

# JMU Faculty Ombudperson

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## What is a Faculty Ombudperson?

The Ombudperson is an independent and neutral third party on campus for faculty members with questions, disputes or other concerns. The current Ombudperson has been an instructional faculty member at JMU for 27 years.

## What does the Faculty Ombudperson do?

The Ombudperson serves as a confidential consultant and referral agent, using an informal process to assist faculty members in a variety of work-related concerns. He/she does not serve as an advocate, but considers all questions and concerns objectively and impartially. Consultations with faculty members can involve varied dimensions, including but not limited to:

- Receiving questions and/or concerns from faculty members.
- Conferring with faculty members.
- Considering options for faculty members
- Referring faculty members to appropriate resources when applicable.
- Assisting faculty members in understanding and applying university policy, rights, and responsibilities.

In addition to supporting faculty members via confidential consultations, the Faculty Ombudperson serves the university by making recommendations and offering feedback regarding policies and procedures. The Ombudperson works with the Faculty Senate and relevant university administrators to help represent the faculty in decision-making.

## What principles guide the work of the Faculty Ombudperson?

*Independence* -- The Ombudperson is independent in structure, function and appearance to the highest degree possible within the organization.

*Neutrality and Impartiality* -- As a designated neutral party, the Ombudperson remains unaligned and impartial. The Ombudperson does not engage in any situation that could create a conflict of interest.

*Confidentiality* -- The Ombudperson holds all communications with those seeking assistance in strict confidence and does not disclose confidential communications unless given permission to do so. The only exception to this privilege of confidentiality is where there appears to be imminent risk of serious harm.

*Informality* -- The Ombudperson, as an informal resource, does not participate in any formal adjudicative or administrative procedure related to concerns brought to his/her attention.

## When should I contact the Faculty Ombudperson?

You can talk with the Ombudperson at any time with questions or concerns. Please remember that consulting with the Ombudperson is not a substitute for participation in more formal procedures. The Ombudperson is a confidential sounding board regarding ideas and resources. The Ombudperson holds all communications with those seeking assistance in strict confidence and does not disclose confidential communications unless given permission to do so. The only exception to this privilege of confidentiality is where there appears to be imminent risk of serious harm.

## How do I contact the Faculty Ombudperson?

You can reach Dr. Charles Blake at [blakech@jmu.edu](mailto:blakech@jmu.edu). The Faculty Ombudperson's office is in the Wine-Price Building, room 3047. The quickest and most effective way to reach the Ombudperson is via [e-mail](#). If the telephone is your preferred method of contact, please send a short e-mail message providing a phone number at which you can be reached to arrange a consultation. The Faculty Ombudperson is available for consultations throughout the year. Every effort will be made to schedule appointments with faculty members as soon as possible after the initial request.