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1990 Ombudsperson Survey

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# 1990 Ombudsperson Survey

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Wayne State University

Thanks to all of you who took the time to complete and return the questionnaire. It was sent to 134 university and college ombudsperson offices, one questionnaire to each office for which I had an address. Sixty-eight usable replies were received, one more than a 50% return.

First, a profile of the ombudsperson. Unless specifically noted, the characteristics of Canadian and U.S. ombudspeople and offices are very much alike. Unless otherwise indicated, N = 60 or more.

Over 80% of the respondents were full-time employees of their institution; about 20% were students, part-time employees and two retired faculty reincarnated as ombudspeople.

Excluding student ombudspersons, prior to becoming an ombudsperson, over a third of us were teachers, almost as many were administrators, and a fourth of us came from a variety of backgrounds including ministry and law.

Over half of all respondents continue to spend part of their working hours on non-ombuds activities. Turning that around, 43% of respondents now spend all of their time on ombuds activities. Canadian ombudspeople are much more likely to be purists (63%) than U.S. ombudspeople of whom only 36% work exclusively at ombudsing.

Excluding students, part-time employees, etc., the majority of ombudspeople are between 40 and 60 years of age. There were half as many male as female ombudspeople 40 to 49 years of age, and twice as many male as female ombudspeople over 60 years of age. However, males and females are equally likely to have had a teaching or administrative career prior to becoming an ombudsperson.

Excluding students, we range in service as ombudspersons from half a year to 21 years with a median of 3.5 years. Nine of 12 ombudspeople with 11 or more years of service were males.

Most of us like what we are doing and want to continue ombudsing. About 1 out of 5 of us would like to go on for over 5 more years. About a third of us don't know or (I suspect) don't want to say how long we want to continue. Of course, some of us may like what we are doing but are close to retirement. However, Canadians are more likely than U.S. ombudspeople to want to stay on for less than 2 more years.

So much for our profile. What about the office as such? Thirty-six respondent offices (over half the total) have existed for 11 years or more; 13 offices have existed for 20 years or more. (A community college claims to have had an ombudsperson office for 30 years.) The median existence of all respondent offices is 14 years.

The initial term for which an ombudsperson is appointed is unspecified for 4 out of every 10 ombudspeople.

Four out of every 10 ombudspeople report to the president (by whatever title) of their institution. Another 2 out of 10 report to a vice president. Others report to faculty or student senates, etc.

The median size of office staff is 1.275 persons and, as might be expected, is related to the number of cases handled. The data are highly variable but, on average, each ombudsperson handles about 300 cases. The larger the number of cases at a school, the more cases each ombudsperson is likely to handle.

What to we count as cases? Almost 1 out of 3 offices count every client they deal with. The rest of the offices are more conservative in counting cases. They may distinguish cases vs. non-cases on the basis of number of contacts (at least 2) made to resolve the case, or time spent on the "case." These offices would exclude from the case count clients who are merely provided information or referrals. If we consider only the offices which discriminate in what they count as cases, the median number of cases handled is (surprisingly) virtually the same as before, 331 vs. 335.

Total cases per reporting school (N = 41) ranged from 20 to 1363, with a median of 335 cases, almost precisely the same median whether Canadian or U.S. Three schools reported over 1000 cases, 8 schools reported less than 100 cases. The average full-time equivalent student body for schools reporting over 1000 cases was over 30,000 vs. a student body under 10,000 for schools with less than 100 cases.

About half the respondents reported using 10 or less categories to classify cases; 1 out of 5 used 11 to 25 categories; 1 out of 4 used 26 to 50 categories. The largest number of categories reported was 800.

About one-third of the offices maintain electronic files of cases, but two-thirds of the offices use computers for some purpose. About half the offices keep records 5 years or less.

The most frequent types of cases varied from school to school. Despite the fact that almost every respondent said they analyzed case load by type of problem, 1 out of 5 either could not or would not state what their most frequent type of case was. Despite the fact that 1 out of 3 respondents claim to use an electronic record keeping system, very few

respondents could (or would) state what percent their most frequent cases accounted for. Still, nearly two-thirds of all respondents said they wanted to be able to compare types and frequency of cases among different schools; only 15% did not.

