

## MINUTES

### Faculty Affairs Committee

Monday March 19, 2020, 4:10-5:00pm

Dunford Hall 2412

**Members Present:** Beauvais Lyons, Eliza Fink, Cheryl Greenacre, Jessica Westerhold

**Members Absent:** Elizabeth MacTavish, Todd Freeberg, Nathalie Hristov, Brian Krumm, Jon Shefner

**Guests:** Lisa Yamagata-Lynch and members of the Appeals Committee (Rebecca Prosser, Merilee McCurdy, Stephanie Benjamin)

### Approval of the Minutes:

[February 10, 2020](#)

**Discussion of Goal 8:** A conversation with Ombudsperson Lisa Yamagata-Lynch

<https://ombuds.utk.edu/ombudsperson-faq/>

<https://ombuds.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/28/2019/08/519379-Ombuds-Annual-Report-accessible.pdf>

In advance of the meeting, Lisa sent the following email message with two attachments, a dashboard summary and a slide presentation documenting her activities. She also wrote in italics below....

*I believe that for our community to take full advantage of the Office of Ombuds Services, it is vital that we demystify the activities that we provide to UT/UTIA graduate students, faculty, and staff to the extent possible while remaining confidential. Therefore, I have information I am going to share with you.*

*For the Faculty Senate presentation in February, I did not have enough time to present all of what I prepared for the 2019 annual data (May to December). You will find the data I intended to present as an attachment to this message. I tried to make the data slides decluttered and as self explanatory as possible, so if you have a chance to review them before the 9th please do so. I am also attaching what I call the Ombuds Dashboard that has a quick snapshot of the most up to date data as of today.*

*With my academic background in instructional design I have some practical visual design training for communication purposes, but I am not a visual design expert, so for those of you who are experts please excuse anything that does not make sense to you. Additionally, please feel free to provide me advise about the visuals that can help me improve my ability to communicate to the UT community.*

*In terms of visitor traffic as of today, since May when I was appointed to the Ombuds position I*

have met with 180 visitors. When you open the 2 files it will not add up to that number because for the latest data in the Dashboard, I have decided to capture only Fiscal Year 2020 rather than starting May 2019. Therefore the FY2020 visitor traffic count does not include the 22 visitors during May and June.

Assuming visitor traffic continues to average 20 or more per month, FY2020 total visitor traffic will range between 215 to 230 by the end of June 2020. Just for contextual information, what seems to be standard traffic for well established ombuds offices at institutions our size with comparable number of students and employees that we serve is 300.

One more piece of data that is not in the files I am sending is my progress to be certified as an Ombuds by the Internal Ombudsman Association. That information is below:

<b>Accomplished in 2019</b>			<b>Planned for 2020</b>		
<b>May</b>	<b>June</b>	<b>August</b>	<b>March</b>	<b>April or May</b>	<b>June</b>
<i>Began Services</i>	<i>Attended training</i>	<i>Passed Written Exam</i>	<i>Attend IOA Conference and Present</i>	<i>Apply for CO-OP</i>	<i>Become Certified or a Candidate</i>

In discussion at the meeting, some issues she flagged are graduate student experiencing health issues that may impact their study and work. She noted that students can retain health coverage if they are taking a leave for medical reasons at \$177/month. Because they are not paying student fees, they lose the right to go to the Student Health Center. International graduate students would have to be handled differently.

In FY 2020 she has had 21 cases where there were touch points with a department head. In some cases these have been initiated by the faculty member.

Lisa notes in her report that policy clarification is a subject that nearly 40% of her visits involve. Sometime this may involve seeking clarification with the Office of the Provost how the policy will be interpreted in their situation. She said it is less an issue of the policy being unclear, only how it is interpreted.

For department heads, their inquiries sometimes related to *ex parte* communications.

From the Appeals Committee perspective it is often about whether a policy has been followed fairly. Cheryl also brought up the issue of changing assignments and responsibilities for a faculty member.

Lisa said she does hear about service loads, and how these are sometimes unequal.

She said she gets more inquiries from non-tenure track faculty than tenure-track faculty members., and it was thought that our new Faculty Handbook language about percentage of effort will address these concerns.

There was discussion of graduate students, who can be caught between their roles as both students and employees or instructors.

She noted that she has a dedicated office at Dunford Hall 2423. She said that she meets with Matthew Scoggins, the Chancellor's Chief of Staff monthly. There was discussion about how to ensure the position is sustainable in her role as a faculty member and ombudsperson. Some consideration to having more than one ombudsperson might be worth pursuing.

### **Quick Committee Updates:**

#### **Goal 5:** Update on the Bullying Task Force (Nathalie Hristov and Todd Freeberg)

The bullying task force met on February 14 to discuss a definition offered by Jenny Richter based on the TACIR (Tennessee Advisory Committee in Intergovernmental Relations) policy. The task force members made several recommendations to the policy and Jenny will send us a revision based on the committee's input soon. Once the revised definition (to be approved hopefully this month) is agreed upon by the committee, the other subcommittees will move forward with implementation, policy-setting, education and outreach.

#### **Goal 9:** Update on dismissal of NTTF in Handbook 5.6 (Brian Krumm)

Brian has been in communication with Laurie Knox and Crystal McAlvin about taking a first run at drafting new handbook language. Efforts to include AAUP still need to be pursued. Lisa noted that in a "for cause" case the process moves too slowly, and that this could be revised. She noted that use of this provision to quickly remove someone who presented a risk to themselves or others might not need to be used. Jessica advocated for an appeals process that aligned more with the appeals processes for tenure-track faculty.

**Goal 2-3:** Update on ["Other Policy Documents"](#) from Section 1.11 of the *Faculty Handbook*, and review the [Appendix I](#) section of the *Faculty Handbook*, These issues are on the agenda for the February 3, 2020 committee meeting. (Beauvais Lyons) Beauvais is communication with John Zomchick about meeting the week of March 23 to follow up on these matters.

### **Future Meeting:**

Monday April 13, 3:30-5:00pm, Dunford Hall 2412

**Adjournment** at 5:02pm.