

IF YOU FIND
YOURSELF SAYING...

Now what do I do?

All I get is the run around.

I need help.

I don't know where to turn.

I just want someone to listen.

Something should be done.

No one cares.

This is not fair.

How can I get this resolved?

Who has the authority to change this?

How can I cut through all this red tape?

... call the Office of
the Ombudsperson.

For more information on Georgia State University complaint
resolution procedures, visit the Ombuds Web site at

www.gsu.edu/ombuds

Confidential

~

Informal

~

Independent

~

Impartial

The Office of the Ombudsperson
One Park Place, Suite 215
Atlanta, GA 30303-3085
404/413-2510


Faculty Ombudsperson 404/413-2513
Student and Staff Ombudsperson 404/413-2512
Office Coordinator 404/413-2510

www.gsu.edu/ombuds

To ensure confidentiality, it is recommended
that you call to schedule an appointment before visiting
the Office of the Ombudsperson.

The Office of the
OMBUDSPERSON

*Listening to Concerns
and Searching for Solutions*


Georgia State University | THE OFFICE OF THE
OMBUDSPERSON

09-0178


Georgia State University

THE PURPOSE OF AN OMBUDSPERSON

In any large institution conflicts, disagreements and misunderstandings will arise. These problems can create stress, decrease productivity, and interfere with the growth and success of not just the organization, but the people within it. The Ombuds office is established as a safe place where anyone at any level within the university can discuss their concerns confidentially and get assistance in finding options for resolution.

The Office of the Ombudsperson at Georgia State confidentially helps students, faculty and staff in resolving complaints or concerns. We are responsible to the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs; however, we function as impartial neutrals on campus, with no ties to any administrative offices or academic departments. One of our goals is to help ensure that people within the university community have a voice and are treated fairly. We operate in accordance with International Ombudsman Association (IOA) standards of practice, which require confidentiality, independence and neutrality.

TYPICAL CONCERNS

- Academic disputes
- Interpersonal misunderstandings or conflicts
- Faculty/student communication
- Unfair treatment
- Incivility
- Fear of retaliation
- Policy or procedural issues
- Supervisor/employee relations
- Questions about complaints and appeals
- Conflicts within or between departments

OMBUDS DOs AND DON'Ts

The Office of the Ombudsperson acts as an impartial resource, meaning that there's a lot we can do to help – but some things we can't do – in order to maintain our neutral status.

WE DO:

- Listen** to you
- Coach** individuals through conflict
- Mediate** to help reach agreements
- Clarify** relevant policies and procedures
- Facilitate** group discussion
- Assist** in pursuing solutions
- Teach** conflict resolution
- Refer** you to campus resources
- Recommend** institutional action or change

WE DON'T:

- Advocate for either side of a dispute
- Conduct formal investigations
- Make decisions on complaints
- Participate in formal processes

CONFIDENTIALITY –

The Office of the Ombudsperson makes every effort to maintain confidentiality for its visitors and all parties involved in resolving an issue. We do not report your visit, your identity or any other information you bring to us, even if you yourself tell others that you have consulted with us. The Ombudsperson does not act as a witness or offer information in any formal proceeding, including litigation, as such participation would undermine our commitment to confidentiality. Please be aware, however, that we are obligated to disclose confidential information when there is an imminent threat of individual or institutional harm.

MEDIATION AND INFORMAL PROCESSES

The Office of the Ombudsperson assists faculty, staff and students with informal options for resolving concerns. These include mediation and facilitation where parties to a conflict have the opportunity – on a voluntary basis – to discuss problems and work toward solutions. The Ombudsperson is not a decision maker in this process, and all discussions remain confidential. Other informal options include coaching, shuttle diplomacy, training and education in conflict resolution, effective communication and cultural awareness.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Office of the Ombudsperson strives to help the Georgia State community maintain a cooperative, productive environment. Please contact our office if you would like us to facilitate an educational workshop for your group in the areas of

- Conflict Resolution
- Diplomatic Communications
- Cultural Awareness
- Mediation Skills
- Civility
- Team Building
- Becoming an Effective Facilitator
- True Colors® (*Temperament, Learning and Work Styles*)

Sessions can be scheduled for professional development programs, classroom presentations, planning workshops or departmental retreats. We can also tailor our training to address specific departmental needs.

CONSULTING SERVICES

Our staff act as consultants to chairs, managers and administrators to assist them in responding appropriately to complaints, informally resolving disputes and creating strategies to improve employee and/or student morale.