Among those office (N = 53) which did indicate what their most frequent types of cases were, academic problems, usually grading, topped the list. The second most frequent type of case involved administrative problems such as with registration or other student services.

Twenty-six schools, nearly 40%, claim to classify case outcome in a way which measures achievement (success) by the ombudsperson office. Conversely, half the respondents said client satisfaction with their office had never been measured, or they were unaware that it had ever been measured.

One out of 4 offices reported establishing written goals for the current academic year.

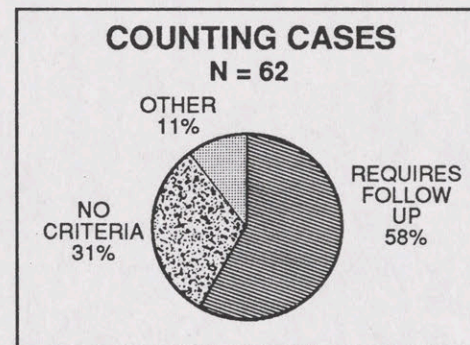
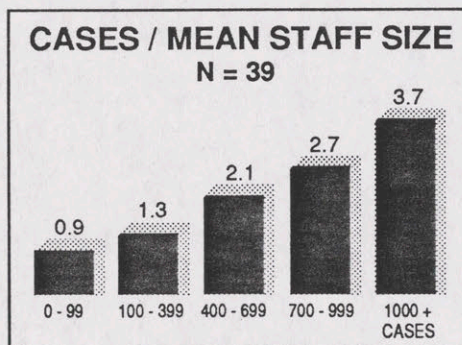
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Although some schools reported growth in case load, or training more people to resolve their own problems, there appear to be no strong trends in ombudsperson mission or activities. On the other hand, the total number of ombudsperson offices appears to be increasing as indicated by the fact that 19 of 65 reporting offices (29%) were created less than 6 years ago.

What would help most to increase the effectiveness of ombudsperson offices? One out of 3 offices (N = 52) would like to have a larger staff. One out of 4 offices would like to have more high-level administrative support.

Finally, we asked what you would like to ask other ombudspeople. By a margin of 2 to 1 over anything else, you were concerned about professional technique; that is, how to deal with specific problems. Your second most frequent concern was how to effect policy change.

If I can draw one conclusion from this part of the survey, it is that you would like more communication with fellow ombudspeople.





# NEWS

UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE OMBUDSMAN ASSOCIATION, INC.

Editor: Jan Morse, University of Minnesota

Spring 1991

MARY P. ROY  
Special Assistant to the President

4/17/91

From the Annual Conference, April 1990

## The Tension between Freedom of Speech and Freedom from Harassment: The Evolving UM Policy

UCOA's initial session at the April 1990 Ann Arbor meeting addressed the recent difficult experience of the University of Michigan in formulating a policy to deal with ethnic and racial harassment.

Virginia Nordby, the university's Associate Vice-President for Government Relations, and Dan Sharporn, Assistant General Counsel, described major incidents of harassment which led to the policy's formulation and its

subsequent challenge by a graduate student, with ACLU support, in Federal Court. This resulted in an injunction against enforcement of the policy, which was then revised to meet the court's strictures on constitutional protection of free speech.

Darlene Ray-Johnson, a Student Discrimination Policy Advisor, detailed some of the ways in which the policy has been implemented.

Complicating the university's dilemma in handling harassment issues without chilling free speech is the fact that it lacks a general code of conduct other than for academic dishonesty; thus, it needed to put a policy in place

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## Violence, Disruptive and Abusive Behavior on Campus

Beatrice Pearson argued that the ombudspersons have a special role to play in the development of an institutional response to violent, disruptive, and abusive behavior on campus. At Concordia University, this type of behavior is defined as unusual, unreasonable or unacceptable behavior which interferes with the normal activities of the university. Three or four years ago a few serious cases caused the ombudspersons to consult with other officers in the institution, notably the Director of Health Services and the Code Administrator (a lawyer). These consultations gradually led to the group thinking of itself as a team, for they found the mutual support, encouragement and advice resulted in outcomes that were more satisfactory for all concerned. Subsequently, the team was recognized by the institution as "the university intervention team." They formed a

policy group to develop policies and procedures, as well as a statement of principles and objectives.

