

Charter of the Furman University Ombuds Office

Purpose

The role of Faculty Ombuds at Furman University was established in 2016 and that of the Staff Ombuds in 2017. Its purposes are:

- To provide an independent, impartial, informal, off-the-record, confidential and alternate channel of communication for all employees to surface and resolve workplace issues
- To assist the university's adherence to ethical conduct and values

In addition to serving as an alternate channel of communication and a resource for the employee to seek guidance on how to resolve or report workplace issues, the Ombuds assists the university by reporting trends and emerging issues observed while maintaining the confidentiality of individual communications with officer's inquirers. To the extent possible, the Ombuds will discuss and make recommendations regarding improvements in university policies and procedures that may prevent malfeasance or prevent workplace issues from becoming significant or recurring.

Responsibilities and Duties

1. Awareness and Accessibility

The Ombuds shall develop initiatives to (i) inform all employees about the role and function of the position at Furman University; (ii) encourage employees to report illegal, unethical or criminal behavior through the proper formal channels; (iii) encourage employees to resolve workplace disputes as informally as possible; (iv) ensure that the Ombuds is easily accessible by making services available through a website, and by continuing to create ways for visitors to have confidential discussions; and (v) publicize that visitors will not be retaliated against for contacting or seeking guidance from the Ombuds.

2. Issue Identification and Resolution

The Ombuds shall (i) assist Furman University in early identification, surfacing and resolution of work-related issues, while maintaining the confidentiality of communications with visitors to the Ombuds; (ii) provide employees with a confidential and anonymous means to seek guidance on how to report illegal, unethical or criminal behavior without fear of retaliation or interference with employment, tenure, or promotion; (iii) promptly report to the appropriate formal channel any issue brought to the Ombuds that he/she determines creates an imminent threat of serious harm to an individual, and (iv) ensures that the practices of the Ombuds adheres to the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice of the International Ombuds Association, a copy of which is attached as Appendix A.

3. Issue Prevention and Change Advocacy

The Ombuds shall (i) report issue trends and impact to the President; (ii) recommend changes to prevent systemic issues and issue recurrence without compromising confidentiality; and (iii) identify gaps in policies.

Operation of the Role

The Ombuds Office is an alternate and informal channel of communication. It is not part of management/supervision and does not make such decisions. It is not a “place of record” for employee to give the university notice of any claims against the university. The Ombuds does not conduct formal investigations, and is not an advocate for either employee or Furman University. The principal interest of the Ombuds is in helping Furman University and employees have a fair process for surfacing and resolving workplace disputes.

Communications with the Ombuds are considered confidential and privileged. To function effectively, the Ombuds must maintain the confidentiality of communications with visitors. Accordingly, the Ombuds does not keep permanent records of confidential communication. Permanent records kept by the Ombuds contain only limited data using the uniform reporting categories suggested by the International Ombuds Association which is attached in Appendix B.

The Ombuds is available to all employees with the express understanding that it provides them with a confidential, impartial and alternate channel of communication. Accordingly, no Furman University employee at any level may compel an Ombuds to disclose a confidence, and it is not appropriate for either Furman University or any other person who use the Ombuds to attempt to compel an Ombuds to reveal confidential communications in any legal proceeding. Use of the Ombuds will be considered to be an agreement to these conditions.

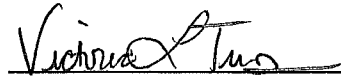
Each Ombuds is expected to be a member of the International Ombuds Association and to adhere to its Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice.


Reporting

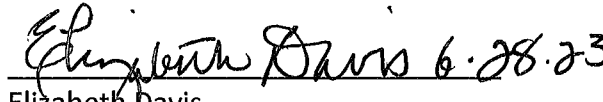
The Ombuds reports to the President of Furman University.

The Ombuds reports trends (while maintaining confidentiality) to the President at least once a year.

The Ombuds will promptly inform the relevant formal channels when he/she reasonably believes that there is an imminent risk of serious harm to an individual.

 7-3-23
Victoria Turgeon
Faculty Ombuds

 6.30.23
John Kemp
Staff Ombuds

 6.28.23
Elizabeth Davis
President