



INTERNATIONAL
OMBUDSMAN
ASSOCIATION

INTERNATIONAL OMBUDSMAN ASSOCIATION

2008 ANNUAL REPORT

April 2009

From The President

April, 2009

Dear IOA Members:

It is an honor to present the International Ombudsman Association 2008 Annual Report. I encourage you to review the report carefully. It details the achievements that support our Association and our member services.

The Board met regularly to conduct the business of IOA in an open and responsible manner to strengthen the ombudsman field. We benefited greatly from the support of the staff of Professional Management Associates, our management group, to manage the logistics of running IOA.

Once again, this year, IOA relied on the many contributions of dedicated volunteers. Board members, committee members and chairs, special task forces, project leaders all dedicated their time and energy to the Association. IOA's standing committees: Communications, Conference Oversight, 2008 Conference Planning, Ethics and Standards of Practice, Finance, International, Legal and Legislative Affairs, Membership, Professional Development, Nominations and Elections and Strategic Planning accomplished work important to us as individuals and as an Association. Several committees encompassed additional subcommittees or task forces such as the Data Base Task Force, the Effectiveness Task Force and the IOA Journal. Consistent with the organization's mission, their work has enabled IOA to serve our members, to advance understanding of our profession, to assist with the establishment of new offices, to ensure the availability of excellent training and to establish educational opportunities, standards of practice and a code of ethics for ombudsmen.

All this leads to our Fourth Annual IOA Conference in Montreal, Canada. The conference provides a wide range of educational and networking forums. I encourage all members to attend the conference and participate in the IOA Business Meeting on Friday, April 17, 2009. The business meeting and other conference venues give members the opportunity to contribute their views on Association priorities and activities. This exchange of information is vital for our Association and directly informs IOA decisions and strategic planning. This is a critical point of growth for both the ombudsman profession in general, and the International Ombudsman Association in particular. Active participation by our members is essential to our continued advancement, both as practitioners and as a profession.

It has been my privilege to serve as president of the International Ombudsman Association. I am grateful for the opportunity to have worked with many respected and talented colleagues. I look forward to strengthening the bonds within the Association and the expanding the influence of our role in all organizations in which we serve.

Sincerely,

Kevin Jessar, President
International Ombudsman Association

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ANNUAL CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Met weekly from June 2008-April 2009.
- Collaborated with Professional Management Associates (PMA) throughout this year on this joint conference planning process.
- Developed a joint conference agreement and contract that delineated shared responsibilities.
- Created a joint conference planning committee.
- Formed sub-committees and assigned tasks and responsibilities.
- Developed the conference theme, conference format, and Program Booklet Cover.
- Issued a call for proposals, papers, presentations, panels, and programming ideas.
- Recruited keynote speakers.
- Recruited plenary speakers and pre-conference leaders.
- Recruited speakers, presenters, and panelists for concurrent sessions.
- Developed the pre-conference and conference programs and schedules of events.
- Coordinated with ACCUO, FCO, & IOA for their annual business meetings.
- Coordinated hotel and meeting spaces.
- Developed ideas for receptions, meals, menus, refreshment breaks, off-site events, and options for fee-time and evenings in Montreal.
- Planned and organized evaluation and assessment measures for all sessions.
- Compiled biographical sketches on all speakers and presenters.
- Planned for speaker needs, e.g. handouts, printing, AV and technical support.
- Organized optimal ways of sharing conference proceedings and speaker presentations with attendees and non-attendees.
- Assisted PMA and graphic designers with Program Booklet development.
- Arranged for vendors, exhibitors, and book sellers.
- Helped publicize the conference and pre-conference with blast emails, developed a letter from the Three Presidents for all members and potential attendees, and wrote articles for various newsletters.
- Coordinated volunteers for conference moderators, facilitators, and roving reporters.
- Worked with PMA on exchange rates for those paying outside the U.S. or with non-U.S. currency.
- Planned for speaker awards, gifts, and recognitions.
- Planned for signage and webpage coordination.
- Assisted in the budgeting process for pre-conference and conference programming.
- Developed a strategy and actively pursued sponsorships, fundraising, and donations-in-kind.
- Coordinated printing and translation services for French and English-speaking attendees.
- Issued invitations to the Presidents of other ombuds/CR/DR organizations to attend this joint conference.
- Arranged for photographic support throughout the conference.

