

HOWARD UNIVERSITY
Position Description

POSITION TITLE:	Ombudsperson	SALARY GRADE:	HU-13
DATE CREATED:	September 19, 2014	EEO CODE:	02
JOB CODE:	7045	FLSA STATUS:	Exempt
BARGAINING UNIT:	N/A		

DEPARTMENT:	Office of the Ombudsperson	POSITION NO:	00028240
REPORTS TO:	CHRO	GRANT:	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes

BASIC FUNCTION:

The Ombudsperson role has a long and honorable tradition as a means of protecting against abuse, bias and other improper treatment or unfairness. The roles and functions of the Faculty Ombudsperson may include, but are not limited to, assisting faculty who have questions, complaints, or disputes concerning University policies and procedures; helping to resolve conflict in the academic unit or between faculty and administrators, including those administrators that are not covered by the University grievance procedures; consultation and informal advising; facilitation and provision of assessments and information to appropriate University officials. The office shall be informal, independent, impartial, and confidential. Recourse to the Ombuds process shall be at the option of the faculty member, and the faculty Ombudsperson may participate in disciplinary proceedings. In considering any given instance or concern, the rights and responsibilities of all involved parties are taken into account. This office supplements, but does not replace, the University's existing structures and resources for conflict resolution.

SUPERVISORY

ACCOUNTABILITY:

The Faculty Ombuds Office is organizationally located in the Office of the President, but the Faculty Ombudsperson operates independently of all institutional reporting responsibilities. The Faculty Ombudsperson is independent of existing administrative structures and submits written periodic [quarterly and annual] reports and recommendations simultaneously to both the Provost [as the Chief Academic Officer of the University] and the Chair of the Faculty Senate [as the elected spokesperson for the Faculty]. The purpose of these submitted reports is to provide information, data and recommendations that aim to improve the academic environment of the university. While maintaining confidentiality of communications, the Ombudsperson shall also prepare a periodic report to the University community. Based on anonymous aggregate data, this report shall (1) discuss University trends in the reporting of grievances and concerns, (2) identify potential problem areas in university/college policies and practices, (3) recommend revisions and improvements as needed, and (4) assess the overall relational climate of the campus, as it pertains to the functions and responsibilities of the Ombudsperson.

NATURE AND SCOPE:

Internal contacts include administrators, faculty, students and staff of the department, hospital and University. External contacts include consultants, auditors, Federal and local government officials, representatives from other colleges and universities, visitors and the general public.

PRINCIPAL

ACCOUNTABILITIES:

Provides confidential consultation to members of the Faculty and Administration regarding matters that are delegated to the Office of the Ombudsperson.

Assists inquirers in interpreting university policies and procedures.

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Provides assistance to inquirers by clarifying issues and generating options for resolution. Facilitates the inquirer's assessment of the pros and cons of possible options or alternative courses of action.

Seeks and receives permission from an inquirer before taking direct action.
Conducts appropriate internal investigation, fact-finding, and analysis for better understand of an issue prior to rendering an opinion.

Consults with Faculty and Administration in order to develop cooperative strategies for complaint resolution.

Consults with all parties to clarify and analyze problems in order to focus discussions and develop a mutually satisfactory process for resolution.

Facilitates group meetings, uses diplomacy or negotiation skills to enable communication between and among parties in conflict.

Encourages flexible administrative practices so as to maximize the institution's ability to meet, in an equitable manner, the interests and needs of all parties in conflict.

Provides referrals to other resources whenever appropriate or necessary.

CORE COMPETENCIES:

Communication and Problem-Solving Skills - The Ombudsperson must have outstanding communication and interpersonal skills, and be able to interact effectively with individuals at all levels of the organization as well as with persons of diverse cultural backgrounds. It is imperative that the Ombudsperson has excellent problem-solving skills and be accomplished at investigating, gathering, analyzing, and interpreting information, and have knowledge of issue of shared governance, and academic freedom, as well as an overall familiarity with academic institutions.

Strategic Thinking and Decision Making Skills - The Ombudsperson must be aware of how decisions might impact the both the inquirer and other stakeholders within the institution. The Ombudsperson must be skilled at anticipating different courses of actions, and equally skilled at advising the inquirer in assessing alternative courses of action. The Ombudsperson must also have the ability to assist the inquirer to determine which conflict resolution method might be appropriate for the specific situation.

Conflict Resolution Skills - The essential element of the Ombudsperson's role is that of facilitating the resolution of conflict between parties. It is important that the Ombudsperson have a thorough understanding of what leads to conflict, and methods for resolution. The specific skills needed to assist inquirers to resolve their conflicts include: (1) helping persons learn how to deal with matters directly, should they wish to do this; (2) serving as a communication conduit between parties (shuttle diplomacy); (3) bringing parties together through an informal mediation process; and (4) influencing or suggesting system change, which might obviate similar problems in the future.

Organizational Knowledge and Networking Skills - The Ombudsperson must be knowledgeable about the University -- its structure, culture, policies, practices, and pivotal, governing documents. The

