




The University of Georgia

Equal Opportunity Office

August 31, 2012

TO: President Michael F. Adams
213 Administration Building

FROM: E. Janyce Dawkins, Director 
Equal Opportunity Office
3 Peabody Hall – 1622

RE: 2011-2012 Ombudsperson Report

This reporting marks the fourth annual Ombudsperson Program report since the Program began on October 1, 2008. The program-year has since many changes, while continuing to document consistent themes evidenced since 2008. Two of the original ombudspersons, Dr. Shay Davis Little, student ombudsperson, and Kathryn M. Chetney, staff ombudsperson, are no longer with the Program. Dr. Little has moved to Kent State University as its Dean of Students and Ms. Chetney has resigned her assignment after four years of service. Additionally, Dr. Catherine Jones has been appointed as the faculty ombudsperson. Linda Edge has been temporarily appointed as the student ombudsperson. <http://www.uga.edu/ombudsperson/>

Though the primary roles of the ombuds have been delegated as faculty, staff or student, individuals are advised to seek assistance from any designee regardless of their formal designation. This has worked well. The ombudspersons continue to provide support to the entire University community in furthering fairness within the University community and serve as a source of information and referral. The Program, in its organization and operation, serves as an additional resource to the University's existing policies and procedures for processing and resolving student, faculty and staff complaints and concerns.

TOPICS FOR CONSIDERATION

- EOO and the Ombudspersons continue to seek opportunities to introduce themselves to the University community and provide information about the Program. Ombudspersons also conduct training sessions throughout the UGA upon request and anticipate the development of training opportunities which will be available through the Training and Development Center.

- “Bullying” or incivility was identified as the most frequent type of complaint with all three ombuds positions. This continues to be a theme in the matters handled at UGA and is a theme all over the world. The ombudspersons participated in a Bullying Webinar Series sponsored by the International Ombudsman Association. Based upon the information provided in that series, it is recommended that UGA develop and offer bullying training through Training and Development. It is also recommended that UGA conduct a policy review to ensure that it effectively addresses bullying.
- For the third year, graduate students remain concerned about the subjective and informal nature of placements (such as in the case of Graduate Assistants, Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants) and other decisions affecting their careers that make them very susceptible to arbitrary and potentially discriminatory actions. The graduate students feel they have not options to address their concerns. Consideration should be given to ways to better inform the participants of the standards and processes involved and to develop, at the University level, a more uniform and objective procedure for handling the graduate students’ concerns, including appropriate appeal provisions. Perhaps some coordination with the Graduate School could facilitate this procedure as an organization outside of the respective academic disciplines.
- In the spirit of continual improvement, consideration should be given to different approaches to providing ombudsperson services for the University so as to ensure they continue to be as relevant and responsive as possible to members of the University community. For example, the idea of full-time ombudspersons should be considered as well as ways to incorporate them into the University hierarchy so as it maximize the reality and perception of their being as independent and neutral as possible.

SUMMARY

The number of ombudspersons contacts increased from 83 in 2010-2011 to 137 in 2011-12 and represents a 65% increase. 59% of these contacts involved conduct and workplace issues. The marked increase in contacts and the continued concerns over bullying-type issues demonstrate that individuals are looking for a solution to the continued problem. They are coming to the ombudspersons, as neutral and safe contacts, for the solution.

Given this increase in contacts, balancing full-time appointments with the ombudsperson appointment may become more difficult. Another consideration in making appointments is to avoid potential conflicts between the ombudsperson’s full-time responsibilities and Program responsibilities.

After four years of reporting, the Program has documented consistent areas of concern expressed throughout the UGA community, irrespective of designation or status. While this identification

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highlights continued problems, it also facilitates targeted responses that can make enormous contributions.

