

MC-709

B.3 F.7

University of Colorado Ombudsman study

1985

ombudsman office

Room 328 • University Memorial Center • University of Colorado • Boulder • 80309 • 303-492-5077

Dear Colleague:

We hope you will help us in defining necessary competencies for successful Ombudsman work. Little has been written or researched regarding Ombudsman performance. Competencies are defined as:

"capabilities necessary for fulfillment of Ombudsman duties."

Competencies (for the purpose of this study) are not job responsibilities per se, rather skills necessary to successfully perform job responsibilities. Although we acknowledge that the focus of the Ombudsman role may differ on each campus, we want to determine general Ombudsman competencies.

Additionally, we are interested in exploring approaches to problem solving with clientele served by Ombudsmen. We realize that we are asking you to categorize and rank order specific responses when you may not choose to work in such a simplistic manner. However, within the research realm, we must ask for such specific responses.

Enclosed you will find a yellow questionnaire which you are to respond to and return to:

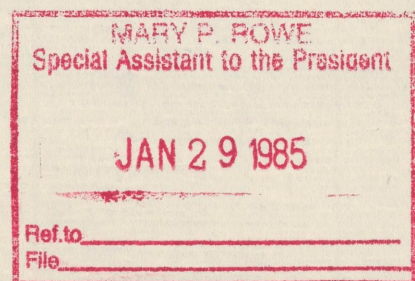
Ombudsman
UMC #328
Campus Box 205
University of Colorado, Boulder
Boulder, CO 80309

You will also find (4) pink questionnaires which we would like you to send to your:

1. Vice President for Academics (or comparable position)
2. Vice President for Student Affairs (or comparable position)
3. Dean of Art and Humanities College (or Social Sciences)
4. Director of Campus Housing

The purpose of asking your colleagues to complete the questionnaire is not to evaluate your performance in any way. Our goal is to measure perceptions of how Ombudsmen should perform in general. We are also interested in discrepancies between perceptions of the Ombudsman and members of the campus environment.

The pink questionnaires have instructions regarding where to return the completed document. You only need to pass on the pink questionnaire



and return the completed yellow questionnaire.

Your cooperation in this study will provide:

1. Valuable data regarding Ombudsman competencies.
2. Critical research data for Ms. Ahuna's graduate thesis.

All survey materials will be handled in a confidential manner. The survey results will not reflect information on individual Ombudsmen or specific institutions.

Lastly, please make a check mark on the last page of the survey if you wish to be sent results of our study. We sincerely thank you for your time and interest in this survey. We ask that you return the completed survey instrument by February 4, 1985.

Sincerely,

Susan Hobson-Panico

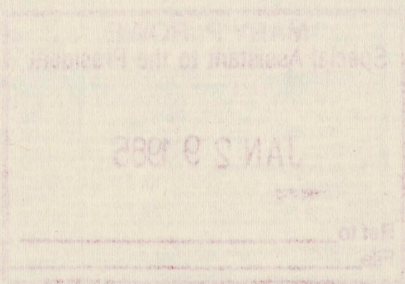
Susan Hobson-Panico
Director, Ombudsman Office
University of Colorado - Boulder

Linda Ahuna

Linda Ahuna
Graduate Student, Dept. of Education
Colorado State University

James H. Banning

James H. Banning
Vice President of Student Affairs
Colorado State University



Please complete the following:

Name: MARY ROWE Address: MIT 10-213

Title: Special Assistant to President No. of years in position: 12+

Educational Background: PhD - Econ

Are You:

Faculty Student Staff (Classified) Admin/Prof

Previous Work Experience: ran economics research group
in consulting firm

Please complete the following two questions before going to next page:

In your opinion, what are ESSENTIAL Ombudsman competencies? Please list:

- Helping others help themselves
- Inventing new options/problem-solving
- Defusing/dealing with/helping people woe ^{anger}

In your opinion, what personal characteristics do you see as undesirable for Ombudsmen? Please list:

- rigidity,
- "one answer" types
- need for recognition
- impatience
- intolerance of ambiguity
- need for control of others

Section I

Please rank order the following competencies necessary for high quality Ombudsman work beginning with the MOST IMPORTANT (1) to the LEAST IMPORTANT (13).

