/integrity/respect/fair treatment

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

- Management of institutional change
- Administrative leadership and support in the colleges
- Shared governance in departments and in colleges
- Knowledge about policies and procedures
- Ambiguous policies pertaining to promotion and tenure, especially during the pandemic, at the department and college level.

➤ Risks Avoided

It is difficult to measure the exact outcomes of Ombuds Services; however, the Ombuds survey reflects that visitors 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 February and June, the Faculty Ombuds met with new members of the faculty in a virtual event sponsored by CeTEAL. The Faculty Ombuds also attended Faculty Senate meetings and the CeTEAL panel on promotion and tenure to advertise Ombuds Services.

➤ 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 190 respondents compared to 143 respondents the previous year. The Spring 2021 Ombuds survey reports that 91.7% (n=11) of those people who contacted the Faculty Ombuds were *very satisfied* with the service they were provided, which is an increase from the 50% (n=4) who reported being very satisfied on the Summer 2020 survey.

Other Observations from the Survey

- Promote/increase awareness of Ombuds Services on campus (faculty and department meetings, orientations)
- Continue virtual meetings and add in-person office hours
- Host Ombuds information events
- Fill the Staff Ombuds Position

The complete results of the 2021 Ombuds Survey Appendix A of this report. While there was no Ombuds report for 2020, last year's survey will be posted on the Ombuds webpage.

➤ Ombuds Reporting and Training

As of 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.

The current Faculty Ombuds attended the following trainings offered by the International Ombuds Association (IOA) during the spring of 2021:

- Virtual Foundations Course (Week-long training for new Ombuds)
- Advocates for Fair Treatment: Ombuds Role on DEI Issues (Live Webinar)
- Annual Reports as a Catalyst for Change (Recorded Webinar)
- Solve Harassment, Bullying, & Aggression at Work: A Few Case Studies (Recorded Webinar)
- Establishing Trust in Groups (Recorded Webinar)
- The Ombud Support Role: Supporting the Administrative Role in the Ombud's Office (Recorded Webinar)

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

- Shared Foundations and Courageous Conversations (DEI)
- Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) Training on Suicide Prevention
- Compliance and Ethics Training
- T4 Training

Finally, the Faculty Ombuds was matched with a mentor, Joshua Canzona, at USC Chapel Hill through the International Ombuds Association. The Ombuds meets with the mentor monthly.

To understand the functions of and build relationships with offices on campus, I have met with the following people and departments:

- Kim Sherfese, Lori Cox, and Scott Stiller, Human Resources
- Meredith Canady, Title IX and Compliance
- Rose Marie Johnson, Strategic Planning and Risk Management
- Brian Bunton, Faculty Senate Chair
- Jim Arendt, Faculty Welfare Chair
- Joseph Fitsanakis, CCU Chapter President, American Association of University Professors
- Atiya Stokes-Brown, Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Carlos Johnson, University Counsel

❖ Recommendations

➤ General Recommendations

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

- Practice consensus building, transparency in decision-making, and responsiveness to faculty concerns and inquiries.
- Provide on-going training and support for department chairs and deans to maintain currency with respect to policies and procedures.
- 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 or 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, 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](#), 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 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 Ombuds Faculty Survey confirms the satisfaction of faculty contacts 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. 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, 2021

❖ Appendix A: Spring 2021 Ombuds Survey Results

Faculty Ombuds Survey

Spring 2021



Faculty Ombuds Survey
Spring 2021

Faculty Type	All Faculty	Faculty	Associated Faculty
TOTAL	190	135	55
Business	28 14.7%	23 17.0%	5 9.1%
Education	13 6.8%	8 5.9%	5 9.1%
Humanities & Fine Arts	69 36.3%	49 36.3%	20 36.4%
Science	66 34.7%	43 31.9%	23 41.8%
Honors	7 3.7%	5 3.7%	2 3.6%
Library	7 3.7%	7 5.2%	- -

Tenure Status	All Colleges	Tenured	Tenure-Track	Non Tenure-Track
TOTAL	190	78	39	73
Business	28 14.7%	12 15.4%	7 17.9%	9 12.3%
Education	13 6.8%	4 5.1%	4 10.3%	5 6.8%
Humanities & Fine Arts	69 36.3%	27 34.6%	14 35.9%	28 38.4%
Science	66 34.7%	27 34.6%	10 25.6%	29 39.7%
Honors	7 3.7%	3 3.8%	2 5.1%	2 2.7%
Library	7 3.7%	5 6.4%	2 5.1%	- -

Faculty Ombuds Survey

Spring 2021

Did you contact the Faculty Ombuds in the 2020-2021 academic year?	
Yes	12 6.3%
No	178 93.7%

[If not contacted] Are you familiar with the Faculty Ombuds and the services they provide?	
Yes	128 72.3%
No	49 27.7%

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
[If contacted] Overall, how satisfied are you with the service the Faculty Ombuds provided you?	11 91.7%	-	-	-	1 8.3%

[If contacted] 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	4 33.3%
I would not have brought the issue up as quickly	1 8.3%
I would have brought the issue up through a formal channel	3 25.0%
I would have left the University	-
Other	4 33.3%

[If contacted] What other action would you have taken?	
I was considering suing the school before speaking with the Ombuds.	
I would have felt helpless since the issue was related to the 'supervisors' above me.	

