



## **Southern Oregon University Faculty Ombuds Office Charter**

### **Office Establishment**

The Faculty Ombuds Office was established in 2015 to provide an independent, neutral, confidential, and informal resource for faculty encountering work and/or work/life challenges, problems, or conflicts.

### **Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics**

This organizational Ombuds Office will provide confidential, neutral, informal, and independent support for all SOU faculty. The Faculty Ombuds Office will follow the Standards of Practice and the Code of Ethics of the International Ombudsman Association while adhering to the principles governing the University. The Faculty Ombuds Office will 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.

### **Purpose and Scope of Services**

The Faculty Ombuds Office is committed to supporting fair process and open communication. At the request of a faculty member, the Faculty Ombuds Office will offer timely support and provide confidential, neutral, informal, and independent consultation. The Faculty Ombuds Office will listen respectfully and non-judgmentally to help faculty gain perspective on issues, problems, and/or concerns. The Faculty Ombuds Office will clarify University governance structures and suggest appropriate referrals. The Faculty Ombuds Office will help identify resources, evaluate a range of options, and discuss possible next steps. When possible, the Faculty Ombuds Office will provide informal mediation between parties. The Faculty Ombuds Office may initiate informal inquiries into matters brought to the attention of the Office. Subject to the other applicable rules, policies, and laws, the Faculty Ombuds Office may request information and files from the University related to concerns brought to the Office and will maintain the confidentiality of materials shared. The Faculty Ombuds Office may decline or withdraw from involvement of matters on the basis of perceived or actual conflict of interest or inappropriateness.

### **Limits to Authority**

In carrying out its mission, the Faculty Ombuds Office is not authorized to: advocate for individuals, programs, departments, divisions, and/or schools; 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. The Faculty Ombuds Office shall not participate in formal investigations or administrative processes; revise or rescind policies and administrative decisions; maintain records that identify an individual; offer legal advice; or testify or gather evidence. The Faculty Ombuds Office will not provide psychological counseling. The Faculty Ombuds Office will not share confidential information unless there is imminent risk of serious harm or disclosure is otherwise required by law.

### **Reports**

In order to communicate systemic issues and trends, general patterns in the concerns brought to the Faculty Ombuds Office will be provided to and discussed directly with the University President on an annual basis and made available on the Faculty Ombuds Office Website (<https://inside.sou.edu/faculty-ombuds/index.html>). This information will be provided in a manner that does not compromise confidentiality or provide individually identifiable information.

### **Protection from Retaliation for Using the Faculty Ombuds Office**

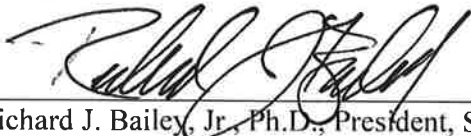
The University is committed to protecting members of the Faculty Ombuds Office and visitors to the Faculty Ombuds Office from reprisal and/or retaliation by members of the University community.

### **Staffing, Training, and Budget**

Faculty with a high degree of familiarity and experience with SOU governance structures and who have participated broadly in university service activities are eligible to serve as Faculty Ombuds. Faculty Ombuds will be selected by a committee appointed by the University President. This committee will be composed of SOU's faculty as well as other members of the SOU community, e.g. General Counsel, Vice President for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, Student Ombuds, etc... Faculty Ombuds will serve a two-year term and may serve additional terms at the discretion of the President. Faculty Ombuds will be available for faculty throughout the calendar year. Faculty Ombuds will be members of the International Ombuds Association. Faculty Ombuds will attend trainings and participate in professional development activities focused on, but not limited to, listening, asking questions, generating options, managing conflict, and/or serving as a mediator. An annual budget, as established by the University President, will be provided for the Faculty Ombuds Office. These funds will support the operation of the Office (e.g. teaching release, phone lines, and printing expenses) as well as the professional development of the Faculty Ombuds, including, but not limited to, membership in the International Ombuds Association and participation in the International Ombuds Association Foundations Course.

### **Approval and Effective Date**

This Charter is approved by Richard J. Bailey, Jr., President of Southern Oregon University, this 29<sup>th</sup> day of August 2023 and becomes effective as of this date.



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Richard J. Bailey, Jr., Ph.D., President, Southern Oregon University