

Role of Ombudsperson at CC
Staff Council
January 12, 2010

Jane Cauvel

- Introductions
- Jane gave history of her role
 - Taught at CC for years, retired
 - Away for 10 years
 - Was approached about the Ombudsperson position. She thought it was a useful role and said she would consider it. She asked to have until March to decide.
 - Wanted to get input about her role from staff council
- Handed out memo, and discussed contents (including information from www.ombudsmanassociation.org) in order to define her role in this position
 - Be an advocate for fairness
 - Be a source of information and referral
 - Aids in answering questions
 - Assists in the resolution of concerns and critical situations
 - Would report to trustee Audit Committee
 - Report on patterns and problem areas and may recommend revisions/improvement
 - Job description was written up a year ago
 - FEC stated interest in Jane being in this position
 - Many staff are familiar with Jane as well
 - If she accepts this role, she would like to talk to BOT first as well as know what the role of reporting will be
 - It will not be a whistle blowing position
 - Confidential unless life threatening
 - Will discuss patterns
- Where should location be
 - Should be private and accessible
 - She is interested in an office next to Heather Horton for more confidentiality and accessibility
 - There is a back stairwell in that area that could help
 - There is also public space where she could reach out to people who aren't in a situation where they need help- but more as a resource
 - She would also have a dedicated cell phone where she could be reached for off-campus meetings
- This is not being considered due to an issue at the college. It was recommended by an outside auditor. It was not "demanded," only "recommended." Was originally recommended for for-profit institutions, but has more recently been explored by non-profit.
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- Coming to us for feedback and to discuss this role and opportunity
 - Would not be available for students- just faculty and staff.
 - Time commitment-
 - Wants half time. Perhaps 4 hours a day. Maybe 10 month position.

- She would ask for appropriate time frames to be available for faculty and staff.
- Uncertain if she would be considered an employee of the college.
 - Perhaps a contract position
 - Now they are considering her being an employee that would be similar to Heather Horton or the Chaplains.
 - Questions being asked of why create a position when so many have been cut.
- Is it for people to complain?
 - She is open to what is needed. She wants to be able to help—but also listen.
 - Within a year, she should know more about how to manage information people are coming with.
- How are employees and faculty going to benefit from role?
 - Be a listening ear, but encourage people to approach the concern with who impacts it.
 - Allow people to vent
 - Assist people in changing things if possible (working with dept heads, chairs, etc.)
 - Give resources
 - Some are asking “what’s the point?” Why would staff go to Jane if issues aren’t getting “resolved.”
- Will staff members feel the same ability to approach Jane as a faculty would?
 - Faculty background
 - Staff may not feel comfortable, or know Jane
 - Jane feels she knew a lot of staff when she was here and feels she is in good-standing with staff who know her.
 - Her statement is that we’re all teachers. People impact students on this campus—and not everyone is a professor.
 - She will rely on people who know her to help spread that word.
 - She would like to stop in to support-staff lunches and meet with groups periodically.
 - Jane has worked with staff more than many other faculty members.
 - She understands it will take a while to build confidence in her role.
 - Abandon titles and use first names for comfort.
 - She gathers that faculty/staff relationships are not the best right now. Especially with budget cuts.
- This role would allow her to go to people who there are concerns about and approach the concerns.
 - She wants to be an advocate for communication, fairness and transparency.
 - The college can use all the openness they can get.
 - There has always been tension between faculty and staff
 - Some comes naturally
 - Some is created by rumors and people stuck in ruts
- Sometimes there is also a divide between faculty and administration, or staff and administration.
 - Would be good for her to have the ears of a trustee to support all areas of the college.

- Jane feels she can approach concerns in an informal manner as well. She feels comfortable talking to the trustees.
- Staff doesn't feel they have the ability to go to trustees. Many people feel very separated from the trustees.
- Role of president should be to translate and interpret campus to the board and the board to campus. This is critical for a healthy environment.
- Is there a track record of other schools using this?
 - Yes, and Jane has been researching this.
 - Some say the first year is hard to get people involved, but it usually takes off after that.
 - Some schools have set up due to a bad situation. Not the case at CC.
 - Jane would go for training, but would also be in touch with others from other schools to see their roles and network.
 - Jane has worked with ACM a lot.
- Sounds like Jane would be good person due to her experience as a faculty member and a staff member
 - She has also had jobs at other schools, which is helpful.
- If we have suggestions, please contact her.
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