Faculty Ombuds Survey
Spring 2021

[If contacted] The Faculty Ombuds...	Mean	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
Gave me the opportunity to express my concerns.	4.58	10 83.3%	1 8.3%	-	-	1 8.3%
Was knowledgeable about relevant institutional policies and procedures.	4.58	10 83.3%	1 8.3%	-	-	1 8.3%
Provided me with valuable information to help me make my decisions.	4.58	10 83.3%	1 8.3%	-	-	1 8.3%
Understood the situation.	4.67	11 91.7%	-	-	-	1 8.3%
Helped me identify my options.	4.64	10 90.9%	-	-	-	1 9.1%
Helped me evaluate my options.	4.55	9 81.8%	1 9.1%	-	-	1 9.1%
Was courteous and respectful.	4.67	11 91.7%	-	-	-	1 8.3%
Was neutral.	4.45	8 72.7%	2 18.2%	-	-	1 9.1%
Was unbiased.	4.45	8 72.7%	2 18.2%	-	-	1 9.1%
Was fair.	4.64	10 90.9%	-	-	-	1 9.1%
Helped me develop skills that might help resolve future issues.	4.27	7 63.6%	2 18.2%	1 9.1%	-	1 9.1%
Helped me learn approaches that might help resolve future issues.	4.45	8 72.7%	2 18.2%	-	-	1 9.1%
Was available for an appointment promptly after contact.	4.64	10 90.9%	-	-	-	1 9.1%
Was able to meet with me for a reasonable amount of time.	4.67	11 91.7%	-	-	-	1 8.3%

[Asked of all] The Faculty Ombuds...	Mean	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
Can be trusted to maintain confidentiality.	4.22	68 49.3%	41 29.7%	23 16.7%	3 2.2%	3 2.2%
Is a resource to which I would encourage colleagues to access.	4.28	72 52.2%	41 29.7%	20 14.5%	1 0.7%	4 2.9%
Is a resource I would access myself if needed in the future.	4.27	73 52.9%	39 28.3%	20 14.5%	2 1.4%	4 2.9%

Faculty Ombuds Survey

Spring 2021

[Asked of all] Are there any suggestions you have for improvement in ombuds services or conflict resolution services on campus?

Perhaps Renee could be introduced at the Fall General Faculty Meeting; also, I am not sure where The Office of the Ombuds is located.

Perhaps some proactive e-mails or flyers could help. I think we all have a concept of what the Ombuds does, but being reminded and having main duties clarified could help faculty be more likely to reach out about serious matters (especially if the conflict is with an administrator in a much higher position).

Not at this time

Do not allow a lag between appointing new ombuds in the future

This survey went to junk mail, fyi incase there is low response. Also, I hope this position remains available via online instead of physical forever. I think it helps with privacy instead of going to a public office in a public library building.

Integrate Ombuds interactions early in the faculty grievance process to provide more avenues of communication to potentially mitigate formal grievance applications.

Is there a similar service for staff?

For the ombuds, no. For conflict resolution, hold HR to the same standards they hold everyone else to.

Eliminate the sources of conflict. Our administration continues to demonstrate that they care very little for "faculty governance." Just in the past several months, we've had the announcement of a new college and departments joining that college; I'm not sure faculty were consulted or had a part in the planning process of this. I am indeed sure that several departments were included in the new college - or weren't - again completely devoid of any faculty, chair, or departmental feedback or consultation. We receive course, room, and schedule changes sometimes days before a semester starts, negating any ability to plan or prepare effectively. We have no say in meeting schedules (our department now has THREE mandatory meetings a month). We have little say in curriculum development or innovation, since now the Dean of our college has assumed all control of that and actually dictates programming. CCU has changed a lot in the past twenty years, and many of our most effective faculty and staff are leaving, seeking other employment, and /or retiring. We don't get raises; we had a pay cut that our administration insisted was a furlough - we don't get any grace - we receive dozens of reminders for one deadline - and are placed on "loser lists" when we haven't met a deadline a week or a day early. These lists are distributed prior to the deadline even arriving. After the provost visited with departments to ascertain what he could do to improve faculty morale, he decided the solution was to ask faculty to devote time, work, and thought on nominating others for awards. We just received a request to complete a list of advisees for our program assistants. This is all information that could be obtained through Institutional Research. If you wanna' nominate someone for an award, do so - don't make us to your work for you. If you want an advising list, run it - don't make us to a \$10/hour secretarial job for you....I could go on and on, but you know what, I don't have time. How does our administration think this makes us feel? Like nothing. It's not our problem, the OMBUDS problem, or anyone else's problem other than an administration that has been VERY GOOD at padding their own pockets and promoting from within but not so good at treating faculty equitably or honorably. I'm outta' here...