Annual Conference Planning Committee - Continued

2009 JOINT CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS:

John Carter (IOA); Martine Conway (ACCUO); Marie Cortsen (PMA); Ian Darling (FCO); Jennifer Graf (IOA); Sue Haslam (FCO); Kevin Jessar (IOA); Odette Lagace (ACCUO/FCO); Patti Lynch (IOA); Pierre Niedlispacher (IOA, FCO); Steve Olive (FCO); Elizabeth Pino (IOA); Anita Pouliot (ACCUO); Trey Reckling (IOA); Patrick Robardet (FCO); Kristen Robillard (ACCUO); Justine Sentenne (FCO); Shawna Wilker (PMA); Jay Wilson (PMA); Gary Yamashita (IOA).

Special Thanks to Shawna Wilker, Marie Cortsen, and Jay Wilson from PMA for their guidance and management expertise throughout this process.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

MISSION:

The mission of the IOA Communications Committee is to support the goals and priorities of IOA by promoting proactive internal and external communications, to enhance understanding of the ombuds role and function, and to develop and disseminate information to heighten awareness of IOA values and educational opportunities.

PRIORITIES:

- Overall Communications: Provide effective communications to members and those interested in the Ombudsman profession.
- Website: Continue to enhance its content according to member needs.
- Newsletter: Provide a newsletter that is professional and informative.
- Outreach: Perform outreach activities, including responding to inquiries, providing informational materials and identifying opportunities to promote IOA.
- Annual Report: Compile and distribute Annual Report for IOA's Business Meeting.
- Journal: Create professional Ombudsman journal.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Launched a newly-designed website.
- Published first edition of the Journal of the International Ombudsman Association.
- Published quarterly newsletter, *The Independent Voice*, covering IOA news.
- Posted a library of Ombudsmen-related articles on the new IOA website which are freely available to members on the Internet.
- Revised, updated and posted on the IOA website the "Endangered Ombuds Office" and the "Nuts and Bolts for Establishing a New Ombudsman Office" documents originally developed by UCOA.
- Aligned current and future Communications Committee projects to meet the goals outlined in the IOA Strategic Plan.
- Continued work on materials that can be posted on the web site to guide organizations that are interested in establishing an ombudsman office.
- Compiled and 2008 Annual Report.

MEMBERS:

A special *thank you* to the members of the 2008-2009 Communications Committee: Tom Barnette, Barbara Boland, John Carter, Kathy Canul, Lawrence Cohen, Nicholas Diehl (Co-Chair), Kerry Egdorf, Michael Eisner, Jean Griffin, Samantha Levine-Finley, Alan Lincoln, Molly McAvoy, Jennifer Nichols, Elizabeth Pino (Finance Committee Liaison), Sara Thacker (Co-Chair), Charmaine Tomczyk (Professional Ethics, Standards and Best Practices Committee Liaison), Tom Ward, Merle Waxman, and Lisa Witzler.

TO JOIN THE COMMITTEE:

Please contact: Sara Thacker, Co-Chair, (510) 642-7823, sthacker@berkeley.edu or Nick Diehl, Co-Chair, (301) 594-1350, diehln@od.nih.gov.

CONFERENCE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

MISSION:

Develop a vision for IOA conferences and engage in long-range planning, oversight, and assessment to ensure that IOA conferences support the IOA vision and mission. To accomplish this, the COC will...

- Develop and propose a long-term conference strategy for IOA's strategic plan, informed by member needs collected through surveys, assessments, discussions, etc.
- Annually review the report of the Conference Committee and recommend changes to conference policies for approval by the Board of Directors.
- Review conference site proposals (up to five years out) received from staff and assist in selecting conference cities and facilities.
- Use the experiences of all those who prepare and plan each year's conference to improve the planning process for subsequent conferences.

