

Minutes of the TPP meeting of 13 November 2017

Approved: 16 February 2018

Present: K.M. Babiak, R. Carlos, G.G. Desai, A. Gailus, D. Freeman, J.T. Lehman (chair), K. Najarian, C. A. Ross, K.M. Staller

Absent: X. Liu, K. Sender

The meeting was convened at 1115 h. The proposed agenda was adopted. Members welcomed Professor Carlos, SACUA vice-chair, who was joining TPP as SACUA liaison, replacing Professor Malik.

#### CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of 2 October 2017 were approved as submitted.

#### PREPARATION FOR VISIT OF CENTRAL OMBUDS

Members reviewed questions they planned to ask the Ombuds.

#### VISIT OF CENTRAL OMBUDS BRUNO GIORDANI

The guest joined the meeting at 1130 h.

1. How long have you served in your ombuds position?

This is my fifth year. The two antecedent ombuds each served two sequential 3-year terms before stepping down. I plan to do the same.

2. Approximately how many cases have you handled during your tenure?

I destroy the records of each case as it is resolved or concluded, so I do not have a precise count, but the number is in the hundreds and potentially exceeds 1000.

3. What is your current inventory of active cases?

I have five meetings scheduled for this week, and I typically receive three or four calls each week.

4. What is the typical time frame, or range of time periods, that a case takes to reach a decision point or final resolution?

(This question was postponed in deference to item 13.)

5. At what administrative level are most resolutions reached?

(This question was postponed in deference to item 13.)

6. Do you ever meet with unit ombuds, or do you know if unit ombuds share their experiences with each other?

I get calls from unit ombuds because I have a direct line to the provost and academic affairs. I don't meet with them enough because I don't have the time. I distribute brochures that I developed and I encourage them to join the International Ombudsman Association (IOA)

(<https://www.ombudsassociation.org/home.aspx>). The organization adheres to several core principles

including independence, neutrality and impartiality, confidentiality, and informality. Because activities are informal there are no written agreements. At the UM, the office is independent, and does not report to anyone.

7. Is there a training program for unit ombuds?

There is a training program run by the office of the provost and I am involved. The Mediation Services group is also involved. These are three hour informational meetings including the use of vignettes. The IOA offers a 3-day training course, and I encourage units to join it.

8. Have you noticed any patterns of complaint? If yes, how would you describe these patterns?

Refer to item 13 below.

9. What types of complaints prove to be the most difficult to resolve?

Interpersonal conflicts prove difficult because there is history and baggage and the ombuds need to understand the relationships. Sometimes people who have had contentious pasts develop a problem and past grudges come into play.

10. Do you have a formulaic or logic model that guides your activities?

(This question was postponed in deference to item 13.)

11. How are you evaluated by the Office of Provost?

The office is completely independent.

12. Do you file annual reports?

I keep no written records.

13. Please provide additional comments.

The central ombuds sees people across campus because some of them don't want to talk to their unit ombuds.

Salary concerns are universal across campus. They range from allegations of favoritism to disciplinary parochialism.

Spousal hires are frequent concerns to such a degree that I believe the rules and environment surrounding these hires need investigation. Spousal hires are paid for three years on a cost-sharing basis with the office of the provost. Many are simply terminated after that. Rules are inconsistent across units and there is a sense of bias against individuals. A review of the program and practices is in order. Senior spousal hires are a special problem.

Deans sometimes try to renege on past dean promises made in writing. Such a practice is not acceptable at the UM.

At present there is no appeal to the provost on promotions of associate professors to full professors. This becomes problematic when, for example, joint appointees are promoted in one unit but not the other.

Faculty do not get proper support about how to apply for tenure. There is a lack of clear guidance about materials and a sense of capriciousness in the system. I don't see annual reviews being done that include guidance from chairs. Faculty should have the right to respond in writing.

I would like to see more top down concern. The provost doesn't want to interfere with deans.

Ten percent salary reductions have started all over campus, without recourse to RB 5.09.

Finances are driving academic decisions.

Other than unit ombuds, student, staff, and central ombuds should be housed in a common area to encourage exchange of best practices.

Ombuds cannot attend Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) meetings by fiat of the General Counsel. However, I think there has been an uptick in OIE cases. There appears to be a degree of communication between unit administration and OIE such that even when an individual is cleared of offenses by OIE, the unit may still impose sanctions.

Is collegiality a part of tenure?

The guest left the meeting at 1243 h. He agreed to return at a future date to be determined to continue the discussion.

#### ACTION ITEM

Members agreed unanimously that the chair should transmit anonymous responses from unit ombuds to the central ombuds.

#### **Future meeting schedule**

The next TPP meeting will be scheduled after the Thanksgiving break.

There was no additional business. The meeting adjourned at 1245 h.