



Carolina Spotlight: Jim Augustine

Jim Augustine came to the University of South Carolina in 1976, at the age of 30, and has been a professor of neuroanatomy at the USC School of Medicine since it opened, in 1977. With the exception of a few transfer students he has taught every student to come through the medical school to date. In 2006, he took on an additional duty as USC's first university ombudsman.

Education: Bachelor of arts from Millikin University, Decatur, Illinois; master of science in anatomy from Saint Louis University, Saint Louis, Missouri; doctor of philosophy in anatomy from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Why Carolina? "Opportunities present themselves and we take advantage or we don't. In my case, it just seemed like a wonderful opportunity to get in on the ground floor of a new, developing medical school at USC. I was about as well prepared when I came here as I could possibly have been, so I have enjoyed it from the very beginning. We had 24 students in the first class, and over the years the classes have gotten bigger and we have added more faculty but I'm still doing the very thing I was hired to do the day I came here."

How did you become ombudsman? "While I was faculty senate chair from 2003-2005 faculty started coming to me with their conflicts and concerns but we didn't have a mechanism for dealing with them. Then Provost Becker suggested I look into what other schools were doing in this regard. That's when we discovered the concept of an organizational ombudsman and the office was established."

What's involved? "The office of the ombudsman is a neutral, informal, confidential and independent resource. Faculty can come to me if they have conflicts or concerns regarding evaluations, peer and colleague relationships, career progression or any other matters of importance to them. I then help them identify and evaluate a range of options for resolving their problem or concern."

Why assume the extra responsibility? I believe in servant-leadership. You learn to lead by serving others, and you learn to serve others in leadership positions. This position has been a wonderful opportunity for me to serve others. I've probably talked to 350 faculty members over the last 7 years, and hopefully have been able to foster fairness, equity, justice and respect in the treatment of faculty.

-- Craig Brandhorst