*Note: The term client refers to those served by the Ombudsman's office (i.e. students, faculty, staff).

- ___ Adeptness at breaking problem into parts.
- ___ Assessing where responsibility for solution lies (person, system).
- ___ Ability to interpret policies and communicate to client.
- ___ Establishing rapport/trust with client.
- ___ Realistically assessing what the client would consider as a satisfactory outcome.
- ___ Understanding perspective of campus departments.
- ___ Recognizing political realities operating on campus.
- ___ Having awareness of administrative law (due process, EEO guidelines, etc.)
- ___ Understanding philosophy of academia.
- ___ Making good use of feedback from clientele and others.
- ___ Thinking quickly on one's feet.
- ___ Maintaining perspective on seriousness of problem.
- ___ Designing strategies to initiate changes in policies and procedures on campus.

All of the above

Section II

In your opinion, how does an Ombudsman develop necessary competencies to effectively perform his/her job? Please be specific. (e.g. types of professional training, academic preparation, personal/philosophical orientation, etc.)

- discussion of paradox; ambiguous situations;
- parenthood, sibling hood
- cross cultural experience; other languages
- taking care of others
- public speaking
- excellent mentoring from power structure
- network contact w/ institution
- solicitation of responses from visitors + line managers
- getting out of the office
- being well loved, oneself

What type of feedback (evaluation) do you feel Ombudsmen should receive from their institution? Also, please describe how you and your office are evaluated.

- I like Dave Heaton's system at Ohio State
- look at the caseload.

Constant letterwriting to me + my boss; nothing formal. I'm always swamped so I think people feel I'm needed.

Section III

The following are short summaries of problems that an Ombudsman might work with. Although Ombudsmen may typically use a combination of the responses provided, please read each "case" carefully and indicate your response to the questions in the spaces provided below each scenario.

Comments are welcome and may be written in the space provided below each scenario.

Scenario #1

Two students collaborate on a major homework assignment in order to finish it by the due date. The professor notices the similarity in their answers and gives them each an "F" on the assignment thereby affecting their final course grade. The students are very upset. As Ombudsman you would:

1. Explain to students that behavior has consequences and help the students talk about why they cheated and how the "F" grade affects them.
2. Educate the campus community as to what constitutes academic dishonesty. Educate faculty about preventing cheating in their class.
3. Explain to the students that faculty have the right to impose punitive grades as they see appropriate. So, unfortunately the grade cannot be changed. In fact, the professor could have given them an "F" for the course.
4. Recommend campus policy which clearly defines cheating behavior along with faculty and student rights and responsibilities.
5. Suggest that the students participate in time/stress management workshops so as to avoid the need for last minute collaboration on assignments.

(A) Which of the above responses would come to your mind first _____, second _____, third _____, fourth _____, fifth _____.

(B) Which is MOST LIKELY to be characteristic of your response? _____

(C) Which responses, if any, would you eliminate as being uncharacteristic of your way of thinking? _____, _____, _____

Comments:

I would on all these scenarios, try to help develop all responsible, effective options + then

Scenario #2

In responding to an emergency on campus, a graduate psychology student parked in a 20 minute parking zone and received a \$7.00 ticket after her car had been there for 2 hours. The Parking Department has a policy that individuals must give advance notice if they must park illegally during an emergency. The graduate student feels extremely angry and frustrated because she feels she was carrying out her responsibilities as the "on-call" counselor and is now getting penalized for it. As Ombudsman you would:

1. Offer to meet with the student and a Parking Department staff member to mediate discussion of the policy.
2. Recommend to the Parking Department that they re-evaluate their policy on emergency parking. Talk to them about better ways to distribute the policies to students so they are better informed.
3. Encourage student to disregard the experience as a one time incident in dealing with bureaucratic red tape and advise her to pay the \$7.00 before a late charge is added to the bill.
4. Explain the appeals process for the Parking Department to the student and suggest strategies she may use in "presenting her case".
5. Review the policy with the student and remind her that she had a partial responsibility as an "on-call" counselor to be familiar with the emergency parking procedures on the campus.