PRIORITIES:

- Develop policies pertaining to IOA conferences as needed (i.e., fee schedules, site selection, sponsorships, etc.).
- Collaborate with Professional Management Association, LLC (PMA) in site/date selection for annual conferences, especially as IOA works towards holding conferences in international locations.
- Develop/modify value sets and criteria for future site selections, blending both the existing and emerging needs of the membership with the strategic vision of the association. Obtain input from members and other committees. Use all information balanced with other factors, including the IOA mission, recommendations from staff, member demographics, attractiveness of venues, non-IOA events, available transportation (airport hub), and time of year.
- Select co-chairs for annual conference planning committee.
- Create a 'handbook' for the annual conference planning committee (i.e. conference policies, budgets, assessment tools, etc.).

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Throughout the year, the COC monitored member input about the effects of the global economic crisis on ombuds offices and the conference. This drove dialog on managing risks of lowered attendance and on creative supplements and alternatives to an annual, single-site conference. We considered the full range of options: a one-year suspension of the conference (2011); replacing it with smaller regional conferences; convening both regional and central conferences joined by video conferencing; focusing on savings achieved by downsizing the conference (rooms and program). ***COC confirmed that an annual conference is critical to the mission of IOA, though gaining new efficiencies and managing the downsides of those efficiencies has risen in value.***

Conference Oversight Committee - Continued

- Worked with PMA in the selection of the 2011 annual conference site, holding the economic load on members and regional rotation of the site as the highest values.
- Continued to explore international conference sites and possible collaborations with non-North American ombuds groups.
- Modified permission forms to encourage more participation by presenters in posting conference materials on the IOA web site for the benefit of all IOA members as well as non-members registered for the conference.

MEMBERS:

A special thank you to the members of the 2008-2009 Conference Oversight Committee: Vicky Brown, John Carter, Lynn Connley, Nancy Deering, Glenda Dickson, Diane Dorion, Pierre Niedlispacher (Board Liaison) and Don Noack (Chair). The COC also thanks PMA staff members Shawna Wilker, Marie Cortsen and Jay Wilson for their hard work and support.

TO JOIN THE COMMITTEE:

Please contact IOA by phone (908) 359-0246 or visit the Association website at www.ombudsassociation.org.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

MISSION:

The IOA Finance Committee institutes the necessary financial strategies, processes, and controls to meet the IOA goals and objectives.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Working with PMA and IOA's accountant and auditors, the Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and Finance Committee are responsible for overseeing IOA's fiscal operations; developing the annual operating budget; monitoring IOA's reserves & investments, including approval of all expenses, the annual audit and the annual tax filings. Our overall budgeting approach is to be fiscally conservative, estimating expenses at the upper range and estimating revenues at the lower range.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- In spite of the economic conditions, the Finance Committee is pleased to report that 2008 was a very successful year with an operating surplus of \$53,000.
- We have increased our reserves and are fiscally sound as we proceed into a major recession.
- We have improved our financial processes and have implemented stronger accountability by assigning Finance Committee members to each of our major committees.
- We have financed a major portion of our Certification Program efforts without incurring a deficit and are positioned to complete the funding this year.
- We have developed a strong sense of teamwork on our Committee.

MEMBERS:

Treasurer Gary Yamashita and Assistant Treasurer Elizabeth Pino, Vicky Brown, Lynn Connley, Lisa Nevares, Reese Ramos, Ted Williamson, Jennifer Wolf, Marie Cortsen (PMA), Jay Wilson (PMA), and Nancy Furstenburg, CPA (PMA).

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

MISSION:

The mission of the IOA International Committee is to support the goals and priorities of IOA by engaging ombudsmen professionals throughout the world with particular emphasis on those working outside of the United States. The Committee seeks to promote the establishment of the role of the ombudsman in industry and organizations; provide professional development to support and advance the profession; monitor legislation, regulations, and trends which impact the profession; increase leadership participation and representation of the Association via regional advisory committees; and promote partnerships that support and sustain the profession.