In her talk, Beatrice spoke from first-hand experience about how unnerving and frightening it is to be the target of abusive behavior. She also addressed the problem working with a team poses for ombudspersons, bound by confidentiality. At Concordia, a complainant is informed at the very beginning about the involvement of the other team members, who they are, and why they are involved. When a complaint about violent, abusive, or disruptive behavior is received by a member of the intervention team, that team member normally acts as the primary problem solver for that case.

Beatrice pointed out that the usual problem-solving mode of ombudspersons

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## Tension

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in an atmosphere of urgency. In a companion effort a brochure was distributed which attempted to explain the policy by citing examples of proscribed behavior. Some of these examples, described by Nordby as "infelicitous," were targeted by the Federal judge for their sweep and vagueness; although the brochure had been withdrawn by the university, that fact was not widely known.

The federal court decision distinguished between penalizing conduct of physical harassment and penalizing verbal conduct, however insensitive and offensive.

The panel members insisted the original policy intended no restrictions on classroom freedom; they faulted the judge's emphasis on that aspect of the policy. Carolyn Stieber, Ombudsman at Michigan State University, who commented on the morning's discussion, pointed out that the judge was critical because he said one could not know, in or out of the classroom, which comments might violate the "harassment" policy and indeed several students had been called to account for classroom remarks even though they were not formally sanctioned. Stieber pointed out that for several decades Michigan State has had in place a broad code of conduct, with a due process procedure enabling students or others to initiate action against threats, intimidation, or other allegations of unfair conduct. While this and other long-established mechanisms do not work

perfectly, they have afforded an opportunity for redress when harassment or discrimination is alleged. She offered the view that it would be a cruel irony if, in the name of civil rights, fundamental civil liberties were curbed but

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she did not think universities were powerless to deal with threats and intimidation.

A lively discussion followed, raising such questions as the value of courses on racial/cultural diversity and the extent to which a broad spectrum of the university community should address issues of prejudice and intolerance rather than relegating the problem almost entirely to specialized offices.

## Violence

*continued from page 1*

sons is not, by itself, effective in addressing the problems of violent, abusive, and disruptive behavior. But our role does give us a perspective on the problem and we have a responsibility to help our institutions evolve effective strategies to deal with the problem. The Concordia intervention team, which includes the ombudspersons on it, is one approach that seems to be working well.

## Handling Harassment Cases

Pamela Freeman, Assistant Dean of Students, described how Indiana University handles racial incidents on campus using the Racial Incidence Team (RIT). The RIT came about after a 1988 protest by the IU Black Student Union that was precipitated by an assault of a Black student by five White students. One of the demands of this protest was an office on campus that *clearly* handles all incidents of racism. Ms. Freeman was directed by the President to set up a team of 8 people: 3 faculty, 3 residence hall coordinators, 1 student affairs professional, and the team coordinator (Freeman). The team has the administrative assistance from one Graduate Administrative Associate. The purpose of the RIT is to collect reports about racism and help intervene. The team maintains client confidentiality. Most of the reports come from the residence halls. Freeman surmises that this is due to the fact that the residence halls system directly to the Dean of Students and the presence of trained residence hall staff members.

Julie Steiner, Coordinator, University of Michigan Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC), said SAPAC also came about as a result of a protest over the University's alleged covering up of the problem of campus sexual assaults. The responsibilities of this center are educate the campus on issues of sexual assault and to coordinate counseling for survivors of sexual assault. The center experienced a dramatic increase in reporting. Steiner suggests this increase is because the SAPAC is "home" for reporting sexual assault incidents; she recommends that similar centers prepare for a dramatic increase in reporting.

