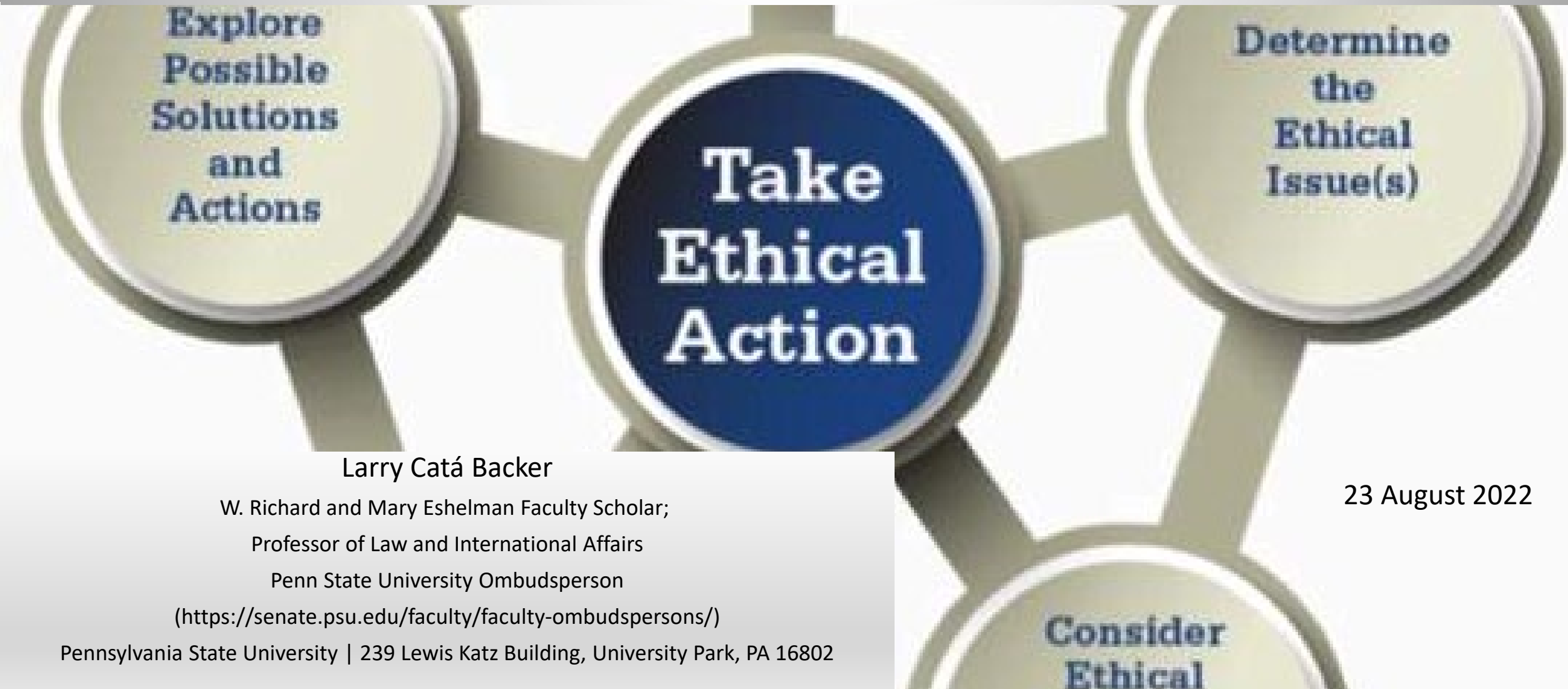


Penn State University Senate Ombudspersons System-Orientation Materials



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(<https://senate.psu.edu/faculty/faculty-ombudspersons/>)

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University Faculty Ombuds

- Since 1973, Faculty Ombuds have provided service to all full-time faculty including instructors and all professorial ranks and equivalent ranks as define in Policy ([AC21](#)).
- Since 1998 the Faculty Senate approved the creation of the office of the University Ombudsperson
- **Functions:**
 - Serve as a coordinator/facilitator and clearinghouse of information for ombuds
 - *Coordination*
 - *System Monitoring and Assessment,*
 - Oversee workshops
 - *Capacity Building*
 - Serve as the university-level contact person for the other ombuds
 - *Functional coherence among units and between Ombuds system and VPF.*

