



June 10, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: SOU Faculty

FROM: Roy Saigo, Ph.D.
President, Southern Oregon University

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roy W. Saigo', is written over the printed name of the sender.

RE: Authorization of SOU Ombuds Office for Faculty

Recognizing the need for an independent, neutral and confidential resource for faculty encountering work/life challenges and issues in the work environment, I authorize the establishment of the Faculty Ombuds Office at Southern Oregon University for a two-year trial basis.

This organizational Ombuds Office will:

- 1) provide confidential, neutral, informal, and independent support for all SOU faculty;
- 2) follow the Standards of Practice and the Code of Ethics of the International Ombudsman Association while adhering to the principles governing the University;
- 3) have access to advice from the University's legal counsel. The University's legal counsel shall provide legal advice to the Faculty Ombuds Office on its legal duties and obligations as an office of the University, but counsel cannot and shall not represent or provide personal legal advice for the individuals using the services of the Ombuds Office.

At the request of a faculty member, the Faculty Ombuds Office will:

- offer timely support;

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- provide confidential, neutral, informal, and independent consultation;
- listen respectfully and non-judgmentally;
- help faculty gain perspective on issues, problems, and/or concerns;
- clarify University governance structures and suggest appropriate referrals;
- help identify resources, evaluate a range of options, and discuss possible next steps;
- support fair process and open communication.

In order to communicate systemic issues and trends, general patterns in the concerns brought to the Faculty Ombuds Office will be shared periodically with the SOU Administration. This information will be provided in a manner that does not compromise confidentiality.

In carrying out its mission, the Faculty Ombuds Office is not authorized to:

- advocate for individuals, departments, or divisions;
- receive notice of a grievance under the APSOU Collective Bargaining Agreement;
- receive notice of a grievance under the Bylaws of the SOU Faculty Constitution;
- receive notice of any other legal claim against the University brought forward by the faculty member in a confidential setting, unless disclosure is required by law;
- participate in formal investigations or administrative processes;
- revise or rescind policies and administrative decisions;
- provide psychological counseling;
- maintain records that identify an individual;
- offer legal advice;
- testify or gather evidence;
- share confidential information, unless there is imminent risk of serious harm or disclosure is otherwise required by law.

In summary, this Memorandum serves to establish the Faculty Ombuds Office at Southern Oregon University for a two-year trial basis. It is my expectation that two ombuds will be selected and available for faculty by the start of the 2015 Fall Term. Serving as a Faculty Ombuds will count as service to the University, and the time spent serving in that role will be reported annually in the Ombuds' Professional Activity Report. Additionally, training of Faculty Ombuds will be considered professional development thereby allowing faculty to use their Professional Development Account funds to support their conference attendance, dues, etc. I recognize that once the Ombuds Office is in operation, minor revisions to this Memorandum may be made to reflect development of the Faculty Ombuds' role at this University. During the two-year trial period, at the end of each academic year, the President will conduct a review of the Faculty Ombuds Office initiative. The outcomes of these reviews will determine whether the Faculty Ombuds Office will be maintained on a permanent basis after the completion of the two-year trial period.

I firmly believe that the establishment of the Faculty Ombuds Office will provide immediate and significant benefits to our University community.