

# UHD Faculty Senate

Minutes recorded by: Michael Cavanaugh  
September 3, 2019 2:32-4:01 pm  
UHD A-300

**Senate:** Michael Duncan, Ronald Beebe, Hsiao-Ming Wang, Michael Cavanaugh, Franklin Allaire, Alexander Bielakowski, Dexter Cahoy, Kristen Capuozzo, Stephanie Coleman, Prakash Deo, Isaac Elking, Krista Gehring, Angela Goins, Felicia Harris, Susan Henney, Pamela Hurley, Tahereh Jafari, Timothy Klein, Steve London, Laura Mitchell, Mitsue Nakamura, Andrew Pavelich, Joseph Sample, Johanna Schmertz, Jace Valcore, Pat Williams, Julie Wilson, Ting Zhang.

**Absent:** Maria Benavides, Cynthia Lloyd, Jeffery Martz, Nathan Neale, Martin Wright.

**Guests:** Juan Munoz, President; Eric Link, Provost/VPAA; Jerry Johnson, AVP Research; Sandra Dahlberg, Faculty Ombuds; Darlene Hodge, FS Admin; Pat Ensor, Library Director; Hope Pamplin, Director of Disability Services; Erika Harrison, Title IX/Equity and Diversity Officer; Michelle Moosally, Associate Professor.

**Call to order:** The Senate was called to order at 2:32 pm by Senate President Michael Duncan.

## Minutes

Minutes of the August 20th, 2019 meeting were approved unanimously.

## Reports and Updates

Dr. Sandra Dahlberg, the UHD Ombuds, came to Senate and gave a presentation on the Office of the Ombuds (see attached).

Dr. Wang indicated that as the Past-President, he could attest to the good work that Dr. Dahlberg did in the past year. He also thanked Dr. Dahlberg for her service.

Ms. Erika Harrison and Ms. Hope Pamplin gave a presentation on Blackboard Ally (see attached).

Questions and discussion about Blackboard Ally commenced.

Q – Some of the content we are talking about comes directly from the publishers and we are not allowed to modify the content. How are we supposed to comply in that situation?

A – Ms. Harrison said that you can modify the materials for compliance reasons as long as you are not modifying the content.

Q – Dr. Michelle Moosally indicated that this seems like a good idea but there may be some problems, especially with PDFs and open access materials. Students are currently getting these for free, but that could stop if we have to get e-versions (non-scanned copies).

A – Ms. Harrison indicated to Senate that this issue was investigated and most of the open access materials that were looked at could be found online free of charge. An alternative is to contact publishers.

Q – What happens if there is a work piece that cannot be made compliant?

A – Ms. Harrison indicated that this is something that they have yet to come across. However, she suggested that the faculty could look for something that is close to the work piece that is compliant.

Q – Students can already ask for documents to be accessible and faculty can turn off the audible formatting. What do we tell students when they ask for accessible documents?

A – Ms. Harrison was unaware of the ability of the faculty to turn off the function and encouraged faculty not to do so.

Q – Dr. Dahlberg asked is this just for students with a disability?

A – Ms. Harrison said it was not just for them, although they would utilize it. All students would have access to the alternative formats.

Q – For Math, how much description for pictures is needed?

A – Ms. Pamplin said that this was something they were trying to determine.

Q – Dr. Moosally asked how this would impact literacy classes where students would need to read and not listen to the material?

A – Ms. Harrison indicated that these types of courses are different than typical courses.

Q – What if I want my students to read the material and it is not a literacy class? How do we fix this?

A – Ms. Harrison said that this is something they will need to think about further.

Q – With the online push from UHD, how much extra work will this be for professors to convert old classes, along with creating new classes, to online?

A – According to Ms. Harrison, we are not necessarily recreating things; rather we are re-teaching ourselves to do these things. Going through these trainings will be different but helpful.

This seems like the bureaucratic tail wagging the dog.

We seem to have accessibility issues with Blackboard Ally. Colorblind individuals cannot see the colors on the pages.

Q – Since this only seems to apply to blackboard with the course material, it seems like I can create my own outside website for my class. Will this push people out of blackboard?

A – Maybe. However, Ms. Harrison said that the current focus is on blackboard.

### **Initiatives**

Dr. Duncan explained that there was a previous motion for the FSEC to draft a compensation resolution. Dr. Duncan put the resolution on the screen and provided handouts for those in attendance (see attached).