Unit Ombuds

- <https://senate.psu.edu/faculty/faculty-ombudspersons/unit-ombudspersons/>



PennState

University Faculty Senate

SENATORS

COMMITTEES

FACULTY

CURRICULUM

STUDENTS

ABOUT US

CONTACT US

DISCUSSION FORUM

Unit Ombudspersons 2022-2023

UNIT	OMBUDSPERSON	EMAIL	ALTERNATE OMBUDSPERSON	EMAIL
Abington	Pierce Salguero	salguero@psu.edu	Meghan Gillen	mmg204@psu.edu
College of Agricultural Sciences	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Altoona	Lauren Jacobson	lpj100@psu.edu	Shawn Bernecky	sxb1021@psu.edu
College of Arts and Architecture	Darla Lindberg	dvl2@psu.edu	Lisa Iulo	ldi1@psu.edu
Berks	Nathan Greenauer	nmg12@psu.edu	Ada Leung	cxl51@psu.edu
Smeal College of Business	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Bellisario College of Communications	Matthew Jackson	mxj20@psu.edu	Colleen Connolly-Ahern	cuc15@psu.edu
College of Earth and Mineral Sciences	James Adair	jha3@psu.edu	Chris Forest	cef13@psu.edu
College of Education	Carlo Panlilio	ccp15@psu.edu	Paul Riccomini	pjr146@psu.edu
College of Engineering (includes ARL)	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Erie, The Behrend College	Matt Levy	ml133@psu.edu	Scott Stroupe	sts16@psu.edu
Great Valley	John Cameron	jcc15@psu.edu	Raghu Sangwan	rxs69@psu.edu

Ombuds Resources: Website--

<https://senate.psu.edu/faculty/faculty-ombudspersons/>

When should a faculty member/Administrator contact the Ombuds?



**NEED TO HAVE A
CONFIDENTIAL
DISCUSSION ABOUT
A UNIVERSITY
RELATED PROBLEM;**



**FEEL A POLICY OR
PROCEDURE HAS
BEEN UNFAIRLY
APPLIED;**



**NEEDS INFORMATION
ABOUT FACULTY
RIGHTS AND
UNIVERSITY POLICIES
AND PROCEDURES;**



**NEEDS HELP IN
FACILITATING A
RESOLUTION TO A
WORK-RELATED
PROBLEM;**



**NEED HELP
COMMUNICATING
WITH OTHER
FACULTY OR
UNIVERSITY
ADMINISTRATORS;**



**WANTS TO
UNDERSTAND
OPTIONS FOR
SOLVING A WORK-
RELATED PROBLEM;**



**SEEKS TO EXPLORE
WAYS TO RESOLVE A
DISPUTE IN AN
INFORMAL MANNER;**



**WANT TO KNOW
WHAT AVAILABLE
UNIVERSITY
RESOURCES**

FRR-AC 76; Role in Conciliation

Colleges and campuses should have a person or group to serve in the role of ombudsperson. The objective is to:

1. *enhance communication and clarify possible misunderstandings* in situations which involve potential disputes,

2. *advise faculty members and administrators* as to appropriate courses of action, and

3. *help settle matters* before they become hardened into serious disputes.

FRR-AC 76: Selection and Jurisdiction

- The individual or group should be **selected by procedures approved by a majority of the faculty in the unit.**
- A. An Ombudsperson and an Alternate Ombudsperson shall **be elected by the faculty** in each of the colleges, campuses and academic units.
 - For those not associated with an academic unit, or in cases where the appropriate ombudsperson may be in doubt, the following policy shall be applied:
 - Where appropriate, the ombudsperson and alternate ombudsperson will be from the same academic unit to which the employee is most closely associated. For example, research associates in the Applied Research Laboratory will have access to the ombudsperson for the College of Engineering.
 - In cases where there is disagreement or doubt as to the appropriate ombudsperson, the Executive Vice President and Provost shall make the determination. **[Recent practice this function delegated in first instance to University Ombuds]**
 - In cases where the ombudsperson is in doubt as to their jurisdiction, they shall ask the Executive Vice President and Provost for a determination.
- B. The Dean, Chancellor, or other appropriate campus official and the faculty organization shall jointly develop selection procedures for the ombudsperson and alternate ombudsperson. Normally, the role of ombudsperson will be performed by a single person, with a designated alternate. In unusual circumstances, a group of not more than three persons may be selected. No one who is a member of the Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities shall serve as ombudsperson.
- **RECENT PRACTICE—The role of the VP/Provost has been delegated to the University Ombuds**