(A) Which of the above responses would come to your mind first _____, second _____, third _____, fourth _____, fifth _____.

(B) Which is MOST LIKELY to be characteristic of your response? _____

(C) Which responses, if any, would you eliminate as being uncharacteristic of your way of thinking? _____, _____, _____

Comments:

Scenario #3

A staff member has a problem with a supervisor that he feels is incompetent. The supervisor has worked at the University for 15 years but has recently been promoted to a different position. The staff member gets little or no direction or feedback from the supervisor. Additionally, he is frustrated that the supervisor does not listen and is unresponsive to his concerns. As Ombudsman you would:

1. Tell the worker that since the supervisor has the right to conduct herself in any way she sees fit; it will be like fighting city hall to get her to change. Counsel the worker to consider looking for another job.
2. Recommend that supervisors implement a two-way evaluation process with their employees. Suggest that copies of each evaluation be sent to the appropriate department head.
3. Suggest that the worker file a formal grievance with the appropriate authority about the supervisor. Advise the worker to include as part of his grievance that he be given a new supervisor.
4. Help the person to discuss his frustration and think of ways he can deal more effectively with his feelings and still remain positive about the work he is doing.
5. Suggest that the worker take advantage of workshops, seminars, etc. that would help him better communicate with the supervisor and perhaps at the same time enhance his skills so that a job change is a viable option.

- (A) Which of the above responses would come to your mind first _____, second _____, third _____, fourth _____, fifth _____.
- (B) Which is MOST LIKELY to be characteristic of your response? _____
- (C) Which responses, if any, would you eliminate as being uncharacteristic of your way of thinking? _____, _____, _____

Comments:

Scenario #4

A faculty member contacts you for help in "asserting his rights". He was kicked off the University racquetball courts after a student complained about his excessive use of foul language. As Ombudsman you would:

1. Suggest that faculty member sign up for racquetball lessons to enhance his racquetball skills and reduce frustration.
2. Explore why he felt it necessary to swear in public. Suggest that he find more acceptable methods of expressing himself.
3. Recommend that the Recreation Department consider better sound-proofing in the racquetball courts since noise from shouting and yelling is an inevitable part of the game.
4. Tell him that foul language is inappropriate for professors and that the decision by the recreation staff was (damn) reasonable.
5. Advise the faculty member to negotiate the issue with the Recreation Department in hopes of getting them to accept that swearing is not so bad if it is not directed at another person.

- (A) Which of the above responses would come to your mind first _____, second _____, third _____, fourth _____, fifth _____.
- (B) Which is MOST LIKELY to be characteristic of your response? _____
- (C) Which responses, if any, would you eliminate as being uncharacteristic of your way of thinking? _____, _____, _____

Comments:

Scenario #5

A graduate student received a grade in an art course that she felt was unfair. The work in question was a series of silkscreen prints. The professor viewed the work as too elementary thus awarded her a grade of "C". As Ombudsman you would:

1. Tell the student that he is not alone in his feelings and that such professor/student conflicts as a graduate student are very common. Work with that student to identify how the experience could be a good preparation for professional life (e.g. judgment by art critics).
2. Help the student to identify the feelings of powerlessness and inferiority that graduate students often feel when they disagree with a professor's judgment.
3. Explain to the student that within the realm of academic freedom it is generally accepted that professors are the best judge of students' work.
4. Recommend that the Art Department write a set of standards for evaluating students' work.
5. Recommend to the academic department heads and the graduate students that they coordinate an orientation program which addresses graduate student and faculty expectations.