PRIORITIES:

- **International Training:** work in cooperation with the Professional Development Committee to plan broad and diverse trainings that complement those already offered in the United States.
- **International Advisory Committees:** work to establish advisory committees that will encompass all regions of the world.
- **Programming:** work with Conference Program Committee to encourage and provide sessions that will be relevant to, and representative of, our rich and internationally diverse membership.
- **Professional Development:** continue to plan and provide professional development training throughout the world.
- **Partnership:** encourage the support and growth of the profession by engaging in strategic partnerships with other entities doing work internationally.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Planned and conducted international training in Paris, France 16-19 June 2008.
- Cooperated with UNARIO (United Nations and Related International Organizations) ombudsmen and mediators in Washington D.C., in July 2008 to offer courses including Ombudsman 101, Conflict Resolution and the Intermediate Workshop.
- Planned and confirmed new international course offerings for Bangkok, Thailand 7 – 9 September, 2009. In addition to Ombudsman 101, the Specialized Course, “Conflict Resolution through a Cultural Lens” will be offered.
- Continued efforts to reduce the role of North American instructors and enhance the role of international multilingual faculty.
- Pursued possibility of targeting Santiago, Chile for its 2010 international training programs.
- Continued discussions with CPR Institute for Conflict Prevention and Resolution and possible partnerships with their European Business Mediation Conference.
- European Advisory Committee met in February 2008 at the International Red Cross in Geneva, Switzerland.
- Re-established the Canadian Advisory Committee.

International Committee - Continued

- The International Committee members represented IOA: at the High-level Conference on Humanitarian Affairs in Marseille, France (September 2008), on the topic of international conflict resolution; in Managua, Nicaragua, in a USAIDPROCAFTA project on the topic of mediation; and at the Inaugural Africa Conference and 10th anniversary of the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners in Johannesburg, South Africa (September 2008), on the topic of accountability and the role of the ombudsman.
- Opened dialogue with new ombudsmen in Brazil for potential IOA support of ombudsmen programs in the region.

MEMBERS:

Many thanks to the members of the 2008-2009 International Committee. John Barkat and James Lee (Co-chairs), Wilbur Hicks, Carolyn Noorbakhsh (Board Liaison), Camilo Azcarate, Karen Campbell, Steven Cordery, Danielle Fischer-Lebailly, Nora Galer, James Nabina, Georgia Shaver.

For Further Information:

Please contact John Barkat, Co-Chair, (212) 346-1111, barkat@un.org, or James Lee, (212) 906-5748, james.lee@undp.org.

LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

MISSION:

The Legal and Legislative Affairs Committee keeps members informed about legislative and legal developments that affect the Ombudsman profession and provides guidance to the IOA Board in establishing legislative priorities for the IOA.

PRIORITIES:

- Track federal and state legislation and court decisions that relate to and impact ombudsmen practice and the profession.
- Educate our members through programs and seminars regarding legal issues as they relate to office structure and ombudsmen practice.
- Coordinate with other IOA committees regarding legal impact to the profession in all aspects of IOA activities.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Expanded committee membership to better increase capacity of committee to meet the growing needs of IOA.
- Educated IOA members on legal and legislative issues through IOA pre-conference courses, conference sessions and contributions to newsletter and Journal.
- Routinely answered questions from IOA members and others about legal issues affecting Ombudsmen practice.
- Successful identified and tracked legislative bills and court cases impacting ombudsman programs and practitioners.

MEMBERS:

A special *thank you* to the members of the 2008 Legal and Legislative Committee: Sean Banks (Co-Chair), Eric Berger, Judy Bruner (Co-Chair), Howard Gadlin, Susan Kee-Young Park, Tom Kosakowski, Grace Meyer, Craig Mousin, Bathabile K. S. Mthombeni, Belinda Newman, Lois Petzold, Patrick Robardet, Lillian Santa Maria, Virginia Santiago, Karen Schaefer, David Talbot, Marsha Wagner, Andrew Vogel and Margo Wesley.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Please contact Sean Banks, Chair, (713) 241-9431, Sean.Banks@shell.com.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

MISSION:

The IOA Membership Committee serves the membership of IOA by accepting and processing membership applications and renewals in a consistent and efficient manner, by recognizing the interests of the various sectors of the profession, and by seeking to grow the organization worldwide. Provision of IOA membership services and benefits are a priority, since the committee recognizes the Association could not exist without its Members, Associate Members, and Affiliate Members.