FRR AC 76: Specification of Function

- ***The Ombudsperson functions:***
 - *Clarification* of misunderstandings;
 - *Advising* faculty and administrators as to appropriate courses of action;
 - *Assisting* in the informal resolution of differences;
 - *Assuring* that appropriate department, college and/or campus procedures are exhausted before referring the case to higher levels;
 - *Informing* the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost and appropriate college or campus officials if a matter cannot be resolved at the lower level and the case is to be referred to the Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities. *[Now performed by the Faculty Senate Office]*
- ***The ombudsperson shall not:***
 - Hold hearings;
 - Exceed the role of conciliator and advisor;
 - Substitute his or her judgment for that of appropriate administrative and/or faculty bodies;
 - Serve as counsel for either party to a complaint before the Hearing Board.

AC 70

Initiation of Dismissal Process

- **A. The Steps That Shall be Followed to Initiate the Dismissal Process**
 - Within a reasonable time after the occurrence of events that might give rise to termination for adequate cause are made known to the appropriate administrator(s), ***the faculty member will be provided with written notice from the administrator(s) of the alleged misconduct constituting adequate cause.*** The notice shall include a copy of or references to this AC70 policy and sufficient information concerning the allegations to enable the faculty member to make a meaningful response.
 - The faculty member will be given an opportunity to respond to the allegations either in writing or at a meeting with the appropriate administrator(s), or both, at the discretion of the faculty member against whom allegations of misconduct have been made. The affected faculty member shall be accorded a reasonable amount of time to prepare a response to the allegations.
 - The faculty member shall have the opportunity to meet with the appropriate administrator(s) and they will be given an explanation of the alleged misconduct. The administrator, at their discretion, may respond to the written submissions of the faculty member at this meeting. ***The appropriate ombudsperson shall be present as an objective, informational resource at the meeting unless the faculty member waives, in writing, the right to have the ombudsperson present.*** The meeting may be continued at the discretion of the administrator(s) should there be a need for additional time to resolve the matter or to obtain additional information or otherwise for other good cause.

Expectations

The Role of Ombudsman

- 1. Faculty reach out to Ombuds; OMBUDS DO NOT REACH OUT TO FACULTY
 - Includes instructors and all professorial ranks and equivalent ranks as define in Policy ([AC21](#)).)
- 2. Faculty include those serving in an administrative capacity;
 - a College Dean can reach out
 - A staff member, or grad student cannot
- 3. CONFIDENTIALITY:
 - belongs to the faculty member;
 - Practice is to minimize note taking; no formal records
 - But under certain circumstance the Ombuds may be required to disclose to university counsel and in formal proceedings

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Key Elements of Ombuds Role

Outreach

- Let people know about your role and scope of services
- Make it easy for people to contact you
- Visibility (e.g. at faculty meetings, etc.)

Build Trust

- Reach out to key unit personnel (HR, finance, research)
- Periodic meetings with Administrators (chancellors, deans, etc.)
- Open communications with faculty institutional leaders in the unit

Know the Rules

- Reach out when in doubt
- You play a key role in helping faculty understand the complexities of PSU internal governance rules and mechanisms)

Lower the temperature

- Maintain a safe space for venting
- Help faculty and administrators focus on the ethical and undistorted facts
- Try to distill the essence of the issues

Offer Holistic but Honest Advice

- Help faculty to dispassionately consider the range of options and consequences
- Provide technical assistance and fill knowledge gaps
- Where appropriate help explore pathways to conciliation

When Should an Ombuds Reach Out to University Ombuds?

- When in doubt
- To run ideas; to make sure that approach is generally consistent with Ombuds practice and University Rules
- Where the issue presented presents a conflict or is sensitive in a way that a non-unit Ombuds might be better situated to take up the task
- To confirm interpretation and uniform application of rules
- To identify systemic conflicts, bringing to the administration's attention those practices, policies, and aspects of PSU culture that appear to exacerbate tensions or create problems for faculty; for administrators, or for the sound positive operation of the university.

Ethical Engagement: An approach to Conciliation



Questions?