Students are told to report sexual assault incidents first to the SAPAC to discuss their options. Because the center offers counseling, they are protected by the Michigan "shield" laws for counselors. Therefore, the center can offer more confidentiality than some other agencies. Once options are clarified, the center makes the appropriate referral.



## The Foreign Student Factor

Kay Clifford, of the University of Michigan's International Center, made a lively presentation and led the subsequent discussion on "The Foreign Student Factor." Her talk focused on three areas: competition for resources, discrimination and ethnocentrism, and majority-culture backlash.

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Since institutions devote limited resources to non-white (foreign and domestic) student groups, some tension exists between U.S. students-of-color and foreign students on U.S.

campuses. However, the trend is toward more cooperation occurring between minority and foreign student groups.

Discrimination and ethnocentrism from the U.S. majority culture victim-

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izes foreign students, and there is also ethnocentrism among numerous groups of foreign students. Other sources of campus conflicts have included: U.S. people-of-color inviting speakers to campus that are considered racist by foreign students; U.S. female students experiencing sexism from foreign-born professors; foreign students stereotyping U.S. students-of-

color; and female foreign students experiencing sexism from male students of the same nationality. Much training is needed in these areas.

Finally, there is the widespread problem of U.S. majority-culture backlash, directed both at foreign students and U.S. people-of-color. This encompasses discrimination and ethnocentrism as well as perceived competition for scarce resources. It has been manifested in white groups pushing for English-only language laws and forced assimilation into the majority culture, rather than appreciation and celebration of diversity.

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## Typical Ethical Knots

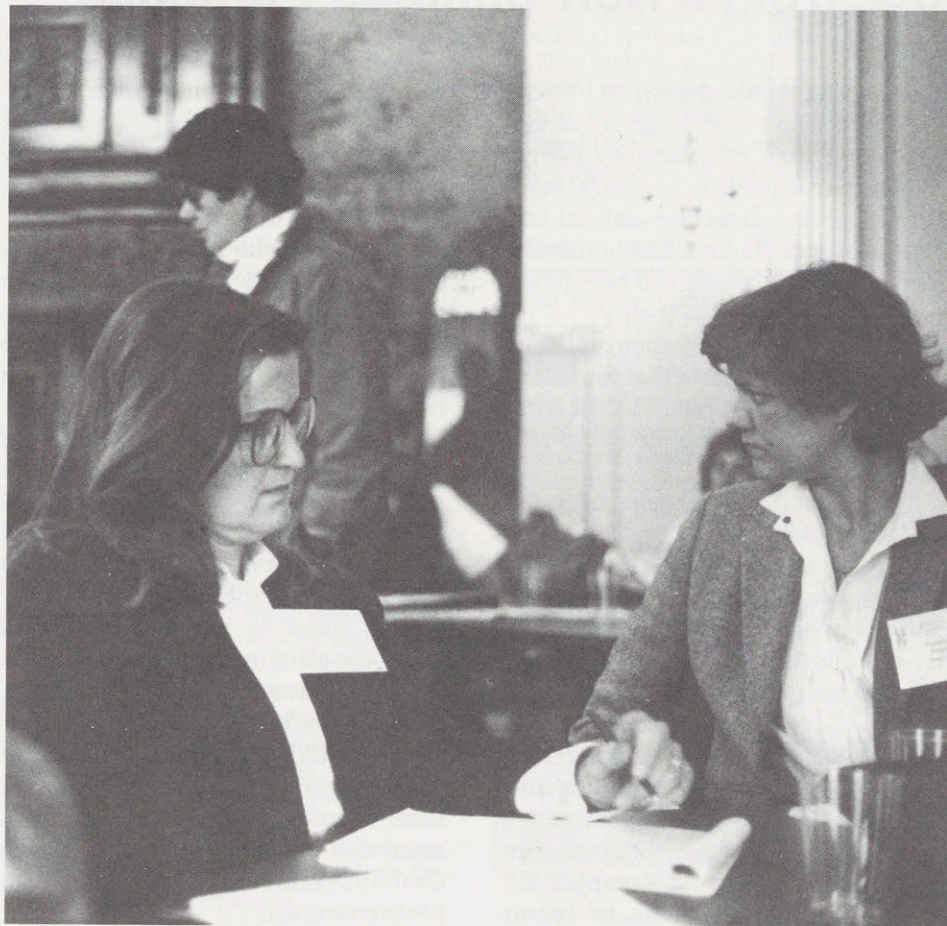
Frances Bauer of Western (London, Canada) described knots or mindsets typical of students, though also a problem at times for anyone. The first is having expectations of others which are not appropriate and feeling aggrieved when those expectations aren't met (example: expecting a dean to excuse you from an exam when you have a death in the family, but without providing documentation of the death).