Discussion ensued.

A motion was made by Dr. Pavelich to amend the language in the last sentence on CUPA but there was no second.

CUPA is average.

Dr. Moosally indicated that CUPA is an average and it is usually tiered with time in rank.

There were small wording changes proposed and made to the resolution, followed by more discussion.

CUPA averages vary greatly by discipline. This is because national averages are based on actual numbers not what they should be.

According to Dr. Moosally, compression and inversion may need to be addressed.

Dr. Schmertz makes a motion to add language addressing compression and inversion and Dr. Bielakowski seconds. No vote.

Dr. Bielakowski suggests that we could table the resolution until next meeting and look at CUPA. Dr. Bielakowski makes a motion to table the draft until next time and Dr. Schmertz seconds.

Dr. Jerry Johnson suggests putting a floor on the raise.

Colleagues at Texas Southern received a 2% across the board raise while other colleagues at UH received 2% merit raises.

Vote on tabling resolution until next meeting and sending it out to all faculty was unanimous with one abstention.

Dr. Duncan also wanted to discuss faculty weighting and the three options that were put forward thus far.

Dr. Cavanaugh explained the differences between 50-25-25 workloads reported to the state and the 50-25-25 weights used for the annual evaluations. The workload data that Mr. Hugetz and Ms. Bowen presented last year was the information that UHD provides the UH system, which then is submitted to the state. The 50-25-25 workload in this scenario is the baseline for a 4/3 teaching load. Deviations from a 4/3 teaching load would reduce the 50 by a factor of 7. A course release for a faculty member in research would result in the faculty member actually having a 3/3 teaching load and a 43-32-25 number reported to the system, with the 32 representing the research category.

However, the annual evaluation weights do not change for faculty members, even if they receive course releases. Faculty members are evaluated on teaching, service, and scholarship, with the teaching category making up 50% of the overall score and the other two categories each making up 25%. The current discussion is centered around the weights of the annual evaluations and not the teaching loads (or workloads) although they are interconnected.

Dr. Duncan said the three options are :

- 1 a flexible weight based on negotiations with the chair
- 2 a weight based on course releases for the year (change of 7 points in a category per release)
- 3 an overall change to something different than 50/25/25

Discussion started

The flexible weight sounds bad although the course release idea has good points. Why the 7 points?

The 7 points comes from how we report to the system. Nevertheless, there are problems for those without releases.

Faculty with research grants may be punished with delayed publication.

Dr. Johnson indicated that some people fall into course releases rather than earning them. We may also need a comprehensive workload policy. Hard questions need to be answered.

Dr. Moosally pointed out that we have a teaching policy (4/3) but we do not have an overall workload policy for service and research. We are a teaching institution and will struggle until we figure out what workload actually is for the university.

What if we have that conversation? Change the formula weights. What should the weights be?

The only issue with a comprehensive workload policy is that we have a multitude of disciplines where there is no uniform scholarship or service.

We keep having this issue pop up in FSEC and Senate. Workload is a problem. But we keep adding taskforces, committees, etc.

We need to address service first because everyone seems to agree that it is a problem.

Dr. Johnson said that we need to take a first step. Make a commitment and move. This can be done at the university, college, and department levels.

According to Dr. Moosally, there are not many committees spelled out in policy, most are initiative based. There is bad follow through on work done. We have to reduce committees. Maybe reduce all committees by two when adding one.

We are trying to reduce committees with the new committee. If we want less service, we need to take the importance out of annual evaluations and/or R&T policies.

Dr. Dahlberg suggested taking this issue back to departments and faculty.

Dr. Lloyd made a motion to make a resolution on changing annual evaluation weights in policy to 50% service, 25% teaching, and 25% scholarship. No second.

That may be going against what we are trying to do.

When looking at the committees, have an action plan, possibly a resolution.

Dr. Beebe stated the new committee would come up with recommendations on November 19<sup>th</sup>.

Upon a suggestion from Dr. Duncan, Dr. Beebe and the Committee will try to come up with recommendations for the November 5<sup>th</sup> meeting instead.

We should have a moratorium on new committees. Who is staffing most committees? The same people. Bring in the people who are not doing much and we stop staffing the committees.

