

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA

ACADEMIC SENATE

RESOLUTION

Resolution for the Academic Senate in Support of the Hiring of a University Ombuds and the Filling of the Office of the University Ombuds

- WHEREAS: The purpose of an Ombuds Office is a vital resource for the university. An Ombuds Office protects staff, faculty, and students by seeking resolution amongst the conflicts and disagreements that may occur at the university. According to the International Ombudsman Association, an Ombuds Office can provide informal support to aggrieved parties by listening and affirming the feelings of the individuals involved in the concern while also providing formal referrals to resources if the situation is emergent and requires escalation;
- WHEREAS, After the retirement of Dr. Lavada Austin, the previous Ombuds, the position was not filled. As an alternative, the President's Office recommends students seek support from Student Affairs, faculty from Faculty Affairs, and staff from the Employer Labor Relations Office. These resources are inadequate as they cannot provide a safe, neutral, confidential, and independent resource for the aforementioned aggrieved parties without fear of retribution, creating a liability for the university. Still others are turning to the California Faculty Association for support on issues that may not be related to the Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- WHEREAS, Of particular concern is the lack of a safe space to voice grievances and seek resolutions for traditionally vulnerable populations on campus such as (but not limited to) underrepresented minorities, women, and members of the LGBTQ+ community.
- WHEREAS, Of the 23 CSU campuses, we are one of only seven campuses that does not have an Ombuds office.
- RESOLVED: The Academic Senate calls on the President to immediately reestablish the Ombuds Office and fill the position of Ombudsperson at Cal Poly Pomona. We also call on the president to hire adequate staff to support the position.
- RESOLVED, The proposed Ombuds Office will abide by the International Ombudsman Association's Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics, except when in conflict with California laws or University policies. The office will establish independent standards and procedures that abide by the aforementioned purpose and scope of services. The office will be independent and will not report to any one entity, but rather work in conjunction with the President's office, Provost, and Academic Senate.
- RESOLVED, The Office will maintain standards of confidentiality, to the extent possible under state and federal law. The Office will also remain impartial and neutral through all conflicts, inquiries, disputes, or issues. In its goal to provide a central place for members of the campus community, the Office will be staffed by individuals trained in skills on how to listen and support the campus community.
- RESOLVED, An Ombuds Office would provide an intermediary step to assist faculty, students, staff, and administrators with conflicts and concerns, and an opportunity to deescalate volatile situations. An Ombuds Office would also encourage members of the campus community to see the Ombuds to discuss preliminary concerns before a situation escalates as well. Indeed, in addition to helping faculty, students and staff with assistance, an Ombuds Office can also provide coaching to chairs and other leaders to help empower people to resolve issues on campus. The creation of such an office would provide an informal environment for faculty, staff, students, and administrators to seek guidance regarding issues, conflicts, concerns, or problems from a confidential, impartial, and independent office. It would then reserve only the most extreme and emergent issues for Student Affairs, Faculty Affairs, Labor Relations, and the CFA.
- RESOLVED, that this resolution be distributed to the President of Cal Poly Pomona, all Vice Presidents and Associate Vice Presidents in Academic Affairs, the Chairs of the CSU Academic Senates, and posted on the Cal Poly Pomona Academic Senate website.

Adopted by the Academic Senate of California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, on Wednesday, March 9, 2022.

Jocelyn Pacleb, Academic Senate Chair