

**Carolyn Noorbakhsh, Ombuds, National Renewable Energy Laboratory
Personal Statement**

The role of an ombudsman within an organization is potentially of such value, that I hope to be a part of advancing the role by continuing my service on the IOA Board of Directors. IOA is still a relatively young organization and experiencing the predictable struggles and growing pains of youth. In order for the organization to grow into a healthy, thriving entity going forward, we need new and experienced, (notice I didn't say "old") voices in leadership roles. I bring the latter. Experience on the TOA and IOA Boards, chairing and co-chairing committees and task forces, developing and teaching courses through the Professional Development Committee, helps position me to serve IOA, our members and our function in a most professional way.

Questions for Nominee

1. Why are you interested in serving on the IOA board?

Please see my "Personal Statement."

2. Do you have any previous leadership or volunteer experience in TOA/UCOA/IOA or in other organizations?

I was previously on the Board of Directors of TOA. I also served on the TOA/UCOA merger committee. For a time, I chaired the Effectiveness Committee. Presently I serve on the IOA Board, the Board of Certification, the Professional Development Committee and have been the coordinator of the Intermediate and Advanced courses. I served on the team of volunteers who revamped the 101 course, and I am part of the pool of 101 instructors. I co-chaired a task force that developed and taught some Specialized courses on "Drawing from Psychology".

3. Do you have an area of expertise that IOA could possibly utilize - such as finance and accounting, grant writing, etc.?

Unfortunately, I do not have an area of expertise that IOA could utilize, outside of ombuds skills.

4. What IOA activities or areas are you most interested in committing time toward?

Certification, Internationalization and Professional Development

5. Describe how you would advance IOA's Strategic Plan.

A Strategic Plan needs to be a fluid document in order to flow with changing needs of IOA membership. So my first suggested step in advancing the Strategic Plan would be for the Board to review it for current relevancy and update time lines, etc. There are multiple topics, (Membership Services, Professional Development, Professional Standards and Ethics, Awareness and Outreach, to name a few), goals and strategies in the current Strategic Plan – too many to address in this brief statement about how I would advance them. For this purpose I would like to address what I believe to be an extremely important element of the Strategic Plan; Professional Standards and Ethics. Advancing the Strategic Plan in this area is tantamount to advancing the “profession.” I believe we must maintain high standards of practice and ensure that we are accountable to those standards. To my thinking, certification is a step in advancing that direction. That said, I think we must evaluate our SOP's and make sure that they are clearly defined, clearly understood, and clearly communicated. In evaluating them, the SOP's should be reviewed and conceivably revised to reflect the reality of law , (state and /or federal statutes) dictating some ombuds practices, such as mandated reporting of child abuse, elder abuse, etc. This could be a significant step in the direction of invigorating members who have felt disenfranchised.

6. Describe an issue impacting the profession that you are most passionate about and the actions you would take have taken related to this issue.

What does it mean and what should it look like to be a truly international organization? I feel strongly about answering this question. I think any organization is only as rich as the diversity of its membership. Our international members can only make us better. We are still in our infancy as the “*International Ombudsman Association*” and while I think we can be somewhat patient while we blossom as an international organization, I pledge to work in this arena collaboratively with the International Committee and the IOA Board to realize our potential. I have served as the Board liaison to the International Committee and will step-up that relationship to be more proactive if re-elected. There is a small working sub-group of the Board on which I presently serve that is addressing the question posed in the first sentence above. I very much hope to be able to continue this work.