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The second is generalizing from one bad experience with one person to a whole series of people (example: assuming they all know a piece of information, assuming they all have it in for the student or person in question). A final ethical knot is related to the second: feeling justified in behaving badly to someone who has behaved badly first. Frances described the case of a student who withdrew from residence because she had a bad experience, and who in turn felt justified in not responding to letters requesting payment of outstanding charges.



# "Who Is that Person I Have to Negotiate with, and Does Understanding His/Her Motives Really Help?"

**Dr. Helen Weingarten**, Director, Program in Conflict Management, University of Michigan, offered a conceptual model originally developed for marital conflict. She stressed that a model is only a metaphor, is only useful if it's useful, may not be useful in all contexts. Conflicts are more complex than game theories. Values, emotions, social bonds, not rationality, are key to conflict resolution. Her "levels of conflict" models posits five different types of conflict differentiated by motive, key assumption, client's view of third party, emotional climate, and negotiating style. She provided a grid which displayed these.

**Level 1**, problems to solve: motive solve problem; assumption we can work it out; third party advisor/facili-

tator; climate hope, style open, direct, clear, non-distorted communication, recognize common interests. **Level 2**, disagreements: motive self-protection; assumption compromise necessary; third party enabler/mediator; climate uncertainty; style cautious sharing, vague, general language, calculation beginning. **Level 3**, contest: motive winning; assumption insufficient resources; third party arbitrator/judge; climate frustration, resentment; style strategic manipulation, distorted communication, personal attacks, not be first to change. **Level 4**, fight/flight: motive hurting other; assumption other can't/won't change, self needn't change; third party partisan ally; climate antagonism, alienation; style verbal/nonverbal incongruity, blame,

perceptual distortions, refusing responsibility. **Level 5**, war: motive eliminating other; key assumption withdrawal costs greater than staying costs; third party rescuer/intruder; climate hopeless, revenge; style emotional volatility, misunderstanding issues, self-righteous, compulsive, unable to disengage.

Levels 1-3 focus on hurt to other and self; Levels 4 & 5 focus on hurt to self; Levels 1 & 2, self-disclosure; Levels 3-5, no self-disclosure; Levels 1 & 2, great joint interest; Level 3, limited joint interest; Levels 4 & 5, no joint interest.

*Order Working Paper #338, "Working Levels for Management of Marital Conflict," for \$2.00 from PCMA, 4016 LS&A Bldg., University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1382.*

## Ombudsing in the 90's: from a Non-Campus Perspective

Presenters:

**Lou Garcia**, Ombudsman, TIAA-CREF

**Dave Bishop**, Ombudsman, Ann Arbor News

**Mark Roy**, President, Foundation for International Human Rights, Inc.

This session provided all university and college ombudsman present the opportunity to hear about how other professions employ ombudsmen. Three individuals from different fields discussed how their role is defined in their profession.

**Lou Garcia.** Lou is employed by TIAA-CREF, the first financial service to establish the ombudsman function. Created by the Board of Trustees of TIAA-CREF in 1987, the 4-person Ombudsmen Office was established to serve as a designated neutral, to resolve problems quickly, and to review policies and procedures and make appropriate changes. Just as university and college ombudsmen serve most members of the university com-

munity, the ombudsmen at TIAA-CREF are appointed to address concerns that may be raised by over a million participants in over 4000 institutions. Quite a large population! Lou reported that TIAA-CREF ombudsmen help participants and beneficiaries look for options in their plans, review benefits and assist them with any problems. Lou reports that the role of the ombudsman in the financial institution environment is growing rapidly.