PRIORITIES:

- Process member applications effectively.
- Provide orientation/support to new members.
- Build stronger member participation in the Association.
- Maintain Membership materials (i.e. Handbook, Brochure).

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- IOA membership grew 4% during the 2008-2009 year to 721 members.
- The IOA Mentorship program was successfully launched in 2008 and recruited 22 Mentors and 18 Mentees. Mentors and Mentees were matched for support and guidance with their Ombuds work and office development. The Mentorship taskforce is led by Vicky Brown with the support of team members, Claudia D'Albini, Mary Chavez Rudolph, and Justine Sentenne. Thank you to the taskforce for their tireless effort in the development and management of this program.
- The Membership committee conducted a random sampling review process of 100 renewal applications, during the Membership renewal period for 2009, to assist our membership with adherence to the IOA Standards of Practice, in selection of the appropriate membership category.
- Revised the 2009 Membership applications to simplify the process and information required for completion.

MEMBERS:

A special thank you to the members of the 2008-2009 Membership Committee: Carol Breslin, Beatriz Dale, Marvin Neal, (Chair) Justine Sentenne, Marsha Wagner, Jan Schonauer (IOA board liaison) and Ted Williamson (Finance Committee liaison).

TO JOIN:

Please contact the International Ombudsman Association @ (908) 359-0246 or the Association website @ www.ombudsassociation.org.

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

MISSION:

The IOA Nominations and Elections Committee (NEC) conducts the call for nominations for open board seats and reviews all submitted recommendations. The NEC submits a slate of nominees, including Directors and Associate Member Representatives, from recommendations made by the membership, per IOA Bylaws (Article VIII – Nominations and Elections). The committee oversees the election process and reviews related policies and procedures. In 2009 there were 6 director seats and 1 associate representative seat to be filled.

PRIORITIES:

- Provide the opportunity for the membership to recommend candidates for election.
- Inform potential nominees of relevant candidate criteria and of Board roles and responsibilities.
- Assess recommendations received to determine that candidates meet criteria for election to the board of directors and represent the organization with respect to sector (corporate, academic, government), gender, ethnicity, race, and geography, as well as ensuring leadership comes from the broadest spectrum of membership.
- Identify a viable and balanced slate of candidates for the election.
- Ensure voter participation is effectively solicited.
- Support ongoing efforts to build strong leadership for the Association.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Revised the nominee selection criteria.
- Made changes to enhance election process and avoid conflicts with membership renewal process.
- Responded to inquiries from IOA Board Members, candidates and the membership regarding the nominations and elections process.
- Successfully oversaw the nomination and election process.
- Recommended 11 director candidates and 2 associate representative candidates to the Board of Directors.

The Nominations and Elections Committee would like to thank all candidates who participated in this year's election process.

Commendations and thanks to the members of the 2008-2009 NEC for their dedicated efforts: Claudia D'Albini, Dolores Gomez-Moran, Sandy McDermott, Amanda Pace, Justine Sentenne, Thomas Zgambo, Judi Segall, and Janis Schonauer, (Chair). Additional thanks and acknowledgement to Marie Cortsen and Jay Wilson PMA Members Services Directors, for their invaluable assistance.

TO JOIN:

Please contact the International Ombudsman Association @ (908) 359-0246 or the Association website @ www.ombudsassociation.org.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MISSION:

The Professional Development Committee (PDC) assesses the educational and professional development needs of IOA members and potential members and delivers courses and workshops to meet those needs.

PRIORITIES:

- Inform and educate those interested in establishing an Ombudsman function about the fundamental principles of Ombudsman work, the standards of practice and how to set up an ombudsman office.
- Provide training for Ombudsmen at all experience levels.
- Deliver training in diverse geographic locations (including outside North America) to make it accessible to current and potential IOA members.
- Proactively identify emerging topics and design professional development opportunities to support these new areas of interest.
- Support certification initiatives.

