OGAPS Ombudsperson Service

- Who, What, Why, Where
- When might a student choose an ombudsperson
- Characteristics of the ombudsperson
- Typical concerns
- Role of the graduate advisor

http://ogs.tamu.edu/current-students/ombudsperson/
• The Assistant Provosts of GAPS: Drs. Sue Bloomfield and Kevin Heinz.

• The ombudsperson advocates for the processes of graduate education by being equally open and accessible to all parties.

• Investigate complaints and attempt to resolve them, usually through recommendations or mediation; but may also identify systemic issues.

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• Graduate students may serve in many roles during their academic careers.
• Varying rules/policies apply for the many roles.
• As long as the expectations for behavior are understood and accepted by all parties, there is rarely a problem.
• However, challenges can arise when expectations are not met or rules violated.

http://ogs.tamu.edu/current-students/ombudsperson/
• Ombudsperson for Graduate Education
   The Commons
   Room 001
   979-845-3631
   ombuds@tamu.edu

http://ogs.tamu.edu/current-students/ombudsperson/
When to use an Ombudsperson

• Have a concern or issue that cannot be resolved.
• Choose not to use formal channels.
• Wish to explore “off the record.”
• Unsure with whom to speak or what options are available to address a matter.

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When to use an Ombudsperson

- A university policy, procedure, or regulation has been applied unfairly, or is itself unfair or ambiguous.
- A problem that requires an outside party to negotiate a solution, or facilitate your communication with others.

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Ombudsperson Characteristics

• Accessible to all involved in graduate education to gather information and investigate issues objectively.

• Attempts to find timely and satisfactory solutions to problems informally, without bias, and in the least intrusive manner possible so as to minimize negative consequences.

• Treats all matters with confidentiality, unless otherwise required by law (i.e. subpoena or sexual harassment).

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Ombudsperson Characteristics

• Obligation to bring to administrators’ attention any policies, programs, personnel or institutional decisions which he or she believes violates the rights of students, faculty, or staff.

• Will not participate in any formal grievance processes.

• Governed by a commitment to equity, neutrality, and fairness - will not take sides.

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Data on the Last Year

Ombudsperson Visits 53

Resolved on own or failed to respond 7

Questions regarding admissions, department requirements, OGAPS processing, etc. (not requiring a visit) 27

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Typical Concerns

Major Professor / Committee  44%

Academics (grades, degree requirements, etc.)  30%

University policies (incl. IT, academic integrity, etc.)  15%

Other faculty, staff, colleagues  11%

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Role of Graduate Advisor

- Ombudsperson service is available for the use of all involved with graduate education.
- Don’t forget resources available at International Student Services, Student Counseling Services, Division of Student Affairs.
- Work to maintain lines of communication among all parties.
- Inform students of policies and procedures clearly and often.

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Questions?

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- Other?

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