

## 1. THE NAME OF THE ASSOCIATION:

The English name of the Association is Association of Canadian College and University Ombudspersons (1). The French name is Association des Ombudsmans des Universités et Collèges du Canada. The acronym is ACCUO (English) and AOUC (French). The Association of Canadian College and University Ombudspersons (ACCUO) is a bilingual (English and French), independent association of ombudspersons in post-secondary institutions in Canada.

## 2. VISION AND MISSION:

- 2.1. ACCUO strives for the promotion of fairness and respectful learning and working environments in post-secondary institutions in Canada through the establishment of ombudsperson services.
- 2.2. In support of its members and the development of the Ombuds profession, ACCUO promotes the principles of independence, impartiality, confidentiality, and accessibility in the practice of Ombuds work.
- 2.3. The mission of ACCUO is to:
  - 2.3.1. Promote the role of Ombudsperson and foster its understanding;
  - 2.3.2. Act as a central resource on the theory and practice of Ombudsmanship;
  - 2.3.3. Promote the presence of Ombuds services within post-secondary institutions;
  - 2.3.4. Provide professional development opportunities to current and potential members;
  - 2.3.5. Develop and promote professional standards for its members;
  - 2.3.6. Share information about best practices among its members;
  - 2.3.7. Sponsor research on issues of interest and concern to its members;
  - 2.3.8. Encourage cooperation with other organizations dedicated to Ombudsmanship.

## 3. THE FUNCTION OF OMBUDSPERSON:

- 3.1. An ombudsperson operating within a post-secondary institution is someone who:
  - 3.1.1. Fosters respectful, fair and equitable policies, practices and treatment of individuals;
  - 3.1.2. Functions independently of the administrative structures of the institution and of the staff, faculty and student associations;
  - 3.1.3. Operates in an impartial and objective manner;
  - 3.1.4. Respects confidentiality;
  - 3.1.5. Provides information, advice and intervention;
  - 3.1.6. Investigates and/or informally resolves complaints through access to persons, records, files and information;
  - 3.1.7. Recommends on individual and systemic issues without decision-making authority to implement the recommendation;

- 3.1.8. Reports publicly and/or issues an annual report to the authority designated in the terms of reference of the office.

#### 4. MEMBERSHIP:

- 4.1. Persons fulfilling an Ombudsperson function as described in Section 3, in a post-secondary institution in Canada, or those interested in the Ombuds profession, are eligible for membership.
- 4.2. Voting and Associate members are required to pay an annual fee, which is established at the Annual General Meeting.
- 4.3. The membership year runs from July 1 to June 30.
- 4.4. Membership in ACCUO is open to:
  - 4.4.1. Full or part-time Ombuds practitioners working in post-secondary educational institutions (Voting Membership)
  - 4.4.2. Full or part-time Ombuds practitioners affiliated with organizations which are not post-secondary educational institutions (Associate Membership)
  - 4.4.3. Anyone interested in the Ombuds profession and is not working in the field currently, e.g. retired Ombudsperson, student, aspiring Ombudsperson (Associate Membership)

#### 4.5. Classifications of Membership:

##### 4.5.1. Voting Members:

- Meet all or most of the characteristics included in Section 3
- Work in a Canadian post-secondary educational setting

Voting members are eligible for the following: voting rights at ACCUO AGM; ability to run for executive offices, e.g. President, Treasurer, Secretary, Member at Large; participation in ACCUO list-serve; attendance at ACCUO sponsored events, e.g. mid-year meeting, annual conference, AGM, occasional workshops, mentoring relationships (if sufficient mentors are available.)

##### 4.5.2. Associate Members:

- Are full or part-time employees of post-in educational institutions (post-secondary, high school or primary levels) but do not meet the definition of Ombudsperson as it described in Section 3;
- Are affiliated with entities other than Canadian post-secondary educational institutions;
- Are interested in the Ombuds profession but are not currently practicing in the field;

Associate members are eligible for the following: attendance at ACCUO annual conference, occasional workshops, consultation with ACCUO executive committee members on issues related to Ombuds practice within post-secondary educational institutions; mentoring relationships (if sufficient mentors available.)