PDC ACCOMPLISHMENTS – 2008

Teaching and Curriculum Activities:

- Provided completely revised Ombudsman 101 courses in Las Vegas (51 participants), Washington DC (60 participants), and Vancouver (47 participants).
Total Ombudsman 101 participants for 2008: 158
- Provided two Ombudsman 101+ courses in Washington DC (30 participants) and Vancouver (21 participants).
Total Ombudsman101+ participants for 2008: 51
- Provided the Intermediate Ombudsman workshop in Washington DC (15 participants).
Total Intermediate Ombudsman participants for 2008: 15
- Provided the Advanced Ombudsman workshop in Vancouver (17 participants)
Total Advanced Ombudsman participants for 2008: 17
- Provided 4 different Specialized Courses in three different locations training.
Total Specialized course participants: 136 individuals
- Provided four half-day and one full-day Pre-Conference courses for the 2008 IOA Annual Conference in Boston.
Total Pre-Conference course participants: 114 individuals
- International professional development: Paris was the site for offering Ombudsman 101 (8 participants) and Conflict Resolution (15 participants). These courses are offered in conjunction with the UNARIO annual meeting.
Total International Training: 23 individuals

Professional Development Committee - Continued

- Finalized agreement with Pepperdine University to pilot an offering of Ombudsman 101 in conjunction with *The Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution's Annual Summer Professional Skills Program in Dispute Resolution*.
- Investigated and provided recommendations to the PDC and IOA Board to hire a consultant and pilot distance learning strategies to teach PDC courses and other professional development activities.
- Finalized and approved various PDC guidelines and procedures: *Ombudsman 101 Observer Guidelines* and *Ombudsman 101 Instructor Selection Guidelines*.

MEMBERSHIP:

Thank you to the members of the 2008-2009 Professional Development Committee: Sean Banks, John Barkat, Mary Chavez Rudolph, Marie Cortsen, Wendy Friede, Jennifer Graf, Jean Griffin, Wilbur Hicks, Kevin Jessar, Donna Loudon, Francine Montemurro (Co-Chair), Lisa Nevares, Carolyn Noorbakhsh, Roxanne Schreiber, Judi Segall, David Talbot, Lee Twyman (Co-Chair), Marsha Wagner, Linda Wilcox.

A special thank you to Wilbur Hicks who has so capably coordinated the Ombudsman 101 courses for many years. Wilbur has retired from that position, handing over the responsibility to David Talbot. A huge thanks to both of you for all your prior and future contributions!

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO JOIN THE PDC PLEASE CONTACT:

Francine Montemurro, Phone: 607.777.2388 E-mail: monte@binghamton.edu
Lee Twyman, Phone: 585.475.2765 E-Mail: Lee.Twyman@rit.edu.

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS, STANDARDS OF PRACTICE, AND BEST PRACTICES COMMITTEE

MISSION:

The mission of IOA's Standing Committee on Professional Ethics, Standards of Practice, and Best Practices is to identify, define and provide guidance on the ethical principles and standards of practice for organizational ombudsman professionals.

PRIORITIES:

- Periodically review and update IOA's guiding documents, the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, and assure that they are consistent with legal and professional developments, IOA Bylaws and membership criteria.
- Periodically review and update IOA's guidance on Best Practices.
- Promote awareness of IOA's ethical principles and standards of practice by coordinating with professional development programs, the Communications Committee, the conference planning committee, etc.
- Coordinate activities to encourage adherence to Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice with other relevant committees, such as the Membership Committee, Communications Committee and Legal and Legislative Affairs Committee.
- Provide ethical guidance to IOA members seeking assistance, and for organizational principles (such as guidelines for confidentiality for collegial sharing among participants in training sessions and conferences, for advertising opportunities for corporate donors, etc.).
- Recruit and retain members to help with work of the Committee.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: (April 2008 – March 2009)

- The IOA Best Practices Task Force has continued to deliberate over the Best Practices document.
- The committee has recruited new members and has focused on providing a structure to encourage healthy debates over the Standards of Practice and they manner in which Ombudsmen are currently practicing.
- The committee is looking at structural changes to enhance work product and better cooperation with other committees.
- The IOA Professional Ethics, Standards of Practice and Best Practices Standing Committee has continued discussions of ways to provide ethical guidance for IOA as an organization and individually for IOA members.

