

## **Introduction**

The mandate of the Ombuds Office is to ensure students are treated fairly in every aspect of their university life. The office is a safe and confidential place where students can get assistance and guidance on existing resources and processes, and help in resolving conflicts related to fairness issues.

## **What Does the Office Do?**

The office is an independent, impartial and confidential resource centre for students to find information and receive guidance, consultation and advice about their concerns and issues relating to fair processes, practices and outcomes. As an advocate for fairness, the office works informally to facilitate resolutions of problems and conflict and investigates student complaints of unfairness that may lead to recommendations for change. The office also works proactively in providing education and collaborating with all community members on matters related to fairness for students and in promoting systemic improvements.

## **What the Office Cannot Do**

The Ombuds Office does not decide who is right or wrong and does not take sides. It is not an appeal body where students can seek to have a decision made through proper channels overturned or changed, and does not have the authority to make orders or require any action to be taken. The office cannot provide legal advice, counselling services nor can it be an advocate for an individual student or in a particular case.

## **Types of Services Available**

If a student needs help, the office can:

- Provide general resource information and make appropriate referrals
- Identify and explain relevant university processes and policies
- Work with students to plan strategies and explore options on how best to proceed
- Empower students to deal directly and effectively with their concerns
- Facilitate discussions and use informal channels to seek resolution
- Investigate student complaints of unfairness where all other avenues have been exhausted

The office can also provide advice, support and training to decision makers to establish and maintain best practices and fair procedures.