(A) Which of the above responses would come to your mind first _____, second _____, third _____, fourth _____, fifth _____.

(B) Which is MOST LIKELY to be characteristic of your response? _____

(C) Which responses, if any, would you eliminate as being uncharacteristic of your way of thinking? _____, _____, _____

Comments:

Scenario #6

A minority student disagrees with the University campus Housing Office's "live-in" requirement for freshman students. The student feels she doesn't "fit in" with others. She especially hates the drinking and party atmosphere of the dorm. She is considering dropping from school. As Ombudsman you would:

1. Encourage the student to meet other students and participate in hall programs and activities.
2. Attempt to discuss the rationale of the policy. Make suggestions to the Housing Office to consider exceptions to the policy.
3. Talk to the student about the need to comply with University policy.
4. Discuss what might be feasible compromises between the student and Housing staff.
5. Refer the student to a minority counselor at the University Counseling Center to discuss cultural identification and authority issues.

(A) Which of the above responses would come to your mind first ____, second ____, third ____, fourth ____, fifth ____.

(B) Which is MOST LIKELY to be characteristic of your response? ____

(C) Which responses, if any, would you eliminate as being uncharacteristic of your way of thinking? ____, ____, ____

Comments:

Scenario #7

A female student tells you that she was recently approached by a male professor and sexually fondled by him in his office. She intended to ask for help on writing a paper but never had a chance to present her questions. The student left the professor's office immediately without saying a word. She is concerned about the grade, and very reluctant to pursue the matter. As Ombudsman you would:

1. Explain to the student that this is something that some "unenlightened" professors sometimes do. Suggest that she drop the class.
 2. Encourage the student to tell the professor that she disapproved of his behavior. Meet with the Equal Opportunity Officer on campus and suggest that you present a workshop on sexual harassment for the faculty in the department where the professor works.
 3. Refer student to the Counseling Center or Women's Center for personal support.
 4. Recommend a policy to the University administration which states that faculty be reviewed for termination if they are found to have sexually harassed another University community member.
 5. Encourage student to join a peer support group for victims of sexual harassment where assertion training is emphasized.
- (A) Which of the above responses would come to your mind first _____, second _____, third _____, fourth _____, fifth _____.
- (B) Which is MOST LIKELY to be characteristic of your response? _____
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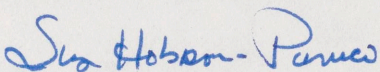
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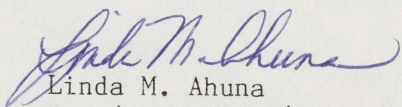
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Sincerely,


Susan Hobson-Panico
Director
Ombudsman Office
University of Colorado


Linda M. Ahuna
Graduate Student
Department of Education
Colorado State University

Please complete the following:

Name: _____ Address: _____

Title: _____ No. of years in position: _____

Educational Background: _____

Are You:

Faculty ___ Student ___ Staff (Classified) ___ Admin/Prof ___

Previous Work Experience: _____

Please complete the following two questions before going to next page:

In your opinion, what are ESSENTIAL Ombudsman competencies? Please list:

In your opinion, what personal characteristics do you see as undesirable for Ombudsmen? Please list:

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- ___ Thinking quickly on one's feet.
- ___ Maintaining perspective on seriousness of problem.
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Section II

In your opinion, how does an Ombudsman develop necessary competencies to effectively perform his/her job? Please be specific. (e.g. types of professional training, academic preparation, personal/philosophical orientation, etc.)

What type of feedback (evaluation) do you feel Ombudsmen should receive from their institution? If you are aware of how the Ombudsman office evaluates its effectiveness, please describe process.