**Dave Bishop.** Often referred to as a "Reader's Advocate," the News Ombudsman was established in 1967 to address the trend in declining readership, poor reputation, and poor quality of editorials. Currently, there are approximately 35 News Ombudsmen in the U.S., 6 in Canada, and 1 in Sweden. Guidelines for news ombudsmen were published in 1982 to "improve fairness, enhance credibility, same as a house critic, represent readers concerns, and investigate complaints." Writing weekly columns to report

back to the readers on questions/concerns raised and writing internal memos to suggest needed changes are just two ways news ombudsmen can be sure to meet the guidelines. Finally, Dave stressed the need for news ombuds to be independent and report to the highest level of authority.

**Mark Roy.** As President of the Foundation for International Human Rights, Inc., Mark gave us an international perspective on Ombudsmen systems. He pointed out that Ombuds are found at the national, state, and local levels, and in many different professions. Where other countries may refer to Ombudsmen as "advocates," there is a common thread woven in all of us because we all work for many interest groups: students, inmates, patients, citizens, handicapped, children, etc. Even though our clients may be different, we all work for basic human rights. Mark also indicated that we will see more and more Ombudsmen as democracy moves into other countries.

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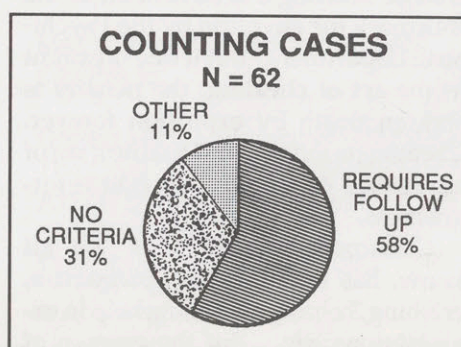
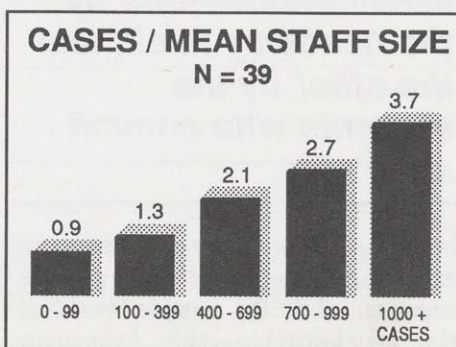
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# Dealing with a Deadly Sin: Cheating in the Classroom

*A presentation by Dean Joe Gluck, Annual conference, University Ombudsman Association, Ann Arbor, Michigan, April 4-7, 1990.*

Since my remarks will dwell on sins, I think I should start with a *confession*. First, I'm a cleric in mufti. Second, I am, I presume, the only *Senior Citizen* in this conference (Junior grade, mind you). Third, I've spent 45 years in college student work. I'm a veteran of panty raids, streaking, and riots, and I've been ordered into battle by 10 University presidents. I confess I came here with some qualms about a possible "generation gap." Not so, and I thank you sincerely for your generous acceptance. You've made my days in Ann Arbor a real joy!

As you may recall, the early Christian Church promulgated to the faithful what is known as "the seven deadly

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## ***Cheating is indeed the deadliest sin of academia.***

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sins." These were pride, envy, anger, sloth (peas), plus Avarice, gluttony, and lechery. If the Church Fathers had foreseen the rise of the modern institutions of the colleges and universities, I propose they might have added the *Eighth* deadly sin, *Academic cheating!*

At least I think it would have been a good idea, given the nature and extent of the problem, which, although it has been alive in academia from the start, in Bologna, Paris, Oxford, and it is proliferating steadily today.

There is a little joke among undergraduates, that one might shoot the President, and burn down a couple of college buildings, to be sent off to the Infirmary for attention by the Psychiatric Department. But if one is caught in the act of cheating, the penalty is sudden death by expulsion forever. Cheating is indeed the Deadliest sin of academia. And for it there is little forgiveness.