#### 4.5.3. Institutional Members:

- An office providing Ombudsperson services in a post-secondary educational institutions in accordance with the characteristics included in Section 3, above, may apply for institutional membership.

This membership will carry the same benefits and rights as Voting members, but will be limited to one vote.

#### 4.5.4 Honourary Members

- Recipients of the ACCUO Distinguished Service Award

## 5. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

5.1. There shall be an executive committee composed of the association officers, namely, a President, Secretary, Treasurer, and two Members-at-Large selected, if possible, one from eastern Canada and one from western Canada.

5.2. The immediate past President will be an Ex Officio member of the executive committee.

5.3. Officers will be elected from the membership normally by electronic voting taking place at the latest 20 days before the Annual General Meeting and serve a two-year term beginning July 1.

5.4. Officers may be re-elected, but may normally not serve more than two consecutive terms in a particular position.

5.5. In the event of a vacancy on the executive committee, the remaining officers may appoint a replacement to serve until the position is filled normally by electronic voting before the next Annual General Meeting.

5.6. The functions of the executive committee include but are not limited to:

5.6.1. Working with the conference coordinator to plan the forthcoming conference and Annual General Meeting;

5.6.2. Considering any matters which, in its opinion, are of concern to the membership;

5.6.3. Managing association funds;

5.6.4. Consulting the membership whenever appropriate;

5.6.5. Delegating particular tasks among themselves or the membership at large.

5.7. Duties of the Officers:

5.7.1. President:

- Will chair meetings of the executive committee, as well as the Annual General Meeting;
- Will coordinate the efforts of the Association;
- Will act as spokesperson for the Association.

5.7.2. Secretary:

- Will prepare and distribute agendas and minutes, as well as receive documents needed for meetings or for the membership (e.g., copies of the financial report.)

- Will also maintain a mailing list of members.
- 5.7.3. Treasurer:
- Together with one other officer, will have signing authority for the association accounts
  - Will have primary responsibility for the preparation of budgetary recommendations, financial reports and collection of membership fees.
- 5.7.4. Members-at-Large:
- The two Members-at-Large will provide general assistance to the other officers in the performance of specific duties and will have a particular responsibility for ensuring that the interests of all members are adequately reflected in decisions, e.g. for ensuring that no one group or region is excluded or overlooked.

## 6. CONFERENCE COORDINATOR:

- 6.1. A conference coordinator will be chosen to plan and to host the forthcoming conference. The conference coordinator must be a member of the Association.
- 6.2. Normally, the coordinator will be chosen two years in advance at the Annual General Meeting so that he or she can gain experience by helping with some of the details of the conference in the year preceding his or her own tenure as host.

## 7. AMENDMENTS:

- 7.1. Amendments to this constitution can be proposed at any time.
- 7.2. Proposed amendments should be sent to the Secretary in sufficient time so that the proposed amendments are circulated to all members at least 30 days prior to the Annual General Meeting.
- 7.3. The Secretary may circulate the proposed amendments via electronic means, e.g. e-mail, facsimile transmission, or regular postal service.
- 7.4. An amendment will pass by simple majority vote of the members present at an Annual General Meeting.
- 7.5. Passed at the Annual General Meeting, 10 June 1990, Québec, Québec
- 7.5.1. Amended 19 June 1993, Winnipeg, Manitoba
  - 7.5.2. Amended 12 June 1994, Ottawa, Ontario
  - 7.5.3. Amended 11 June 1995, Waterloo, Ontario
  - 7.5.4. Amended 17 May 1996, St. Louis, Missouri
  - 7.5.5. Amended 9 May 2002, Winnipeg, Manitoba
  - 7.5.6. Amended 28 May 2004, Montreal, Quebec
  - 7.5.7. Amended 21 May 2010, Vienna, Austria
  - 7.5.8. Amended 8 June 2012, Edmonton, Alberta
  - 7.5.9. Amended 15 June 2016, AGM by Teleconference

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Note 1: The word "Ombudsman" is Swedish. Ombudspersons in Canadian post-secondary institutions sometimes carry a different title such as ombudsman, Ombuds or Ombud. For purposes of clarity, the ACCUO Constitution uses the term "ombudsperson" to describe the position and the term "Ombuds" as an adjective when describing the work of an Ombudsperson.