Dr. Johnson had a couple of ideas for reducing committees. When one is created, another one has to be dissolved. Additionally, rather than having multiple committees for one area, have a taskforce/advisory council or something similar that covers everything in that area (narrowly focused). We will still have certain committees mandated by policy, but we can reduce overall workload this way.

For the commencement speaker committee, this was created more in response to last years' experience. It seems more advisory and not necessarily a committee. Maybe we can just get notice and not have a committee.

Dr. Pavelich makes a motion not to seat members on the commencement speaker committee, just have notice as to whom the committee would like to select. Dr. Bielakowski seconded the motion.

Dr. Henney suggested that we have one commencement committee not a commencement speaker committee. The commencement committee could deal with all of the logistics about commencement, including the speaker.

Dr. Moosally indicated that it might not be a good idea to pull faculty off a committee without a charge yet. We do not know what the committee will be slated to do.

Why not have the committee report back to the Senate on who they would like to choose as the commencement speaker and see if the choice has faculty buy in.

With little time left, the motion on the floor to not seat committee member is voted on. 3 votes in favor and 16 against. The motion fails.

Dr. Deo makes a motion to adjourn and Dr. Capuozzo seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 4:01 pm.



University of Houston-Downtown  
Title IX, Equity and Diversity

**Blackboard Ally**

# What is Blackboard Ally?

- Blackboard Ally is designed to help make digital course content more accessible for all students.
- Blackboard Ally scans files uploaded into Blackboard and searches for common accessibility issues.
- Students are able to download alternative accessible file formats such as HTML, Audio, and Electronic Braille.
- For faculty, Blackboard Ally provides instructors feedback on accessibility issues with their documents and how to fix the issues.



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# Blackboard Ally



**Low** (Red: 0-33%): There are severe accessibility issues.



**Medium** (Orange: 34-66%): The file is somewhat accessible and needs improvement.



**High** (Green: 67-99%): The file is accessible but more improvements are possible.



**Perfect** (Dark Green: 100%): Ally didn't identify any accessibility issues but further improvements may still be possible.





# Common Issues

- Scanned PDFs
- No image descriptions
- Document has tables that do not have headers
- Document has contrast issues
- Document is missing a title



## Why are we using Blackboard Ally ?

- Blackboard Ally helps to be build a more inclusive learning environment and improve student experience.
- Compliance
  - Student Academic Adjustments/ Auxiliary Aids Policy (SAM 01.D.09)
  - Anti-Discrimination Policy (SAM 01.D.07)
  - Electronic and Information Resource Accessibility Policy (SAM 07.A.09)



# UHD Blackboard Ally Rollout

This Fall UHD will be launching Blackboard Ally.  
Become an Ally Gator.

Blackboard



Blackboard Ally is designed to help make digital course content more accessible to students. With Ally students are able to download alternative accessible file formats such as HTML, Audio, and Electronic Braille.

Sign up for an upcoming info session to be prepared ahead of launch. If you have any questions, please contact the Blackboard Ally Gator team: [AllyGator@uhd.edu](mailto:AllyGator@uhd.edu).

## Morning Sessions

## Afternoon Sessions

Register: [calendar.uhd.edu/event/blackboard\\_ally](https://calendar.uhd.edu/event/blackboard_ally)

## Afternoon Sessions

- September 4<sup>th</sup> 2-2:30pm
- September 17<sup>th</sup> 1-1:30pm
- September 27<sup>th</sup> 1-1:30pm
- October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2-2:30pm
- October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2-2:30pm

## Morning Sessions

- October 12<sup>th</sup> 10-10:30am
- October 11<sup>th</sup> 11-11:30am

## LinkedIn Learning



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# Any Questions



**[AllyGator@UHD.edu](mailto:AllyGator@UHD.edu)**

**<https://www.uhd.edu/computing/services-training/blackboard/Pages/Ally.aspx>**

(search Blackboard Ally on the UHD homepage)



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The background features a light green gradient with decorative circuit board patterns in the corners. The patterns consist of thin blue lines forming various shapes and paths, with small circles at the end of the lines, resembling electronic components or nodes on a network.