Classroom cheating, as we all know, has many forms—plagiarism, cribbing, helping and using help in examinations, etc., But the essence of

cheating in the classroom is *theft* or abetting theft. Such an act strikes at the very heart of the whole academic enterprise, which is *Truth*. The motto of many great universities encapsulate this fact; Oxford—"Deus Illuminatio Mea"; Harvard—"Veritas"; Yale—(one of my Alma Maters) "Lux et Veritas." And so on . . .

A central question in this matter is, Why do students engage in cheating anyway? Ostensibly they come to college to learn, not to beat the system.

Why is cheating of first-rank importance to the academy everywhere? First of all, this nefarious activity has been growing steadily for the past several decades. Secondly, our teaching faculties view it as a truly deadly sin, in academia at least.

I suggest that this sin is promoted, unwittingly perhaps, by *two false assumptions*—one by the Academy itself, and the other by the students who commit such acts.

First, the Academy *falsely assumes* the student has been adequately trained in ethical behavior *before* he or she enters the community of learning. And so the academic conduct regulations are buried away in the bowels of catalogs and handbooks. Its obvious importance is often overlooked or slighted in freshman orientation. Incidentally, I do my bit, gratuitously, by hammering on it in lectures to small groups of around 3,000 freshman each year.

But on an equally false assumption, the student enters academia with a

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## ***I suggest that this sin is promoted, unwittingly perhaps, by two fake assumptions—one by the Academy itself, and the other by the students who commit such acts.***

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belief that the academy operates on an extension of the values he or she has experienced in the outside world of the marketplace—the American

"Market Culture," so to speak, of shady dealing and the pervasive desire for immediate gratification, short cuts to quick and easy success. That's the media pitch he or she has been suckled on for years—so why not the college?

### **Solutions?**

Sadly enough, the classroom cheating problem, I for one think, has no immediate solution. As the Russians say, it may "have to get worse before it can get better."

As for the Academy, it had jolly well better start with a more valid assumption that the incoming student *is not*

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## ***... our ultimate hope lies in a much earlier regimen of ethical training ...***

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*trained in ethical values*, which will perforce demand some elementary nurture in the values of ethical conduct, not only in the classroom but in the outside world as well.

As for the student, our ultimate hope (it seems to me) lies in a much earlier regimen of ethical training—the ABC's of right and wrong, where such things are *not an option*, but a *rule of life*. I'm convinced it will have to start early, even say, before the age of ten, even before the onslaught of the other deadly sins, and the shallow market culture that tends to engulf us all.

In this matter, so dear to its heart, the Academy may have a larger educational challenge than it has ever dreamed of—a veritable "tiger by the tail." The respect for Honesty cannot be assumed, and dishonesty is indeed a deadly sin!

### **Addendum:**

A coincidence: ten days *after* these comments, on April 16, the ABC Nightline TV show was devoted to the problem of cheating in American colleges and universities. Prominent educators and student leaders were interviewed and came out with basically the same answers as Dean Gluck's. Selah!



# MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

## UCOA

University and College  
Ombudsman Association, Inc.

**April 3-6, 1991**

University of Kentucky

### ***"Ombuds '91: Changing Roles for Changing Needs."***

*Sessions include:*

- "Beginner's Workshop"

*Panels on:*

- Compromising Positions/Conflict of Interest:  
How Many Hats Can an Ombudsperson  
Wear?
- Multicultural Conflict
- Handling Hate Crimes

*An open discussion of current issues and problems as well as a session on "Cases That Cross the Line" also promise to be very interesting and informative.*

For information, contact Frankie Garrison,  
University of Kentucky, 204 Frazee Hall,  
Lexington, KY 40506-0031.  
Telephone (606) 257-3929, FAX (606) 257-5171.

## ACCUO

Association of Canadian College  
and University Ombudspersons

**June 16-19, 1991**

University of Western Ontario

*Keynote Speech:*

### ***"Alternative Dispute Resolution"***

*Other topics covered:*

- Confidentiality, Privacy and Information  
Protection
- Human Rights Issues
- "The Chilly Climate for Women"  
(20 minute video)

*Techniques and strategies for dealing with sample cases.*

For further information, contact Frances Bauer,  
Ombudsman, University of Western Ontario, Room  
267, UCC, London, Ontario, Canada N6A 3K7  
Telephone (519) 661-3573

## Application for Membership

Membership is open to all individuals who are practicing ombudspersons or are interested in the practice of ombudspersons and are affiliated with an institution of higher education.

