The Ombuds Office at Washington University exists to hear and attempt to resolve, both confidentially and informally, the University-related concerns and issues of faculty members with appointments on the Danforth Campus.

Our office is located in 13 Sever Hall. The phone number is (314) 935-7673, the email address is linda.ombuds@gmail.com and the website address is facultyombuds.wustl.edu/. Although no specific office hours are designated, an initial phone or e-mail contact will result in a prompt response or a rapid arrangement of a mutually convenient time for a longer meeting or phone conversation. Please note that, given the limits of technology, confidentiality cannot be ensured in email communication. Thus, visitors are advised against sending sensitive information via email.

Contacting Us

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Information Governing Employment at Washington University

Much information is available both in print and on line. The sources and web pages below may be helpful.

Faculty Information Handbook
http://pages.wustl.edu/facultyinformationhandbook

University Policies
http://www.wustl.edu/policies/

This list of University Policies covers a variety of topics including but not limited to:

- Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity
- Code of Conduct
- Conflict of Interest
- Compliance Program
- Consensual Faculty-Student Relationships
- Discriminatory Harassment
- Research Integrity
- Sexual Harassment

Personnel Policies:

- Faculty and Staff in Arts & Sciences
  http://artsci.wustl.edu/office_of_the_dean/administration/personnel
- Policy on Academic Freedom, Responsibility & Tenure
  http://www.wustl.edu/policies/tenure.html
Who We Are

The Ombuds Office is staffed by the Ombuds Professor Linda Nicholson, the Susan E. and William P. Stiritz Professor Women’s Studies and Professor of History.

Our Independence

The Ombuds Office is not associated with any other University office. It is not a part of and does not report to Human Resources or the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and General Counsel or any Dean’s Office. We were appointed to our positions by the University Provost but we are not part of that office.

What Concerns Come to the Office?

Ombuds offices commonly listen to concerns that may be unpleasant personally, that interfere with productive work, or that raise ethical or legal questions. Concerns or issues may involve co-workers or team members, senior or junior colleagues, supervisors or subordinates. Interpersonal differences, communication problems, and conflicts of interest are not uncommon. Perceived discrimination, unfair treatment, and lack of appropriate recognition illustrate concerns that may lead to a visit with the Ombuds.

What the Ombuds Office Can Do

The mission of the Office is to provide a confidential place for faculty members to voice concerns, acquire information, and consider ways to solve problems. The Ombuds listens and may suggest various options, both informal and formal, for responding to or resolving concerns, complaints, or disputes. The Ombuds may offer communications coaching or may help in drafting a letter if that seems appropriate. With your permission, the Ombuds may make informal inquiries on your behalf, collect data or gather the perspectives of others in similar circumstances. The Ombuds may suggest referrals to other University offices or, with your permission, serve in the capacity of mediator. The Ombuds also provides information to University officials, including the Faculty Senate Council, on general trends and patterns of complaints to prevent such problems from escalating or recurring.

What the Ombuds Office Cannot Do

The Ombuds cannot receive notice on behalf of the University or require any person at the University to take action to resolve issues brought to the Ombuds’ attention. The Ombuds Office cannot give you legal advice, nor can it testify on your behalf in legal proceedings. The Ombuds Office cannot take part in formal appeal or grievance procedures; it will not undertake formal investigations; and it cannot become involved in a case if formal proceedings have already begun. The Office will try to find answers to questions and in doing so may undertake informal inquiries to the extent that it has your permission. Because the Ombuds Office maintains a neutral position, it cannot serve as an advocate, although it can provide constructive and supportive advice.