Who is eligible to use the services of this office?

The Faculty Relations Fellow provides assistance to WCU faculty, and by extension, department heads and deans.

Other WCU staff and employees may receive similar assistance from Rusty Marts in Human Resources.

What services do you provide?

The Faculty Relations Fellow is somewhat similar to an ombudsman but does not adhere to all of the standards of practice that are required of an ombudsman. We are here to provide faculty a safe, informal place to discuss concerns and issues as a neutral party. We give you a listening ear, ask questions, and assist you to consider your options and next steps, provide clarification about university policies and the faculty handbook. If warranted, we may assist you to mediate disputes you experience with another individual, or attend a meeting as a neutral witness if you wish to have someone observe as you attempt to address a problem.

Are meetings with this office confidential and anonymous?

This office does not divulge the names of anyone who seeks assistance except under the following circumstances: (a) when you give permission to do so in order to assist you in resolving a concern; (b) when the issue is a legal matter that is required to be reported; and (c) when it is determined that there exists an imminent threat of harm to others or to you.

Whereas this office does not compromise the anonymity of individuals who reach out for assistance, one objective is to provide the Provost’s Office with a semi-annual report of the activities of the office so that action may be taken on frequently raised concerns. This is accomplished by reporting on patterns and categories of complaints and concerns that are brought to this office. No names are ever provided in the semi-annual reports.

Who will know that I was here?

We do not violate your confidence or anonymity when you visit this office. The exception is under the conditions listed in the previous question. Nobody will know that you met with the Faculty Relations Fellow unless you choose to make this information known to others.
How is this office different from other offices on campus?

This office provides an informal mechanism for addressing concerns. It is staffed by a fellow faculty member with expertise in organizational behavior and conflict resolution. However, it is not a substitute for the formal procedures outlined in the Faculty Handbook or in the policies of the university. Further, it neither provides legal advice nor serves to provide legal notice to the university concerning any matters of a legal nature.

Do you serve as my advocate in conflicts or disputes?

In short, no. The concerns you experience as a professional employee of this institution are important to you and have the potential to impact your work. Your personal well-being in the spirit of meeting your professional obligations is important. We can help you by listening and processing information, answering questions, and assisting you to work through difficulties. However, we are not here to take sides. Nor do we make demands on others to resolve an issue in a particular manner.

What is done with the information I share when I meet with the Faculty Relations Fellow?

An aggregated report is prepared twice a year and delivered to the office of the Provost. It summarizes a taxonomy of complaints and concerns that have been presented and the outcomes of these concerns, if known. Otherwise, any notes taken during conversations between faculty and this office are destroyed after meetings have concluded.