UCOA Membership Annual Dues \$35.00

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

Institution with which you are affiliated  
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Description of your responsibilities  
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Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_



University and College  
Ombudsman Association, Inc.

Mail your application and a check  
payable to:

Dalene Hoppe, Treasurer, UCOA  
The Ohio State University  
A150B Starling-Loving Hall  
320 West 10th Avenue  
Columbus, Ohio 43210-1240

## Gadlin Farewell Address

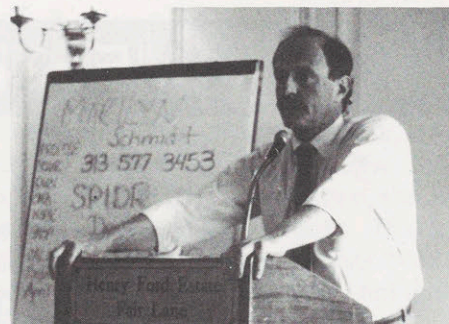
The chance to present a farewell address provides me the opportunity to reflect the state of our profession as well as to sum up some of the most salient aspects of this year's meeting. Two things come to mind. First, I was struck by the contrast in tone and mood between the last presentation on foreign students and the first session on the legally frustrated efforts of the University of Michigan to implement a racial harassment policy. The discussion of foreign students and their problems was relaxed and almost playful as we contemplated the misperceptions, insensitivities, and miscommunications which often characterize interactions between foreign students and their host institutions. By contrast, the discussion of racial harassment and policies intended to control or eliminate it were guarded and tense, each of us being cautious lest we reveal that we too share in the misperceptions, insensitivities, and miscommunications that characterize interactions between different races in this country.

Second, while listening to papers during this year's annual meeting, I was also thinking about the growth in the number of ombuds offices over the past few years. Although it is satisfying to see the expansion of the notion of the ombudsman, it is with some concern that I contemplate the missions that are being defined for these new offices, as well as the changes in the functioning of long established offices.

Many of the new programs have been established in direct response to the outbreaks of racial and ethnic harassment and strains in race relations that have been polluting the atmospheres of our campuses. And although I feel passionately about these problems of race and ethnicity, I have some concerns about the ways in which Ombuds Offices are being used, and ombudsmen are being coopted, in the effort to develop adequate responses to racial tensions.

Let us look, for example, at policies of racial harassment. We are told that these policies are intended to create a campus climate free of harassment, that they are expressions of the school's commitment to multiculturalism and civility. And we are told that this commitment justifies rethinking freedom of speech and academic freedom, not only for malicious and intentionally harmful acts, but also for actions that reflect a lack of sensitivity as to what some people consider offensive. All well and good if we accept the intent of these policies as they are framed by their proponents.

Harassment policies organized around disciplinary and punitive sanctions allow us to locate social ugliness in the deficiencies and pathologies of the other. They allow us to ignore the larger problems associated with moving toward truly multicultural organizations. Such policies also allow us to ignore the fact that we do not live in an



integrated society, we live in a society where there is some limited mixing. Most of our institutions are committed to sustaining their identities, functions and power hierarchies in the face of pressures to change, even while they profess to be on the cutting edge of change.

The institutions' understanding of the problems that confront them are very much a part of the problems themselves. To be sure, there are racists and hooligans out there and they cause more than their share of difficulties. But the problems of race and ethnicity on campuses cannot be attributed only to troublemakers. As ombudspeople, I believe we have the responsibility to resist the temptation to frame issues in the same way as the rest of the campus community. After all, part of the reason we exist is because of the way issues are framed by the rest of the campus community. If they haven't learned to do it right with respect to grade disputes, disciplinary procedures and a whole host of other administrative and academic issues, there is no reason to believe they have got it right when it comes to issues of race.

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