DATE: February 1, 2017
TO: KU Faculty, Staff, and Students
FROM: University Senate President Joe Harrington
RE: Notification of Proposed Amendments to University Senate Rules and Regulations (USRR) Article V Section 1

The University Senate Executive Committee (SenEx) has referred to University Senate the amendments below to University Senate Rules and Regulations (USRR) Article V, Section 1. The proposed amendments will be discussed at the University Senate meeting on February 9, 2017, and voted on at the meeting on February 23, 2017. (A vote may be taken on February 9, 2017 if two-thirds of the members present vote to take a vote on the amendments). Both meetings will be held in Room 203 Green Hall (Law School); the February 9 meeting will begin at 3:15 and the February 23 meeting at 3:30 p.m. The meetings are open to members of the University community. In the proposed amendments below deleted language is shown in strikethrough and added language is shown in bold and highlighted.

Interested persons may submit written comments on the proposed amendment to the Office of University Governance [email: govern@ku.edu] by noon on Thursday, February 9, 2017. Please note that proposed changes to the University Senate Rules & Regulations are required to be sent to all faculty, staff, and students, but no action is required on your part unless you wish to submit a written comment.

Please contact me [joharring@ku.edu] if you have any questions about this amendment.

Potential Amendments to University Senate Rules and Regulations (USRR) Article V Section 1
(Regarding the University Ombuds Office)
Approved by the University Senate Executive Committee (SenEx) on December 6, 2016

Rationale:

In order to prepare for the upcoming staffing turnover in the University Ombuds Office, the Ombuds Office requested that the University Senate consider the changes listed below to Article V, Section 1, of the University Senate Rules and Regulations (USRR). The majority of the new language serves to open up the University Ombuds position to allow both external and internal searches for the University Ombuds. With this in mind, the proposed amendment would drop the requirement that the University Ombuds have six years of prior service at the University of Kansas. However, given the importance of institutional memory and a deep knowledge of the University for the Ombuds Office, the Ombuds Office proposed keeping the six year requirement for the Faculty Ombuds position; thus the Faculty Ombuds would provide institutional knowledge in the event of an external hire for the University Ombuds position. The University Senate Executive Committee (SenEx) voted to change the six year requirement to ten years to provide more institution knowledge.

The remaining changes are to clarify the role of the University Senate Executive Committee in assembling the search committee for both the University Ombuds and Faculty Ombuds positions, and to stress that the University Ombuds (and the Faculty Ombuds in their 3-year term) does not serve in that position at the pleasure of the Provost. The Ombuds Office considers this is an important issue, as ombuds professional standards and certification requirements specify that the ombuds role must be independent.

University Senate Rules and Regulations
Article V Organization for Conflict Resolution
Section 1. University Ombuds Office

(a) 5.1.1 Appointment. The University Ombuds and Faculty Ombuds shall each be appointed by the Chancellor from among a panel of three candidates presented by a search committee to be assembled by the University Senate Executive Committee.

(b) 5.1.2 Ombuds’s Office. Faculty will be represented in the staffing of the Ombuds Office through a part-time appointment of a faculty member elected to the position of University Ombuds or a Faculty Ombuds by the University Ombuds. The University Ombuds is a full-time position; due to the independent nature of the University Ombuds Office, the University Ombuds does not serve at the pleasure of the Provost. Both the University Ombuds and Faculty Ombuds (see below) shall report to the Provost and to the University Senate Executive Committee.

(c) 5.1.3 Term of Office. Faculty Ombuds. Faculty will be represented in the staffing of the Ombuds Office through part time appointment of one or more tenured faculty members to the position of Faculty Ombuds. Faculty members serving in the Ombuds Office shall serve a three-year term. The Faculty Ombuds shall be eligible for reappointment.

(d) 5.1.4 Qualifications. The University Ombuds shall possess a comprehensive knowledge of the University organization and procedures and knowledge of current professional ombuds standards and practices and a post-baccalaureate degree. The Faculty Ombuds shall possess a comprehensive knowledge of the University organization, and shall, at the time of initial appointment, have completed at least ten years of service at the University of Kansas.