

BYLAWS OF THE LEHMAN COLLEGE SENATE

Adopted December 22, 1971 & Last Amended April 1, 2015

Ombudsman (Section 15)

- The Lehman College Ombudsman shall serve as a confidential investigator in cases of alleged unfairness or maladministration. The Ombudsman shall be the impartial spokesman for all parties involved in such cases.
- The Office of Ombudsman shall be governed according to guidelines established in the Senate enabling resolution of November 1984. The Office of Ombudsman shall be headed by a member of the tenured faculty who shall serve as Ombudsman for a term of two years, and who shall be eligible for re-election.
- The Ombudsman shall be chosen by the President of the College from a panel of candidates nominated by the Senate. Nominations shall take place in the Spring semester by procedures regularly used in Senate elections. In case of a vacancy, the same procedures for submission to the President shall be used in choosing nominees for the unexpired term.

The City University of New York – Student Complaint Procedure

(Revised 1/26/07)

The Possible Role of the Ombudsman in the Student Complaint Procedure

CUNY Procedures for Handling Student Complaints about Faculty Conduct in Academic Settings (selected sections):

...

III. **Informal Resolution.** Students are encouraged to attempt to resolve complaints informally with the faculty member or to seek the assistance of the department chairperson or campus ombudsman to facilitate informal resolution.

IV. **Formal Complaint.** ...

... C. The Fact Finder shall meet with the complaining student and faculty member, either separately or together, to discuss the complaint and to try to resolve it. The Fact Finder may seek the assistance of the campus ombudsman or other appropriate person to facilitate informal resolution.

Outline: Cases / Other Activities Engaged in So Far -

1. Asked to assist a Substitute Lecturer who paid a substantial amount of money to TRS (to earn “Prior Service Credit”) with an expectation that this individual could receive retirement benefits (case is ongoing).
2. Responded to a request by leadership from the Dean’s Office of one of our schools to assist in expediting the response from an adjunct faculty member to a student’s concern about a grade.
3. Asked by several Full-time faculty members to discuss whether criteria for tenure / promotion were reasonable as described to them by the leadership of the relevant academic departments.
4. Asked to possibly serve as an “outside-of-department mentor” to a faculty member undergoing a comprehensive mentoring/guidance program created by the relevant chair of the department.

Problems encountered since becoming an Ombudsman –

There appears to be no CUNY-based training for an Ombudsman or any guidance documents, containing advice or procedures for how to conduct an investigation of allegations of unfairness or maladministration.

This is unlike the comprehensive training I received at CUNY when I became the Research Integrity Officer (RIO) or when I was elected Department Chair.

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