

Senate Resolution 11/12-03: Establishing the University Ombuds Office

Senate Bill 355 History:

8/25/11 Submitted for consideration to FSEC, Sent to FS Personnel Comm. (PC)

9/22/11 After revision by FS PC, sent to FS EC, passed first reading unanimously

9/29/11 Before full Faculty Senate for Second Reading; passed unanimously at second reading adopted as Senate Resolution 11-12-3 to forward to Administration

WHEREAS: The faculty of the University of Alabama in Huntsville seek to ensure that all members of the university community (faculty, staff, and students) receive fair and equitable treatment, and

WHEREAS: With a goal of facilitating the resolution of grievances (both formal and informal) and conflicts effectively, confidentially, impartially, independently, and in a timely manner as described in the Faculty Handbook and within other similar University documents, and

WHEREAS: The level of professionalism within a modern and growing university demands formalizing the support structures common at peer institutions,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Faculty Senate advocates the formal establishment of "The University Ombuds Office" prior to the 2012-2013 Academic Year;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this office be established as a resource for the entire university community (faculty, staff, and students) consisting of a full-time, qualified ombudsperson and appropriate support staff;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

This newly established "The University Ombuds Office" should follow standard best practices for such offices including, but not limited to, operating outside the usual administrative authority to ensure objectivity;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The Ombudsperson become a member of the International Ombudsman Association (IOA) if not one already, and adhere to its Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The Ombudsperson shall be available to (a) receive and attempt to resolve individual grievances of members of the University community; and (b) to recommend procedural changes within the University in response to experience acquired in investigating individual cases.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

All proceedings in individual cases shall be held confidential by the Ombudsperson unless otherwise authorized by the complainant. The Ombudsperson shall have access to all administrative officials of the University and, in accordance with law, to all University records, including those of faculty members. He or she shall not have authority to take disciplinary action, reverse decisions, or circumvent existing University rules and procedures. He or she shall supplement, not replace, other means, where they exist, for redress of grievances.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

1. The Ombudsperson shall at least annually make reports to the University community at large.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That following the establishment of this office that the position of Faculty Senate Ombudsman should go vacant and ultimately eliminated upon approval of new Faculty Senate bylaws.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That an ad hoc committee of the Faculty Senate be formed to define the position of the ombudsperson, and that this committee include all stakeholders including faculty, staff, students and administrators.