

UNO Ombuds Services

Ombuds Services is a resource for all UNO students, faculty, and staff members who seek informal, confidential, impartial assistance with conflict resolution and problem-solving. An Ombuds (or Ombudsperson) listens to people's concerns, answers questions—or helps find others who can, provides information, makes informal inquiries, helps to identify and analyze options, assists with interpreting policies and procedures, and makes referrals to other resources. When appropriate, we provide consultation, communication and conflict coaching, shuttle diplomacy (acting as a go-between), conflict mediation, and facilitation of two-party or group discussion.

Guiding Principles

The UNO Ombuds are guided by four principles based on the International Ombudsman Association Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics. We review these principles with each visitor (consultee) before discussing an issue.

Confidentiality: The Ombuds maintain confidentiality concerning all matters that are brought to us. We do not save or disclose case notes or records, and we are not agents of “notice” for the university. However, at our discretion, with permission from the visitor, we may carry pertinent information forward. If a visitor discloses a serious problem and is unwilling to take part in addressing it, we try to find a way that is acceptable to the individual, or that does not reveal their identity. Exceptions to our pledge of confidentiality occur only when there is an imminent risk of serious harm and no other reasonable option.

Neutrality: The Ombuds provide neutral and impartial assistance. We avoid situations in which we may have a conflict of interest and maintain no personal stake in the outcome of any dispute we assist with. We do not represent or advocate for individuals on either side of a dispute and we do not impose solutions or discipline. However, we do advocate for fair processes and equitable resolution of conflicts and problems.

Informality: The Ombuds help individuals resolve conflicts and problems informally, staying behind-the-scenes in most cases. Use of our services is voluntary and not a required step in any procedure; there is no penalty for using or not using Ombuds Services. The Ombuds do not receive formal complaints, grievances, or appeals. However, we provide information about formal options and make referrals when agreed to by the visitor. We do not conduct formal investigations or create and retain records or official documents for the university (other than of aggregated data for identifying trends). Ombuds will strongly resist taking part or testifying in any formal proceedings.

Independence: The Ombuds exercise autonomy regarding our responsibilities and act as independently as possible of all other UNO offices. We avoid conflicts of interest, external control, and either the reality or appearance of being compromised. The Ombuds identify trends and emerging types of problems that might influence general academic or work performance, morale, or perceptions about the culture of UNO, and we make needed recommendations for addressing concerns. These trends are reported to the UNO leadership in a manner that protects the identity of individuals.

For more information or to arrange an appointment, please contact one of the University Ombuds.

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