# UHD FACULTY OMBUDS

FACULTY SENATE, SEPTEMBER 3, 2019

# SANDRA L. DAHLBERG, PHD


UHD Faculty Ombuds, 2018-present

Professor of English

UHD faculty member since 1997

Member, International Ombudsman Association

**I am here to serve you.**



The UHD Faculty Ombuds adheres to the standards of practice for the International Ombudsman Association:




- Confidentiality

- Informality


- Independence

- Neutrality

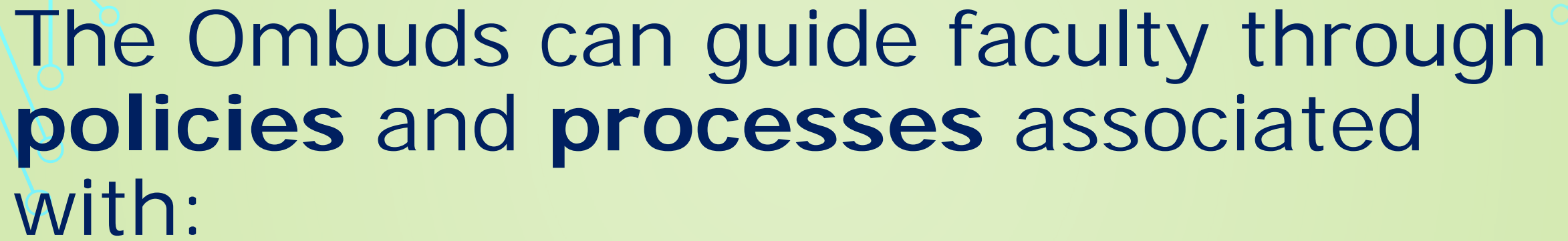


The top corners of the slide feature decorative light blue circuit-like lines with small circles at the ends, resembling a network or data flow diagram.

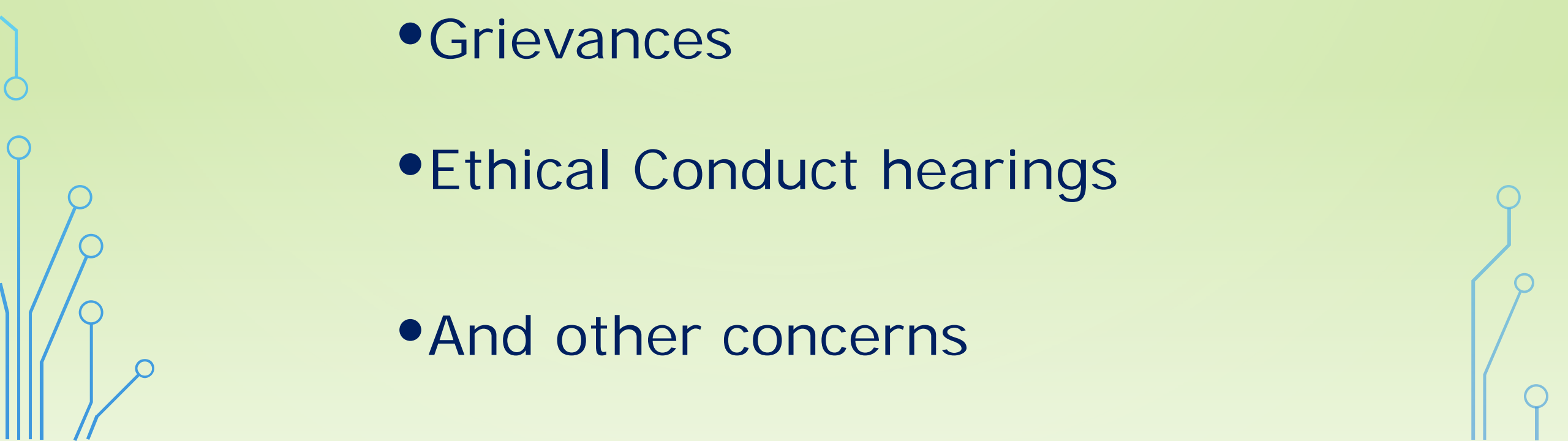
The Ombuds acts as a neutral agent on behalf of other faculty who have questions about:


- **Academic Rights**—academic freedom, shared governance, etc.
  - **Working Environment**—workload, faculty responsibilities, interpersonal conflicts
- 
- The bottom corners of the slide feature decorative light blue circuit-like lines with small circles at the ends, mirroring the design in the top corners.



