Candidate Name

Carrie Anderson, Certified Organizational Ombuds.

Candidate Title

Ombudsperson

Organization

MD Anderson Ombuds Office

Candidate Statement

It would be an honor to serve on the IOA Board of Directors and give back to the profession and association that have given so much to me throughout my career. My involvement with IOA has supported my growth as an ombuds, leader, and volunteer, while providing opportunities to learn from and connect with colleagues across the profession.

When I first joined the Ombuds Office, I was introduced to a profession I quickly became passionate about. That passion ultimately led me to pursue a master's degree to further develop the knowledge and skills needed to grow and become an ombuds. Along the way, I have benefited from the generosity, guidance, and support of colleagues, supervisors, mentors, ombuddies, and the broader IOA community. Their willingness to share knowledge, provide encouragement, and invest in the development of others has shaped both my professional journey and my commitment to service.

I am interested in serving on the Board because I believe in the value of this profession and the important role IOA plays in supporting its members. If elected, I would bring a collaborative mindset, a commitment to listening, and a genuine desire to serve the membership. I would be honored to help advance IOA’s strategic goals while supporting a professional community that has had such a meaningful impact on my career and personal growth.

I would welcome the opportunity to help ensure current and future members experience the same support, connection, and sense of community that have meant so much to me throughout my journey.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for all that you do every day to support your visitors, organizations, and the ombuds profession!

Pathway to the Profession

Looking ahead, I see one of the greatest opportunities for IOA and the organizational ombuds profession as continuing to increase awareness and understanding of our role and value. IOA's continued focus on raising awareness of the profession represents an important opportunity for growth and impact. In a time of increasing uncertainty, complexity, and change, I believe the work of organizational ombuds is more important than ever.

Before joining the Ombuds Office in 2010, I was unfamiliar with the organizational ombuds profession. Even today, we continue to encounter individuals who are unfamiliar with the role and the resources we provide. At the same time, we have had visitors tell us they learned about the concept of an ombuds

through a friend, family member, or even a trusted colleague and then reached out for support. Those experiences illustrate both the progress we have made and the opportunity that remains.

As organizations continue to navigate change, I believe it is increasingly important to demonstrate the value of organizational ombuds programs and the power of human connection. Ombuds provide a confidential space for people to be heard, explore options, and navigate challenges constructively. My experience in healthcare, communications, outreach, and relationship-building has shown me that increasing awareness is not just about marketing a service; it is about building understanding, trust, and access.

As a Board member, I would bring a perspective grounded in outreach, relationship-building, and communication, along with a commitment to helping IOA continue advancing awareness of the profession while supporting the members who carry out this important work every day.

IOA Values

My perspective is shaped by the core of ombuds work: helping people feel heard. We spend our days supporting visitors, leaders, and organizations through difficult situations and conflict, and I believe IOA can provide that same sense of support and connection for its members. While ombuds work offers meaningful opportunities to make a difference, it can also be challenging and, at times, isolating. IOA plays an important role in fostering connection, professional growth, and a sense of community among those who share this unique profession.

I have been encouraged by the growth, forward momentum, and transparency I have seen within IOA, including the development of the four-year strategic plan and efforts to increase member engagement. IOA has made meaningful investments in expanding opportunities for participation across time zones, enhancing the new member experience, strengthening professional development and certification offerings, and supporting mentoring opportunities.

When members have opportunities to share their perspectives, contribute in meaningful ways, and see how their feedback informs decisions, it builds trust, strengthens engagement, and fosters a sense of belonging. For example, mentoring provides invaluable support for new ombuds. As members grow in their careers, there may be opportunities to explore additional ways to build connections, whether through peer networking, mentoring circles, or informal "ombuddy" conversations and knowledge sharing.

At the same time, I do not believe board service is about arriving with all the answers. The needs of our members, our organizations, and our profession continue to evolve, often more quickly than we anticipate. One of the Board's most important responsibilities is to listen, remain adaptable, and partner with members to understand where support and opportunities are needed most.

By fostering connection, dialogue, and transparency, the Board can help ensure members feel heard, valued, and supported while experiencing meaningful value from their IOA membership.

Volunteer or Leadership Experience

My leadership, governance, and volunteer experiences have given me opportunities to support the growth and advancement of the ombuds and conflict resolution professions. I have been an active member of IOA since 2015, serving on the Communications Committee since 2020, where I currently serve as Chair, and on the Recertification Committee since 2020. These roles have provided insight into IOA's operations, strategic priorities, member communications, recertification processes, and organizational decision-making.

I also served as Co-Lead of the Workplace/Ombuds Section for the Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR) from 2017-2023, collaborating with colleagues to support programming, member engagement, and professional development. This experience strengthened my skills in collaboration, consensus-building, strategic thinking, and volunteer leadership.

Together, these experiences have prepared me to contribute thoughtfully, collaboratively, and strategically as a member of the IOA Board of Directors.

Professional Expertise

My experience aligns most closely with strategic communications, outreach, relationship building, and member connection. Through my service on the IOA Communications Committee, I have gained experience supporting communications that connect members with resources, opportunities, and the work of IOA. Professionally, I have worked to increase awareness and understanding of the Ombuds Office through outreach, education, training, and relationship-building efforts.

I also bring the perspective of a healthcare ombuds who has worked in a large organization for more than 15 years. Throughout my career, I have focused on building relationships, fostering collaboration, and helping people navigate organizational systems. These experiences have strengthened my ability to understand stakeholder perspectives, communicate effectively, and identify opportunities to strengthen engagement and connection.

As a Board member, I would bring strong communication skills, a collaborative mindset, and a commitment to listening. I believe these strengths can help support IOA's strategic direction by communicating member value, strengthening connections across the membership, and helping members feel informed, engaged, and supported.

Candidate Bio

I have worked in the Ombuds Office at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas since 2010. I currently serve as an Ombudsperson (2022-Present), following service as an Associate Ombudsperson (2018-2021). Prior to becoming an ombuds, I was in administrative and program support roles within the office (2010-2018). In my ombuds roles, I provide confidential conflict resolution services, coaching, mediation, facilitation, training, and organizational consultation. With more than 20 years of healthcare experience, I have experience in workplace conflict management and organizational effectiveness.