The Program continues to serve the entire UGA community in a tangible way. It serves as a beacon of fairness, a source of information, and a place to go when there seems to be no place to go. The Program has been a valuable addition to the UGA family.

cc: Provost Jere Morehead

H. Nelson Hilton

OMBUDSPERSONS REPORT

2011-12

Table 1											
Status, Gender and Ethnicity of Contacts in 2011-12											
Status of Contact	Female	Male	Not Known	TOTAL	African-Am	Asian	Caucasian	Latino	Other	Not Known	TOTAL
Student	24	11	2	37	4	5	9	0	1	18	37
Faculty	14	8	0	22	2	3	11	1	3	2	22
Staff	41	20	0	61	6	3	50	1	0	1	61
Non-UGA	5	12	0	17	1		5	1	0	10	17
TOTAL	84	51	2	137	13	11	75	3	4	31	137

Table 2					
Types of Primary Issues Presented by Campus Constituencies in 2011-12*					
Types of concerns	Students	Faculty	Staff	Non-UGA	TOTAL
Financial Concerns	4	1	0	0	5
Student Academic	9	1	0	0	10
Student Conduct	7	2	0	0	9
Classroom Instruction	1	0	0	0	1
Faculty/Staff Performance	8	0	2	0	10
Employment/Workplace Issues	4	6	25	0	35
Faculty/Staff Conduct	0	9	31	6	46
Misc. Concerns	4	3	3	11	21
TOTAL	37	22	61	17	137

Table 3
Primary Issues Presented in 2011-12*
Financial Concerns
Contracts, emergency loans, encumbrances, fees, financial aid, fines, independent status, insurance, leases, paycheck, refunds, tuition, tuition waiver, graduate assistantships, other.
Academic
Academic probation/dismissal, add/drop, admission, certification, clinical/student teaching course, closed classed, comprehensive exams, credit transfer, incompletes, degree/graduation requirements, medical withdrawals, other.
Student Conduct
Academic misconduct, alcohol, classroom disruption, due process, harassment, hazing, intimidation, judicial system, residence hall misconduct, roommate disputes, sanctions, sexual harassment, theft, other.
Classroom Instruction
Attendance, course syllabus, discriminatory grading, faculty absences, final exams, grade appeals, grade change, grading standards, make-up work, personality conflicts, quality of instruction, teacher fluency, other.
Faculty/Staff Performance
Inaccurate advising, inattentiveness, incompetence, retention of test/papers, availability, tardiness, attendance, completion of tasks.

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2011-12**

Employment/Workplace Issues

Training, supervision, performance evaluation, pay, benefits, retirement, promotion/tenure, job classification/duties, work schedule/setting, hiring, discharge, unfit for duty, interpersonal conflict, disability issues (ADA/FMLA), conflict of interest, nepotism

Faculty/Staff Conduct

Deceitfulness, derogatory comments, discrimination, favoritism, harassment, intimidation, retaliation, rudeness, sexual harassment, theft, intoxication/under influence, insubordination, job abandonment, workplace violence, arrest/conviction, garnishment, other.

Miscellaneous

Policy Issues and Development, privacy issues, disability accommodations, parking, on-campus housing, legal issues, health concerns, ethical considerations, off-campus housing, immigration issues, off-campus problems, safety issues, career advising, not otherwise categorized (NOC).

***These data only represent allegations that were brought to the Ombudspersons and should not be interpreted as confirmed incidents.**

Table 4

Ombudspersons Presentations/Meetings 9-1-11 to 8-31-12

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Organization/Group</u>
10/7/2011	Peer Tutoring Training	Division of Academic Enhancement
10/27/2011	Conflict Resolution Symposium	Georgia State University
10/28-29/2011	Southeast Assoc. of Facilitators Conference	Kennesaw State University
11/3/2011	Webinar on Sexual Misconduct	Risk Management Model
11/4/2011	EEOC Presentation on FMLA/ADA & Retaliation	Georgia College and University Professional Association
11/17/2011	Bullying Webinar Series	International Ombudsman Association
12/14/2011	Bullying Webinar Series	International Ombudsman Association
1/26/2012	Dr. Julie Coffield, Graduate School	Ombuds Meeting to Review Graduate School Policies
2/9/2012	Bullying Webinar Series	International Ombudsman Association
2/10/2012	Peer Tutoring Training	Division of Academic Enhancement
3/14/2012	Bullying Webinar Series	International Ombudsman Association
3/21/2012	UGA Ombudsperson Lunch	EEO
3/28/2012	Conduct Matters Fair	Office of Student Conduct, Tate Center Plaza
4/13-15/2012	IOA Training, Houston Texas (Catherin Jones)	International Ombudsman Association
5/4/2011	Bullying Training	Meeting with T & D on developing Bully Training Course