Section III

The following are short summaries of problems that an Ombudsman might work with. Although Ombudsmen may typically use a combination of the responses provided, please read each "case" carefully and indicate your response to the questions in the spaces provided below each scenario.

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5. Suggest that the students participate in time/stress management workshops so as to avoid the need for last minute collaboration on assignments.

(A) Which response should the Ombudsman consider first ____, second ____, third ____, fourth ____, fifth ____.

(B) Which response do you feel the Ombudsman would actually pursue? ____

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Comments:

Scenario #2

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The Ombudsman should:

1. Tell the worker that since the supervisor has the right to conduct herself in any way she sees fit, it will be like fighting city hall to get her to change. Counsel the worker to consider looking for another job.
2. Recommend that supervisors implement a two-way evaluation process with their employees. Suggest that copies of each evaluation be sent to the appropriate department head.
3. Suggest that the worker file a formal grievance with the appropriate authority about the supervisor. Advise the worker to include as part of his grievance that he be given a new supervisor.
4. Help the person to discuss his frustration and think of ways he can deal more effectively with his feelings and still remain positive about the work he is doing.
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1. Suggest that faculty member sign up for racquetball lessons to enhance his racquetball skills and reduce frustration.
2. Explore why he felt it necessary to swear in public. Suggest that he find more acceptable methods of expressing himself.
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2. Help the student to identify the feelings of powerlessness and inferiority that graduate students often feel when they disagree with a professor's judgment.
3. Explain to the student that within the realm of academic freedom it is generally accepted that professors are the best judge of students' work.
4. Recommend that the Art Department write a set of standards for evaluating students' work.
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Scenario #6

A minority student disagrees with the University campus Housing Office's "live-in" requirement for freshman students. The student feels she doesn't "fit in" with others. She especially hates the drinking and party atmosphere of the dorm. She is considering dropping from school. The Ombudsman should:

1. Encourage the student to meet other students and participate in hall programs and activities.
2. Attempt to discuss the rationale of the policy. Make suggestions to the Housing Office to consider exceptions to the policy.
3. Talk to the student about the need to comply with University policy.
4. Discuss what might be feasible compromises between the student and Housing staff.
5. Refer the student to a minority counselor at the University Counseling Center to discuss cultural identification and authority issues.

(A) Which response should the Ombudsman consider first ____, second ____, third ____, fourth ____, fifth ____.

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Comments:

Scenario #7

A female student tells you that she was recently approached by a male professor and sexually fondled by him in his office. She intended to ask for help on writing a paper but never had a chance to present her questions. The student left the professor's office immediately without saying a word. She is concerned about the grade, and very reluctant to pursue the matter. The Ombudsman should:

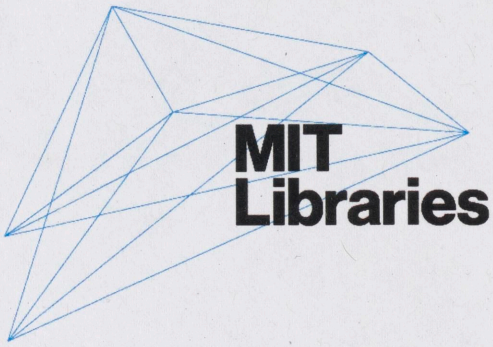
1. Explain to the student that this is something that some "unenlightened" professors sometimes do. Suggest that she drop the class.
2. Encourage the student to tell the professor that she disapproved of his behavior. Meet with the Equal Opportunity Officer on campus and suggest that you present a workshop on sexual harassment for the faculty in the department where the professor works.
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4. Recommend a policy to the University administration which states that faculty be reviewed for termination if they are found to have sexually harassed another University community member.
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Comments:



Department of Distinctive Collections
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139-4307

libraries.mit.edu



The remaining contents of this folder have been redacted.

If you would like to see the full folder, please email the

Department of Distinctive Collections at

distinctive-collections@mit.edu