



Ombuds Office UC Davis

Katherine A. Greenwood, JD, PhD, CO-OP



❖ What is an Organizational Ombuds?

- ❖ The terms “Ombudsman” originated in Sweden and is thus still somewhat unfamiliar in the United States
- ❖ An organizational ombuds is a person who acts as a confidential resource and who helps individuals and groups who find themselves in conflict situations
- ❖ In the United States, many ombuds adhere to the International Ombuds Association’s standards of practice and code of ethics
- ❖ Many universities and colleges have ombuds to support campus constituents in utilizing in conflict resolution techniques and approaches



What is conflict?






One definition of Conflict:

❖ CONFLICT is “a difference that prevents agreement.” (Merriam-Webster)






Is conflict always destructive?

- ❖ Conflict isn't necessarily negative. Many times, the process of addressing conflict can produce positive change and even personal growth. Conflict that is handled well can increase levels of communication, understanding, and appreciation between people.
- 



Conflict Management

- ❖ Gaining and utilizing skills that will allow us to effectively address conflict as it arises, thus increasing the chances of preserving relationships, fostering civility, and creatively solving problems.
- 




The Ombuds Office

A Safe & Confidential Resource designed to assist individuals and groups in navigating the course through Conflict

- ❖ A place to sort through and untangle problems
- ❖ A place to generate options to address issues
- ❖ A place to weigh possibilities and options
- ❖ A place to talk to a neutral person
- ❖ A place to find out about possible campus resources and policies




CONFIDENTIAL

- ❖ We do not share the identity of Visitors without express permission
 - ❖ We are NOT an Office of Notice for the university
 - ❖ We do not keep records, other than the annual statistical report
- 



NEUTRAL

- ❖ We do not take sides on a conflict
 - ❖ We advocate for fair process for each Visitor
 - ❖ We listen and generate with impartiality
- 




INFORMAL

- ❖ We do not take part in formal processes, such as grievances or lawsuits
- ❖ We do try to assist parties to resolve conflicts informally
- ❖ We can assist parties with mediation services



INDEPENDENT

- ❖ We report to the highest level of the university, which allows us to fully explore, without external influence, all options that might be available to Visitors
- 



How Can We Help?

- ❖ Listen actively to issues and circumstances
- ❖ Identify possible underlying issues
- ❖ Brainstorm options
- ❖ Explore policies and procedures
- ❖ Recommend other campus resources
- ❖ Reality Test possible avenues of action
- ❖ Provide multiple communication approaches
- ❖ Explain conflict models and theories
- ❖ Coach Visitors



❖ What We Don't Do

- ❖ Serve as an Office of Record
- ❖ Maintain records that identify Visitors
- ❖ Conduct formal investigations
- ❖ Provide psychological counseling
- ❖ Offer legal advice
- ❖ Participate in formal procedures
- ❖ Advocate on behalf of departments or individuals
- ❖ Tell people what to do



Why Might Someone Come to the Ombuds Office?

- ▶ Interpersonal conflicts
- ▶ Confusion about university policies and procedures
- ▶ Questions about reporting channels and consequences
- ▶ Issues of fairness
- ▶ Ethical dilemmas
- ▶ Evaluation issues with grades or performance
- ▶ Concern about work climates
- ▶ Misunderstandings based on diverse perspectives
- ▶ Perceived retaliation or fear of retaliation
- ▶ Harassment or discrimination
- ▶ Contested ownership of intellectual property
- ▶ Bureaucratic or relational impasses



We Offer Trainings & Presentations! Invite Us!

- ❖ Communication Styles
 - ❖ Behavioral and Personality Typologies
 - ❖ Conflict Models
 - ❖ Workgroup Dynamics
 - ❖ Leadership Development
- 



How Can You Find Us?

We are Located on the Davis & UCDHS campuses

- ❖ Davis Campus

- Surge IV , Suite 409 (behind the Bamboo Trees)

- ❖ UCDHS

- UC Davis Medical Center, 2315 Stockton Blvd., Room 1519

- ❖ Call for an appointment: 503.219.6750

- ❖ Website: ombuds.ucdavis.edu



Ombuds Office Staff

- ❖ Director of the Ombuds Office

 - ❖ Katherine Greenwood, JD, PhD, CO-OP

- ❖ Ombuds Office Coordinator

 - ❖ Monique Garcia