

Kerry Egdorf, Ombudsman, Marquette University
Personal Statement

As an Associate Member, I have experienced the tension between the desire to practice to Standards and realities of my job description. IOA provides valuable resources and members offer tremendous support and wisdom, yet these resources are sometimes limited as the needs of Associates can be unique. As we continue to support the OO role, we must remain mindful to do so in ways that serve the needs of all members. As your representative, I will seek and give voice to those needs and work to provide those resources.

Questions for Nominee

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

I wish to serve on the Board because I am committed to IOA's goals of supporting and advocating for organizational ombuds. I believe I can offer the perspective of a relatively new OO and believe that I will represent well the challenges and opportunities of being an Associate Member, while maintaining a commitment to addressing the needs of the entire association.

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

Currently: member of IOA's Communications Committee; co-leader of outreach task Force, member and secretary of the editorial board for the Journal of the California Caucus of College and University Ombuds and member of the planning committee for the 2010 Cal Caucus meeting

- Planned and hosted various speakers and career events for students and alumni
- Served on numerous committees during academic career, including:
- Chair, undergraduate curriculum committee, Department of Communication, UW—Milwaukee
- Member, Leadership Commission, UW—Milwaukee
- Member, graduate committee, College of Communication, Marquette University
- Member, graduate and undergraduate curriculum committees, College of Professional Studies, Marquette University
- Member, various faculty search committees
- Member, planning committee, Mission Awareness Week, Marquette University

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

Survey research; training and development including both curriculum development and delivery; writing and editing.

My academic training and research includes both quantitative (survey development, administration, and analysis) and qualitative approaches. In addition to teaching at the university level for over 15 years, I have maintained a training and development practice in the areas of conflict resolution, interviewing and hiring, performance appraisals, communication skills, coaching/counseling and corrective action, and have taught courses in training and development (i.e., train the trainer).

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

Professional Development, Conference Planning, LLAC, and outreach/promotion of profession and IOA.

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

I was formally introduced to the ombuds profession in the summer of 2005 by attending Ombuds 101 and 101+. There was much talk about the merger and IOA as the new professional association for organizational ombuds. It was very exciting—even though I was not yet an ombudsman. A lot was accomplished between that summer and when I became an ombudsman and attended my first conference in April, 2007. And we have much to be proud of in November, 2009; so many have accomplished so much in a short amount of time.

In our push to establish the Association and meet the growing needs of members and those who wish to learn about the profession, I believe we have overlooked or neglected some of the basics of what makes us organizational ombuds in the first place. To that end, if elected, I would want to revisit the basics. And help to ensure that our current and future plans are aligned with our basic values, as described in the strategic plan.

Specifically, I would work for increased:

- transparency and commitment to continuous improvement;
- accountability in IOA work;
- fairness in activities;
- commitment to diversity, including diversity of opinions and needs;
- promotion of openness and collaboration among all members; and
- advancement of the profession

Success in the internal processes within the Association will allow us to be so much more successful as a profession and as we advance the field we care about so much. The existing strategic plan is will help us to grow. The goals are challenging, but attainable. Success depends, in large part, on an internal structure and processes that work for all.

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.

As an Associate Member, one of my primary concerns is equal access, support, and opportunities. Associate members face unique challenges in their practices and need support and resources that might be unique as well. I would like to see the Association more directly target the needs of this membership group.

I submitted a recommendation to the Conference Planners for a listening session in New Orleans specifically for Associate Members. If elected, I would ensure that such sessions are available for Associates to have direct access with the Associate Representatives to the Board, Standards of Practice/LLAC members, and members of the Board leadership to share their needs and concerns. Additionally, I would seek out and give voice to Associate needs as your Representative, and communicate with Associate Members frequently.

Beyond the Association, I believe it is critical that we strategically and consistently distinguish ourselves as organizational ombuds. There is great confusion—as evidenced by court documents, newspaper articles, books, and other various media—that the term ombudsman, in its various forms, is not well understood. The ABA distinguishes among the various types of ombuds, but then fails to take into consideration those distinctions in describing best practices. Incorrect definitions and assumptions go unchallenged in the press, and in the courts. We must take the lead to define ourselves and “correct the record” when we can.