Our office is located at 13 Sever Hall. The phone number is (314) 935-7673, the email address is peggie.ombuds@gmail.com, and the website address is facultyombuds.wustl.edu. Although there are no specific office hours designated, an initial phone or email contact will result in a prompt response to discuss an issue or concern, or to arrange an in-person meeting. Please note that due to the limits of technology, confidentiality cannot be ensured in email communications. Thus, you are advised against sending sensitive information via email.

Medical School faculty members should contact:
Karen O’Malley or Jim Fehr
ombuds.med.wustl.edu
(314) 747-8819
karen.ombuds@gmail.com
jimfehrmd.ombuds@gmail.com

University staff and graduate students should contact:
Jessica Kutch-Miller
(314) 379-8110 (cell phone)
Who We Are

The Ombuds Office is staffed by the Ombuds, Professor Peggie Smith, the Charles Nagel Professor of Employment & Labor Law.

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. The Ombuds is appointed by the University Provost but the Ombuds is not a 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 forum for faculty members to voice concerns, acquire information, and consider ways to solve problems. The Ombuds listens to and helps visitors clarify concerns and develop options, both informal and formal, in order to manage or resolve concerns and conflicts. 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, and gather data or 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 a facilitator 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.