



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**New Co-Editors Named to the Journal of the International Ombuds Association.**

SEATTLE (May 21, 2026) – The International Ombuds Association (IOA) has appointed Brent Epperson, PhD, and Laura Armstrong, PhD, as co-editors of the Journal of the International Ombuds Association (JIOA). They succeed Shannon Lynn Burton, PhD, who served as editor-in-chief of the journal for more than 10 years.

Drs. Armstrong and Epperson are active ombuds practitioners, scholars, and long-standing members of the organizational ombuds community. Together, they bring complementary expertise that reflects JIOA's commitment to rigorous, practice-informed scholarship in organizational ombuds work.

Dr. Armstrong is a professor in the School of Counselling, Psychotherapy and Spirituality at Saint Paul University in Ottawa, Canada. Dr. Epperson is an assistant professor in the School of Conflict Studies and co-chair of the Center for Informal Dispute Resolution at the same institution. Dr. Epperson brings more than a decade of experience as an organizational ombuds across multiple sectors and jurisdictions, including higher education, professional associations, and international organizations. His work bridges practice and scholarship, with publications and conference presentations focused on ombuds practice, public administration and policy, and fairness in institutional governance. Dr. Armstrong's work complements this foundation through her expertise in mental health, conflict coaching, program development, and applied research. Her scholarship includes more than 75 articles, books, chapters, workshops, and conference publications in psychology and, more recently, ombuds practice. She also brings expertise in mixed-methods research, quantitative measurement development, program and service evaluation, and knowledge mobilization methodologies.

In announcing the appointments, the IOA Board noted that the co-editorship reflects a deliberate pairing of expertise in ombuds practice, conflict coaching, interdisciplinary research, mental health, and organizational systems.

The Board also expressed sincere gratitude to Dr. Burton, University Ombudsperson at Michigan State University, for her decade of leadership and service to the journal. "Shannon's deep understanding of the field, insatiable curiosity, commitment to helping practitioners find their voice in the research space, and calm yet visionary leadership beautifully informed her direction as editor-in-chief," said Wayne Marriott, who led the search process.

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The International Ombuds Association Journal (JIOA) is a peer-reviewed online publication dedicated to advancing knowledge, research, and professional practice in the ombuds field. Through scholarly articles, case studies, and emerging insights, JIOA highlights the vital role ombuds professionals play across corporations, government agencies, colleges, universities, and other institutions.

JIOA fosters greater understanding of the ombuds profession by exploring what we do, how we do it, and how our work evolves in response to social, organizational, technological, and legal change. While confidentiality remains central to ombuds practice, the profession itself benefits from thoughtful study, research, and dialogue that strengthen effectiveness, accountability, and impact.

By promoting scholarship and professional exchange, JIOA helps elevate the visibility and credibility of the ombuds profession, supports professional development, and deepens understanding of the dynamic role ombuds serve within institutions worldwide.

The International Ombuds Association (IOA) is the professional association committed to championing the value and benefit of organizational ombuds worldwide. Its members help organizations mitigate risk by creating a confidential and informal option for stakeholders to raise concerns, safely navigate conflict, and manage change. IOA provides professional development, networking, mentoring, resources for ombuds and technical assistance to organizations who wish to establish an ombuds program, and is the definer of the field through certification and ethical standards. Learn more at [www.ombudsassociation.org](http://www.ombudsassociation.org).

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