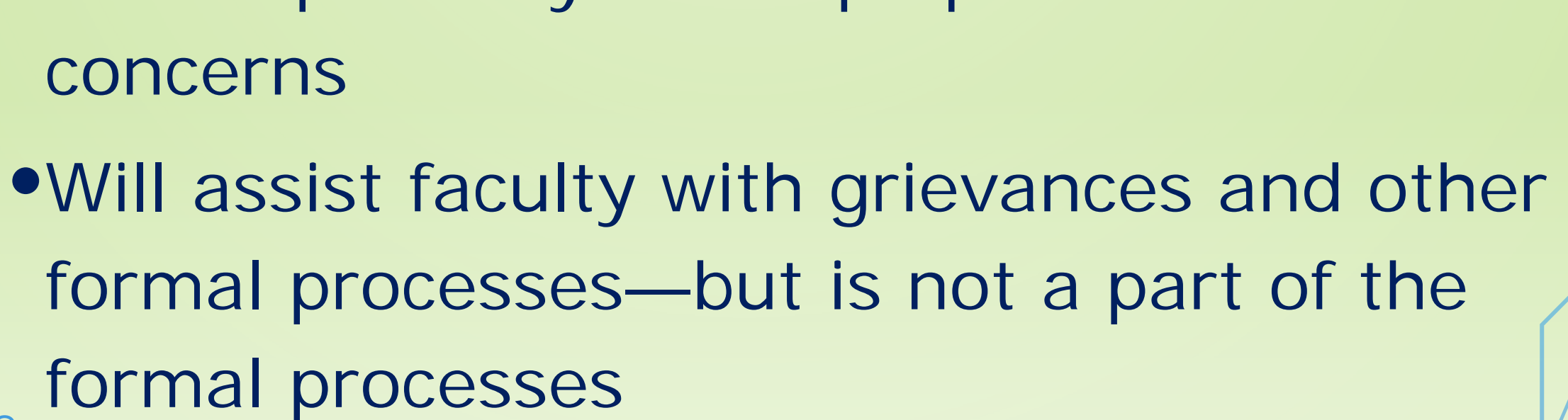


The Ombuds can guide faculty through **policies** and **processes** associated with:

- Rank and Tenure
  - Grievances
  - Ethical Conduct hearings
  - And other concerns
- 

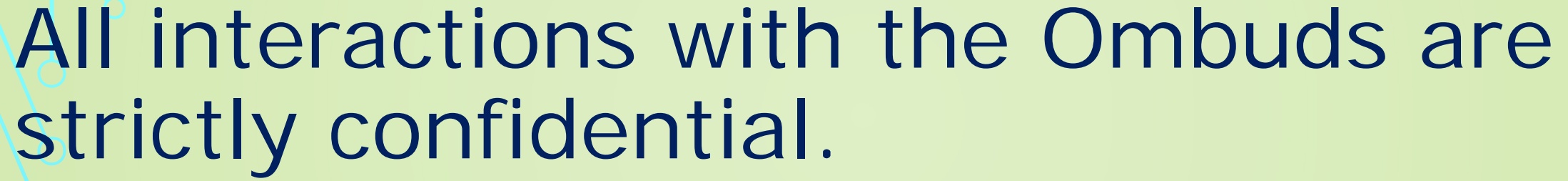


The Faculty Ombuds is an informal, off-the-record resource for faculty who:

- Will help faculty develop options to resolve concerns
  - Will assist faculty with grievances and other formal processes—but is not a part of the formal processes
- 