MEMBERS:

Howard Gadlin, Nathanael Haddox (chair), Kellie Harmon, Laurie Mesibov, Charmaine Tomczyk, Marsha Wagner, and Margo Wesley (Board Liaison).

TO JOIN:

Please contact Nathanael Haddox (806.742.4722), n.haddox@ttu.edu.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

MISSION:

The mission of the IOA Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) is to work with the IOA Board, committees and members to develop and maintain a visionary 5-Year Strategic Plan that serves as a blueprint for all Association core capabilities, goals, objectives, strategies and activities. The committee also works on and completes special projects assigned by the IOA Board of Directors.

PRIORITIES:

- **The Profession:** Remain engaged with the ombudsman profession to assist with the determination of IOA's global strategic direction.
- **Process:** Develop, implement and document a practical and meaningful planning process that provides for development of a plan and annual updates.
- **Plan Development/Maintenance:** Work directly with the Board, Committees and members to develop and maintain a plan approved by the membership.
- **Dialogue:** Maintain a meaningful dialogue about the needs and direction of the Association through communication and coordination with the IOA Board, committees and members.
- **Research:** Perform research on topics key to strategic planning and effective planning methodologies, and carry out special projects that relate to the effectiveness and direction of the association.
- **Refine:** Refine the plan through periodic communication with the Board and updates related to key priorities and specific projects, as needed.
- **Measurement:** Assist the Board in measuring progress against the approved plan as directed and if needed.
- **Reporting:** Report progress on strategic initiatives and activities, if requested by the Board.
- **Updates:** Refine and update the plan annually as approved by the Board, and as indicated in the IOA Annual Report.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Incorporated all Board and IOA Committee changes into the draft Strategic Plan.
- Received final approval of the 2008/2013 5-Year Strategic Plan.
- Developed a structured format (template) for documenting all IOA Projects.
- Collected information for all IOA projects and incorporated it into the approved project template.
- Distributed the approved 2008/2013 Strategic Plan at the 2008 IOA Annual Conference. The final Plan was also posted on the IOA website.
- Discussed and prioritized potential special projects for the SPC to undertake.

Strategic Planning Committee - Continued

- Identified two special projects:
 - Research the feasibility of retaining an IOA Executive director.
 - Establish strategic alliances with other ombuds, ADR and business groups for mutual benefit.
- Project planning for the two special projects is underway (02/25/09).

MEMBERS:

Accomplishments of the Committee were possible only through the collective efforts of all members. Special thanks is extended to: Carol Breslin, Howard Gadlin, Randy Williams (Co-Chair), Eric Berger, Jennifer Wolf, Mike Turpenoff (Co-Chair) and IOA Board Liaison, Patti Lynch.

TO JOIN:

Please contact Randy Williams, Co-Chair, at (973) 377-4937, or at rwa2002@msn.com or Mike Turpenoff, Co-Chair, at (202) 377-3477, or at mike.turpenoff@ed.gov.

CERTIFICATION TASK FORCE

MISSION:

The current primary mission of IOA's Certification Taskforce is to research, plan, develop and implement a certification program for individual organizational ombudsman practitioners. A secondary mission is to explore and coordinate development of an accreditation program for organizational ombudsman programs that practice according to the IOA Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- January 2008: The Taskforce announced that the results of the December 2007 "market survey" were highly positive: Almost 75% of the respondents said they believed certification is "very important" or "important" to the organizational ombudsman profession.
- Spring 2008: SMT consultants guided the Taskforce in drafting a list of knowledge, skills, abilities and tasks essential to performing the organizational ombudsman job. These were reviewed and refined at a two-day meeting in April of diverse organizational ombudsman practitioners.
- June-July 2008: an email survey was sent to 472 IOA members and associate members, asking them to rank almost 200 job elements.
- August 2008: Job analysis survey results of 200 respondents (an impressive 42.3% response rate) included practitioners representative of a wide range of practice sector, geography, size of organization, years of experience and other variables. The job analysis group excluded any suggested job element that was not performed by at least 90% of the respondents. They finalized a list of tasks ranked by respondents as important to the organizational ombudsman job.
- November 2008: Based on the job analysis, a group of organizational ombudsman practitioners met in a three-day workshop to write psychometrically appropriate multiple-choice questions for the certification exam. Each question is linked to one of the job elements.
- December 2008-January 2009: The Taskforce continued to plan the policies and governance of the certification program, which will be called CO-OP, or Certified Organizational Ombudsman Practitioner. These have been revised and refined, and sent to the IOA Board for approval.
- February 2009: In a two-day meeting, the first certification exam was approved by a group of ombudsman practitioners at SMT headquarters in Florida, and several dozen additional multiple-choice questions were added to the exam item bank. The first preliminary administration of the exam will take place in Fall 2009.

MEMBERS:

A special appreciation to dedicated members of this taskforce: Sean Banks, Ilene Butensky, Tom Barnette, Mary Chavez-Rudolph, Nancy Deering, Carolyn Noorbakhsh, Janis Schonauer, Judi Segall, Marsha Wagner (chair), Merle Waxman, Jennifer Wolf, and Gary Yamashita.

TO JOIN:

To express interest in serving as a subject matter expert in exam question writing, or serving on eligibility, ethics, or appeals committees, please contact the International Ombudsman Association at 908 359-0246 or the Association website, www.ombudsassociation.org.

UNIFORM REPORTING CATEGORIES TASK FORCE

MISSION:

Develop categories and subcategories that can be used by ombudsmen across sectors to classify the kinds of issues, questions, and concerns with which they are asked to assist members of their organizations.

PRIORITIES:

- Discuss and develop categories and subcategories that anticipate the needs of IOA members and share classification systems with IOA Board.
- Name and define each category and subcategory in meaningful ways that reflect the impartial role of an organizational ombudsman to the greatest extent possible.
- Study the usefulness of the classification system itself (i.e., how well members' work may be classified using the categories and subcategories).
- Communicate with IOA members about study results.
- Encourage new IOA members to adopt the classification system.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

In the summer of 2008, the Task Force developed a plan for contacting all IOA Members and Associate Members via telephone to invite them to send the Task Force annual data for a recent one-year period. It was hoped that the "personal touch" of a telephone contact would result in dramatically improved rate of returns from IOA colleagues over previous Task Force efforts. Sandy Morrison volunteered her own time and time of her staff to accomplish this task. While originally planned to be complete by early 2009, due to staffing challenges, she and her team are not meeting the original timeline from completion. It is still expected that as many members as possible will be contacted by August 2009. For IOA members not using the IOA classification system, upon receipt of these data, Task Force members planned to complete conversion of the data into IOA reporting categories and share the resulting data with colleagues who sent their data.

The plan above and the idea of presenting a plenary session about the results at the 2009 conference were coordinated with IOA President, Kevin Jessar. However, as conference plans unfolded, the decision was made by conference planners for this session to be a concurrent session. One important reason for this decision was the fact that the 2009 conference was a "joint" conference" and interest in this presentation would likely be limited to IOA members. However, the Task Force has already made five previous concurrent conference presentations (2004-2008) and, after discussion, the decision was made to try to collect the data from members during the 2009-2010 year and propose to present it in a plenary session at the 2010 conference in New Orleans.

MEMBERS:

Beatriz Dale (American Express Company), Sandy Morrison (Scotiabank), and Tom Sebok (University of Colorado at Boulder) NOTE: Due to retiring from the World Health Organization, David Miller resigned from the Task Force in April 2008. Also, due to changes in his job assignment at the US Department of Labor Office of the Inspector General, Joe Ganci resigned from the Task Force in the summer of 2008.