This was the first time I contacted the faculty ombuds. I did not receive a reply to my request to meet.

None

This is probably being done but just increasing the visibility of the Ombuds office and its services to remind forgetful faculty like myself of the types of issues that the office can help with.

I would suggest training sessions to explain your services. We have a lot of newer faculty coming in who might now be aware of all you provide. Also, some faculty might be afraid of retaliation if they come to you with an issue, so explaining the process and how it works could calm some nerves.

Where is the office now?

No

Better awareness to the faculty OVERALL on the position and its use, including to NEW faculty at orientation.

none

No.

Be more visible—what can ombuds do for faculty? How can ombuds be more approachable?

Faculty Ombuds Survey

Spring 2021

[Asked of all] Are there any suggestions you have for improvement in ombuds services or conflict resolution services on campus?

Give the person some real power and make her a true ombudsman! Current person in charge of the position is not known to be an advocate for faculty.

SO grateful!

No

None at this time.

I think it would be good to have a way to reach out to the ombuds anonymously, just to ask questions or get feedback on an issue. I know that the ombuds is confidential, but I think if there was some sort of anonymous exchange format people could utilize, it might be first step more people would be willing to take with certain issues.

No. But I think it's really important that we fill the Staff Ombuds position ASAP. I know of a conflict between staff members that could have benefitted from conflict resolution but they have no ombuds. I hope Coastal will fill that vacancy soon.

It makes me feel good to know that the service is there. I have not had to use it yet. I cannot think of a better person than Renee Smith for that position.

Truth be told, I kind of know what an ombuds does but I am confused if it functions like arbitration. Also, it appears that only information is heard but how does a decision be made.

no

The Ombudsman role could be more effective at CCU if they were allowed to mediate between parties having issues. For example, our current CCU policy is that conciliation should happen between the faculty member and chair initially and then faculty member with Dean and the problem with that approach is that it's usually one of those parties faculty have issues with and it not feasible to expect them to be impartial when it could be their decision-making causing the issue. It would be ideal is the Ombudsman could facilitate/mediate conciliation sessions between faculty and members of leadership. This would help with current issues that currently are not acted upon in a timely manner, if at all.

Thanks for all this office does! I am fortunate not to have needed the office but value its presence on our campus!

She seems to have her hands tied. She wants to make improvements, but there is a lack of commitment to rules, regulations and procedures from above. She can bring issues to top management, but she will never be successful if top management is not willing to act in an ethical manner.

No.

none

None

Chairs should receive some training in dealing with/avoiding conflict before it needs to be resolved.

no

During the pandemic faculty who are not allowed to work from home may have difficulty finding a private space to have an online appointment with the ombuds. hopefully this situation will end, but if it continues, could there be a designated space on campus these faculty could use? Admittedly I think this is a small group of people, but when there is a staff ombuds again soon they may have the same issues I think--many more staff are on campus and although everyone has a socially distanced office space, many don't have a private enough office space to discuss concerns like this without being overheard by others.

I wish the ombuds would visit department meetings to speak about her role and services. She may already do this, but I didn't see her at our department meetings this year. She is doing a great job, though, I feel very confident in her abilities!

Nope

Who is it?

I have not used this service. My only concern would be its the confidentiality.

no

I have no direct experience with the Ombuds committee and cannot speak to their functions. However I would not hesitate to contact them if I needed their assistance.

Faculty Ombuds Survey

Spring 2021

[Asked of all] Are there any suggestions you have for improvement in ombuds services or conflict resolution services on campus?

I am so grateful to know this position is available. I worked with the Ombuds Office several years ago and I believe it is an incredibly important resource.

It is hopeless.

Given the conflict of an underperforming faculty member being gifted a job in the provost's office after roundly being rejected for Dean, then having an entire college created for her by the provost, then being named Dean of that college, I'm not sure how trustworthy anyone in administration is at this point.

A campus liquor bar!

Please keep this service going!

None. There was a long transitional period this year, and I did always appreciate Charmaine's reports at University-wide faculty meetings.

No suggestions; not sure what the purpose is...

Town Hall or virtual discussion about the Ombuds responsibilities.

None. Thank you.

N/A

None

No, only a general suggestion about performance reviews. I think that the institution (faculty and staff) should conduct 360 Performance Reviews, where we would get the opportunity to provide feedback on the performance of our department chairs/deans/supervisors. There are minor issues that don't require the Faculty Ombuds to get involved and could easily be resolved if we could give constructive feedback without fear of reproach, particularly for non-tenured faculty. Faculty performance reviews are essentially 360 Performance Reviews; I think it's only fair that the Deans/Associate Deans (and supervisors on campus) are held to the same type of review.

Not at this time.

This service/ support for faculty seems to "hide its light". I would like to see a more visible presence.

Perhaps someone could come at the beginning of semester department meetings to let new hires know about your services.

Make sure the office is not overly political in its approach and work. Avoid mission creep to justify items important to the director.

N/A

Possibly an occasion brief Q & A about, or brief description of, the types of issues the ombuds can help resolve.

Good service.