# The Ombuds serves ALL UHD faculty:

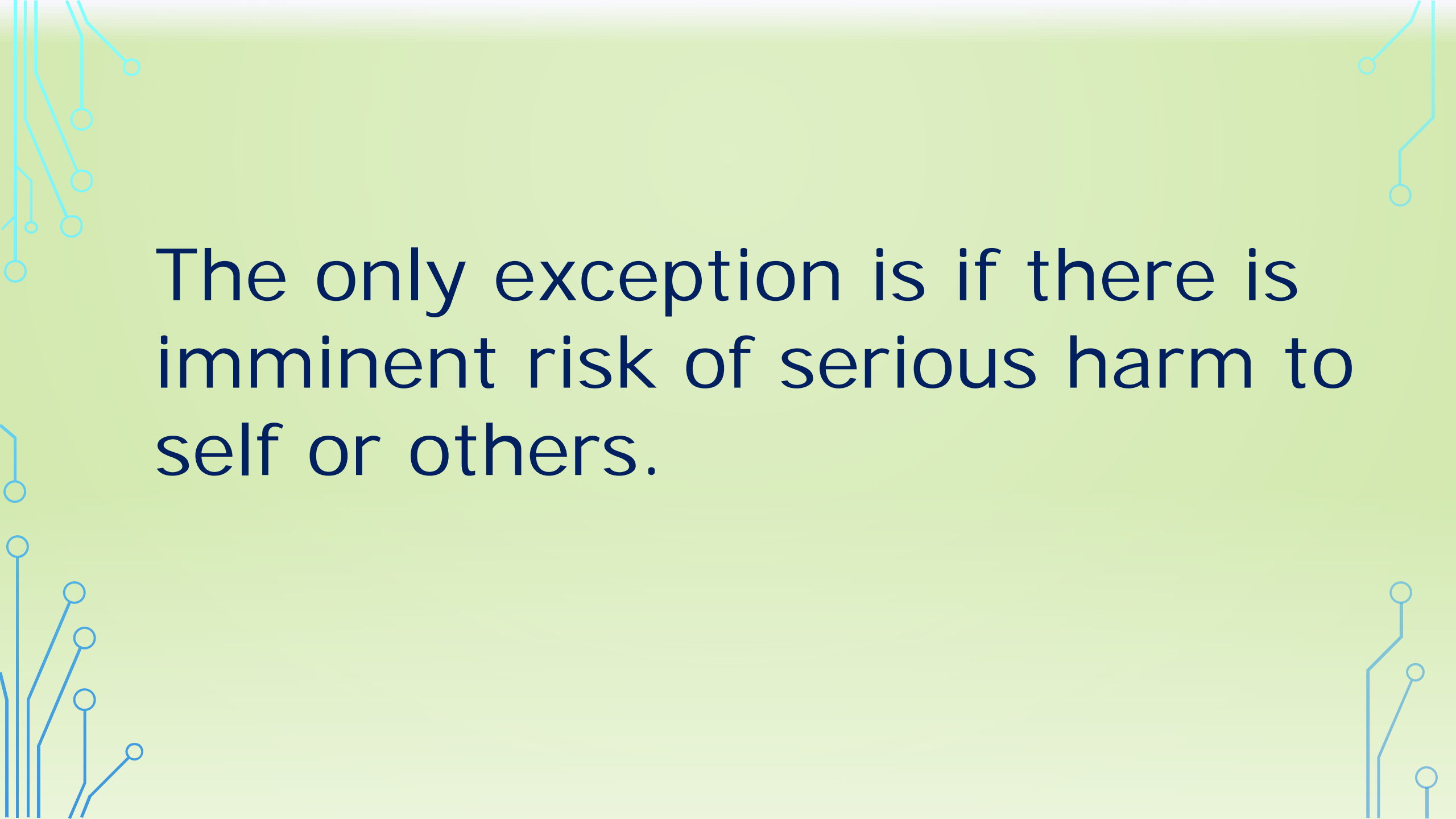
- Tenured, untenured and clinical faculty
- Adjunct, Lecturer, & VMOE faculty
- Department chairs
- Departments or committees



All interactions with the Ombuds are strictly confidential.

You control **IF** and how any information is conveyed to others.

- The Ombuds can share information only when directed to do so by the faculty member.
- 

