

Creation of an IFC 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 the goal of which is to resolve issues, ease tension, or improve working conditions.

Other universities make use of an ombuds(man/person) to field faculty concerns, including formal grievances. Typically, a single person is designated as ombuds(man/person). To address the complexity of the IUPUI campus, designating a team is likely to serve the different character of its many and diverse academic units.

The creation of an ombudsteam is designed to designate place(s) where and persons to whom faculty can 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 making a decision as to what steps, if any, to take next.

The creation of an IFC ombudsteam requires two steps that are described in the motion, below: one is a decision in principle to proceed with establishing an ombudsteam; the other is to determine the particulars for implementing the ombudsteam and its operation.

- The goal of the IFC Ombudsteam is to link problems to options for resolution
- The framework for the IFC Ombudsteam is designed in the following way:
- The IFC Ombudsteam is made up of five members with three-year staggered terms
 - Three members are drawn by the IFC-EC from the IFC grievance panel, which is elected annually, 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 IFC Executive Committee, 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 IFC Ombudsteam, including contact information, is posted on the IFC website so that faculty can choose with whom to get in touch initially
- All conversations with any member of the IFC Ombudsteam are confidential, neutral, informal, and independent

- The Ombudsteam allows faculty to choose among team members 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 IFC 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 IFC Ombudsteam will be determined, in cooperation with the Office of Academic Affairs
- Administrative support of the IFC Ombudsteam will be determined, in cooperation with the Office of Academic Affairs
 - Designated space
 - Telephone
 - Administrative support
 - Support for faculty members serving on IFC Ombudsteam

Motion:

Create an IFC 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 as well as exploring and evaluating options. Creation of the IFC Ombudsteam does not obviate the IFC grievance policy and procedure on the IUPUI campus.

This IFC 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, which is elected annually by the IUPUI faculty, and two (2) from the emeritus faculty of the Senior Academy. The members serve three-year, staggered terms. The IFC Executive Committee determines annually the constituting chair of the IFC Ombudsteam, who serves as liaison to the Offices of Academic Affairs and the Office of Equal Opportunities.

All conversations are confidential, neutral, informal, and independent. The IFC 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 IFC Ombudsteam, except in the case of violations that require follow-up in compliance with the law.