

7th ANNUAL SUMMER MEETING OF ACADEMIC OMBUDSPERSONS

Monday, July 13, 2009
Holmes Student Center University Suite
Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois

Tentative Agenda

- 8:00 - 8:30 Gathering for Continental Breakfast
- 8:30 - 9:00 Welcome and Introductions
Ground Rules (Mutual Respect & Confidentiality)
Determine Topics for Plenary Discussion Sessions
- 9:00 - 10:30 Plenary Discussion I
- 10:30 - 10:45 Break (refreshments provided)
- 10:45 - Noon Breakout Sessions (topic descriptions on next page)
A) Stress Management and Burnout Prevention for Ombuds
B) Addressing Cases of Bullying in Academia
C) Climate Change Isn't Always Bad: Tools for Diagnosing and Working with your Organization's Communication Climate
- Noon - 1:15 Lunch (provided in Sky Room, 16th floor) and Break
- 1:15 - 2:30 Breakout Sessions – Case Studies
A) Student Case
B) Staff Case
C) Faculty Case
- 2:30 – 2:45 Break (refreshments provided)
- 2:45 – 4:30 Plenary Discussion II
- 4:30 - 5:00 Evaluation and Wrap-Up
- 5:30 Dinner (optional; not provided)
Participants are invited to meet in one or more groups for dinner, continued discussions, and camaraderie

Title: Stress Management and Burnout Prevention for Ombuds

Presenter: Dave Carver, University of Nebraska Medical Center

College and university ombuds face a unique set of stressors in their day-to-day work. The standards of practice offer some boundaries and guidance, but the wide array and complicated nature of problems that visitors bring to our offices can be daunting. The body of institutional knowledge needed to provide competent ombuds services expands continually. Dealing with individuals who are often upset, angry, or suffering from unspecified mental health issues can be challenging and at times exhausting. The fact that many higher education ombuds work in small offices or solo practices is another source of stress, especially when they have no "in-house" colleagues as consultants. The current economic downturn has led to increased concerns about the sustainability of many ombuds programs. All of these factors support the notion that ombuds need to recognize the potential for unhealthy stress and burnout. This workshop will use brief checklists and small group discussion to help the participants identify their own unique sources and symptoms of distress. Several proven techniques for managing stress preventively will be introduced and demonstrated. Participants will leave the workshop with a "first draft" of a personal stress management plan.

Title: Addressing Cases of Bullying in Academia

Presenter: Sue Theiss, University of Arkansas

Description: Cases of bullying are some of the most complex faced by Ombuds in any organization. These cases become even more challenging to address in an academic environment where policies, tradition, and structure may inadvertently institutionalize bullying behaviors. Participants in this session will learn how to recognize cases of bullying, understand bullying as a dynamic process, and discuss how an Ombud can effectively educate and coach managers and targets towards resolution and change. The presenter will draw from current literature and experience as an Ombud, as well as her thesis research, which included interviews of deans and department chairs from various universities and colleges.

Title: Climate Change Isn't Always Bad: Tools for Diagnosing and Working with Your Organization's Communication Climate

Presenter: Kerry Egdorf, Marquette University

Description: Whether in an individual performance appraisal, in departmental meetings, or in the organization as a whole, communication climate affects and is affected by how we interact within our work place and is a key determinant of its effectiveness. In this workshop, we will explore how to identify the climate of your organization, how climate affects conflict interaction, and how we, as ombuds, can help our visitors and the organization create a more constructive climate. An assessment instrument will be presented and case studies will be utilized.