

Faculty Affairs Committee Recommendation
For IUPUI Faculty Council: March 7, 2017

Creation of an IUPUI Ombudsteam

Rationale:

The IUPUI Faculty Council (IFC) has in place policies and procedures for evaluating and guiding grievances by faculty. The IFC grievance process is carefully designed and does not warrant review or revision. The role of the grievance process is limited, however, in that it does not provide opportunity for faculty to voice concerns and/or learn about options other than a formal grievance with the goal of resolving issues, easing tension, or improving working conditions.

Other universities make use of an ombuds(man/person) to field faculty concerns, including formal grievances. The complexity of the IUPUI campus suggests a variation on the use of one designated person as an appropriate reflection of the different character of its many academic units.

The creation of an ombudsteam is designed to provide designated place(s) and persons for faculty to voice concerns and learn about options for channeling criticisms and addressing complaints, which may include a formal grievance, so that faculty can be fully informed about possible actions and consequences before they make a decision as to what steps, if any, to take next.

The creation of an IUPUI ombudsteam would require two steps: the first is a decision in principle to proceed with establishing an ombudsteam; the second is to determine the particulars for implementing the ombudsteam and its operation.

- The goal of the IUPUI Ombudsteam is to link problems to options for resolution.
- The framework for the IUPUI Ombudsteam is designed in the following way:
 - The IUPUI Ombudsteam is made up of five members with three-year staggered terms.
 - Three members are drawn from the IFC grievance panel, which is elected, with consideration of diversity in regard to academic unit, rank, gender, and ethnic background.
 - One of those three members serves as chair (a position that can rotate, especially in situations of possible or perceived conflict of interest).
 - The chair is the liaison to the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Equal Opportunity.
 - Two members are drawn from a pool of emeritus faculty in the Senior Academy.
 - The membership of the IUPUI Ombudsteam, including contact information, is posted on the IFC website so that faculty can choose with whom to get in touch.

- The goals, organization, and procedures of the IUPUI Ombudsteam are posted on the IFC website.
- All conversations with any member of the IUPUI Ombudsteam are confidential, neutral, informal, and independent.
 - The Ombudsteam allows faculty to choose among faculty with different expertise, experience, and background as the person with whom to confer.
 - Ombudsteam members not serving as primary or preferred contact may lend advice, when asked.
- The IUPUI Ombudsteam follows the Standards of Practices & Code of Ethics of the International Ombudsman Association (<http://www.ombudsassociation.org/About-Us.aspx>).
- The location for the IUPUI Ombudsteam needs to be determined, in cooperation with the Office of Academic Affairs.
- Administrative support of the IUPUI Ombudsteam needs to be determined, in cooperation with the Office of Academic Affairs:
 - Designated space
 - Telephone
 - Administrative support (as part of administrative assistant to the Senior Academy?)
 - Support for faculty members serving on IUPUI Ombudsteam (summer support? teaching load adjustment?)

Motion:

Create an IUPUI Ombudsteam in order to provide faculty with a safe place and trustworthy persons where and with whom to have conversations that allow voicing and fielding concerns and exploring and evaluating options. The IUPUI Ombudsteam does not obviate IUPUI grievance policy and procedure.

This IUPUI Ombudsteam consists of five (5) members with each of the members able to serve as primary or preferred contact. Of those members three (3) are drawn from the IFC grievance panel and two (2) from the emeritus faculty of the Senior Academy. The members serve three-year, staggered terms. The chair of the IUPUI Ombudsteam serves as liaison to the Offices of Academic Affairs and the Office of Equal Opportunities.

All conversations are confidential, neutral, informal, and independent. The IUPUI Ombudsteam follows the Standards of Practices & Code of Ethics of the International Ombudsman Association. Decisions about possible next steps are those of the faculty, not the IUPUI Ombudsteam, excepting violations that require follow-up because of the need for compliance with the law.