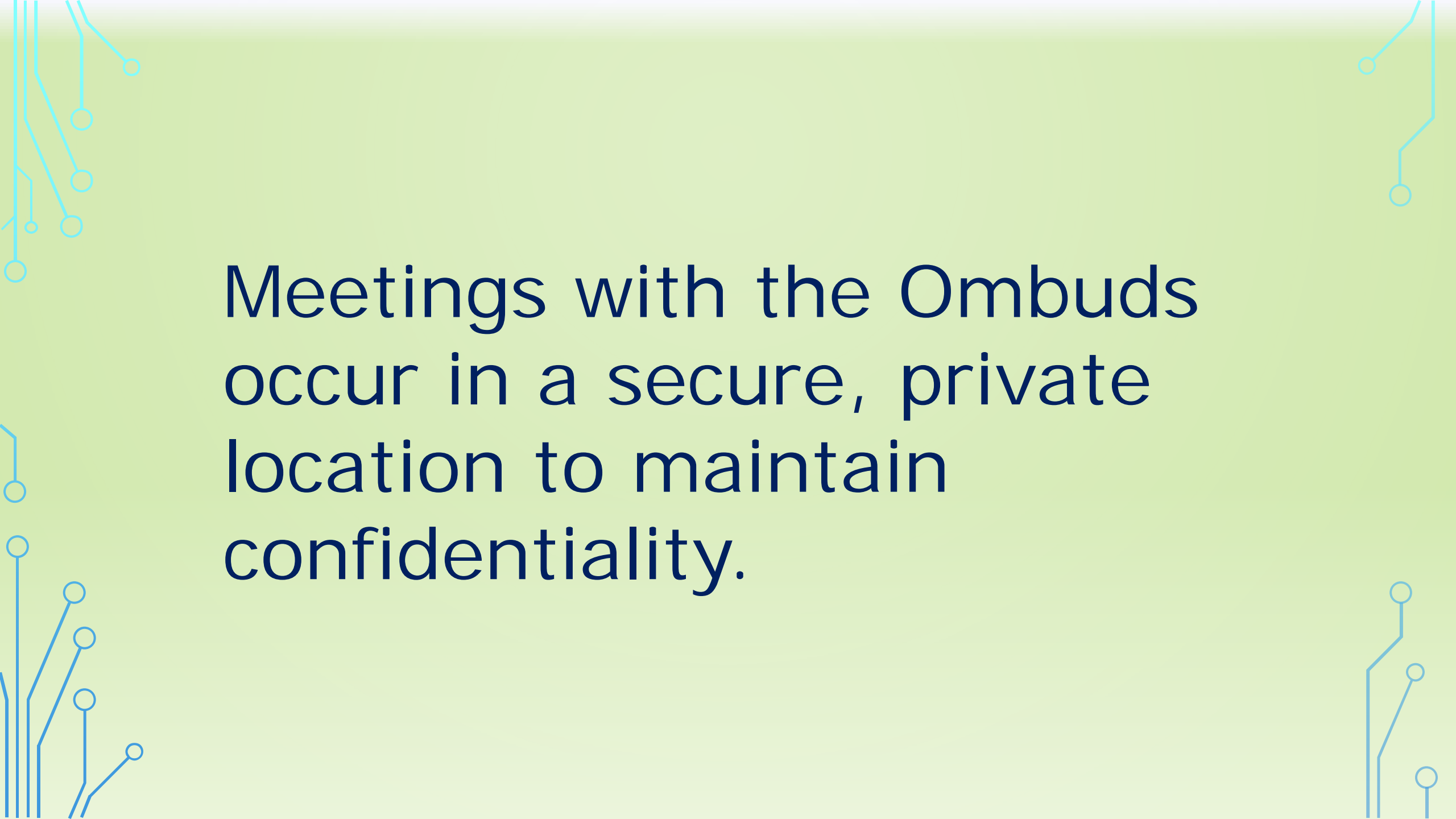
The background is a light green gradient. In the corners, there are decorative elements consisting of light blue lines and circles, resembling a circuit board or a network diagram. These elements are located in the top-left, top-right, bottom-left, and bottom-right corners.

The only exception is if there is imminent risk of serious harm to self or others.

The slide features a light green background with decorative circuit-like lines in the corners. These lines are composed of thin blue lines with small circles at the ends, resembling a stylized circuit board or network diagram. The lines are positioned in the top-left, top-right, bottom-left, and bottom-right corners, framing the central text.

# With permission of all parties:

- The Faculty Ombuds can provide informal third-party intervention (mediation).

The background is a light green gradient. In the corners, there are decorative elements consisting of light blue lines and small circles, resembling a circuit board or a network diagram. These elements are located in the top-left, top-right, bottom-left, and bottom-right corners.

Meetings with the Ombuds  
occur in a secure, private  
location to maintain  
confidentiality.

The Ombuds is chosen by Faculty Senate and reports annually to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) and the Provost.

The Ombuds keeps no records, just a time log with ALL data disaggregated to ensure the utmost confidentiality.



# Faculty Ombuds contact information:

- Phone: 713-221-5841
- Email: [ombuds@uhd.edu](mailto:ombuds@uhd.edu)



**THANK YOU!**