University Senate
PROPOSAL FORM

Name:	Ellin Scholnick
Date:	9/13/16
Title of Proposal:	Revision to the Senate Bylaws to Provide Representation for Ombuds Officers on Senate Committees
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Unit/Department/College:	President's Office
Constituency (faculty, staff, undergraduate, graduate):	Faculty Ombuds Officer
Description of issue/concern/policy in question:	The University of Maryland currently has four Ombuds Officers who provide confidential, independent, and impartial Ombuds services to members of the University community on issues specific to Faculty, Staff, Graduate Students, and Undergraduate Students. The role of the Faculty Ombuds Officer was established in 1990 in University policy II-4.00 (A) University of Maryland Policies and Procedures Governing Faculty Grievances. The policy describes the role of the Faculty Ombuds Officer as "counselor, fact-finder, mediator, and negotiator, but not as an advocate for any party in a dispute." Although the Senate receives an annual report from the Faculty Ombuds Officer, there is no communication channel for discussing institutional structures that underlie complaints. As the current Faculty Ombuds Officer, I have been fortunate enough to have developed informal channels in my time in this role. The former Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs generously met with me on a regular basis. I have served on the taskforce updating the APT policy and on the Senate Faculty Affairs Committee which has addressed the structure of PTK positions. These experiences have helped to inform me about the policies and procedures that have been the sources of complaints and have helped me to advocate for change. I think such experiences have increased my effectiveness and I suggest that it would be helpful to formalize this connection between the Ombuds Officers and the Senate. I propose that the Faculty Ombuds Officer sit as a voting ex officio member on the Faculty Affairs Committee (with comparable positions for other Ombuds Officers on

	appropriate Senate Committees tasked with staff and student issues).
	Serving on Senate Committees will allow Ombuds Officers to make committees aware of concerns with University policy and institutional structures, but adding such representation will benefit Senate committees as well. Because of their work with University policy and campus community members, Ombuds Officers have a unique institutional perspective, a perspective that is different than that of representatives from the administration or of constituency representatives. Ombuds Officers have a holistic view of the institution, and will be able to speak to the impact of a draft recommendation both on the administration charged with implementing it and on the member of the campus community it will affect. This perspective would be a valuable addition to relevant Senate Committee discussions.
Description of action/changes you would like to see implemented and why:	Revise Senate Committee memberships to include voting ex-officio seats for the Faculty Ombuds Officer on the Senate Faculty Affairs Committee; the Staff Ombuds Officer on the Senate Staff Affairs Committee; and the Undergraduate and Graduate Student Ombuds Officers. Consideration should be given to which Senate Committee would be most appropriate for the Undergraduate and Graduate Student Ombuds Officers to serve on, depending on the types of issues they address (such as the APAS Committee, Educational Affairs Committee, or Student Affairs Committee).
Suggestions for how your proposal could be put into practice:	The Senate ERG Committee should be charged to review the proposal and propose revisions to the Senate Bylaws to include voting ex-officio membership for the Ombuds Officers on appropriate Senate Committees.
Additional Information:	