

A scenic landscape photograph of a snow-capped mountain range. The mountains are rugged and covered in patches of snow and dark rock. In the foreground, a person wearing a yellow jacket and blue jeans stands on a large, flat, frozen lake. The sky is a clear, pale blue. The overall scene is serene and majestic.

Transition to Student Internships

ENOHE 2015 Innsbruck
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University of Alberta
CANADA

The Flexible Ombudsman

- *“the issue of the structure, organization and jurisdiction of the ombudsman institution must be approached with a great deal of flexibility and improvisation”*
- *“the critical indicator of performance is cheap, fast, easily accessible,... and above all free of bureaucratic pathologies”. (Victor Ayeni, IOI Occasional Paper, 1985, p.20)*

Goal of the Session

- To provide an overview of how ombuds offices evolve in a unique way at each Canadian institution
- To demonstrate Ombuds value to the University community
- To examine challenges of the 18 year hybrid model
- To show the planning of the internship and how it is structured to provide students better training and mentorship
- To demonstrate the necessity of research and input from other intern programs
- To draw on colleagues' expertise in forecasting challenges with the new model
- To gather information on important aspects to monitor the first year.

Evolution of Ombudsing at the U of A – Unconventional; idiosyncratic; bizarre!

- 1971 - 1975 1st ombuds: retired professor; position closes after ombuds enters faculty tenure dispute (Assoc territory)
- 1976 “Grass Roots” Casual labour Professor Ombudsman
- 1977 Student Advisor (SA) of Grievances (Dean of Students)
- 1983 Students’ Union (SU) Student OmbudService
- 1997 Merge of SA & SU SOS – 3 year MOA (3 ombuds)
- 2000 MOA lapses – Growth of University ombuds positions; mentoring role emphasized with student ombudspersons
- 2014 – 3 FT University & 2 PT SU; internship model transition
- 2015 – May 1st; University Office of the Student Ombuds; Ombuds Internship begins

Gateway Student Newspaper 1976

contact us.

Apply to Kevin Gillese, editor, in the Gateway offices (SUB 282) for further information. Or contact Dirk Schaeffer (439-5485).

The Board of Governors has decided that this University does not need an ombudsman.

There are people who argue that there is very little this University needs more than an ombudsman, but even they might agree that what we don't need (again) is the Board of Governors' ombudsman. After all, how much sense does it make to have an ombudsman, whose only job is to defend the underdog, getting paid

Self-Appointed “Grass Roots” Ombuds

- Feels the provincial and former University ombuds only played a watchdog role, and that we need:
- “an ombudsman who does not have to rely on the top dog’s generosity for his livelihood”
- “so what do we need for a powerless ombudsman? We need someone who has time, patience, honesty, integrity, and a passion for justice. That hopefully is me.”
- “And we need someone with the tools of publicity at his disposal. That’s the Gateway and its editor, Kevin Gillese”
- “And we need sources of information. That’s you.”
(Grievances and complaints)

<http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/newspapers/GAT/1976/11/02/3/Ar00300.html> Dirk Schaeffer, PT Psychology University Prof, Ombudsman 1976

Hybrid Ombuds 1997-2015

- Director OmbudService
- Graduate Ombudsperson
- Undergraduate Ombudsperson
- University Professional Positions
- 2 Students' Union Ombudspersons (1 yr)
- Director trains and mentors SU ombuds but students report to Students' Union Manager

Strengths

- One office where there would be more consistency in service and expertise
- Strict mentoring helps students to build important communication and ombuds skills
- Important to have the student perspective
- Diversity in age helps for serving diverse population
- Student leadership is promoted at universities so they can be leaders in society

Challenges

- No direct reporting model
- Maverick styles can lead to disunity
- Students take time to find balance in impartiality
- SU political posturing for confidential information undermines confidence in the office
- Perception of close ties to Dean of Students for University employees
- Perception that being a student peer draws students' trust more than university employee
- Client who wants advocacy may use students and manipulate them
- University was developing more specialized roles of expertise but student ombudsmen remained unspecialized
- Ensuring student ombudspersons referred cases over that became more complicated

The Idea of an Internship Program

- 2010 - University ombudspersons introduced the idea of internships about 5 years ago
- 2012 – ACCUO Standards of Practice: professional demands on quality and consistency of service
- 2013 - 2015 – Explored the Internship Model with the Students' Union over 3 year period
- 2014 – review of hybrid model found flaws that compromised the functioning of the service: these were concerns that had been raised before
- 2015 – University's notice given to start an ombuds internship program

Benefits of Internship

- Professional approach to teaching and mentoring
- Senior student
- Full-time internship tied to career internship model
- Special project while on internship
- Wage-based (can rely on commitment)
- University credits for internship
- Training and Mentorship in a niche area of work
- Potential for future work in ombuds and related areas such as mediation and restorative justice
- OTHER?

Challenges of Internship

- Time commitment for training and monitoring may increase
- Mentoring background varies – need to ensure consistency during shadowing and mentoring (3 ombuds staff)
- Steep level of learning needs to be carefully executed to encourage, not frustrate
- Project Mentorship allows the intern to specialize in a research area of ombudsing (another time commitment for ombuds trainer)
- Ensuring Best Practices (follow SOPs)
- OTHER?

Collaborative Aspects

- Internships attract students of exceptional quality in all faculties for Undergraduate Students; they must initially qualify for an internship in their faculty
- Potential for expansion to Graduate Students
- Currently 2 undergraduate ombuds interns
- Interns are offered in 4 month, 8 month and 12 month terms. We chose 12 months because of level of training and time to demonstrate expertise
- The internships in our office are full-time, wage-based and receive university credits. Student enrol in an internship-credit course

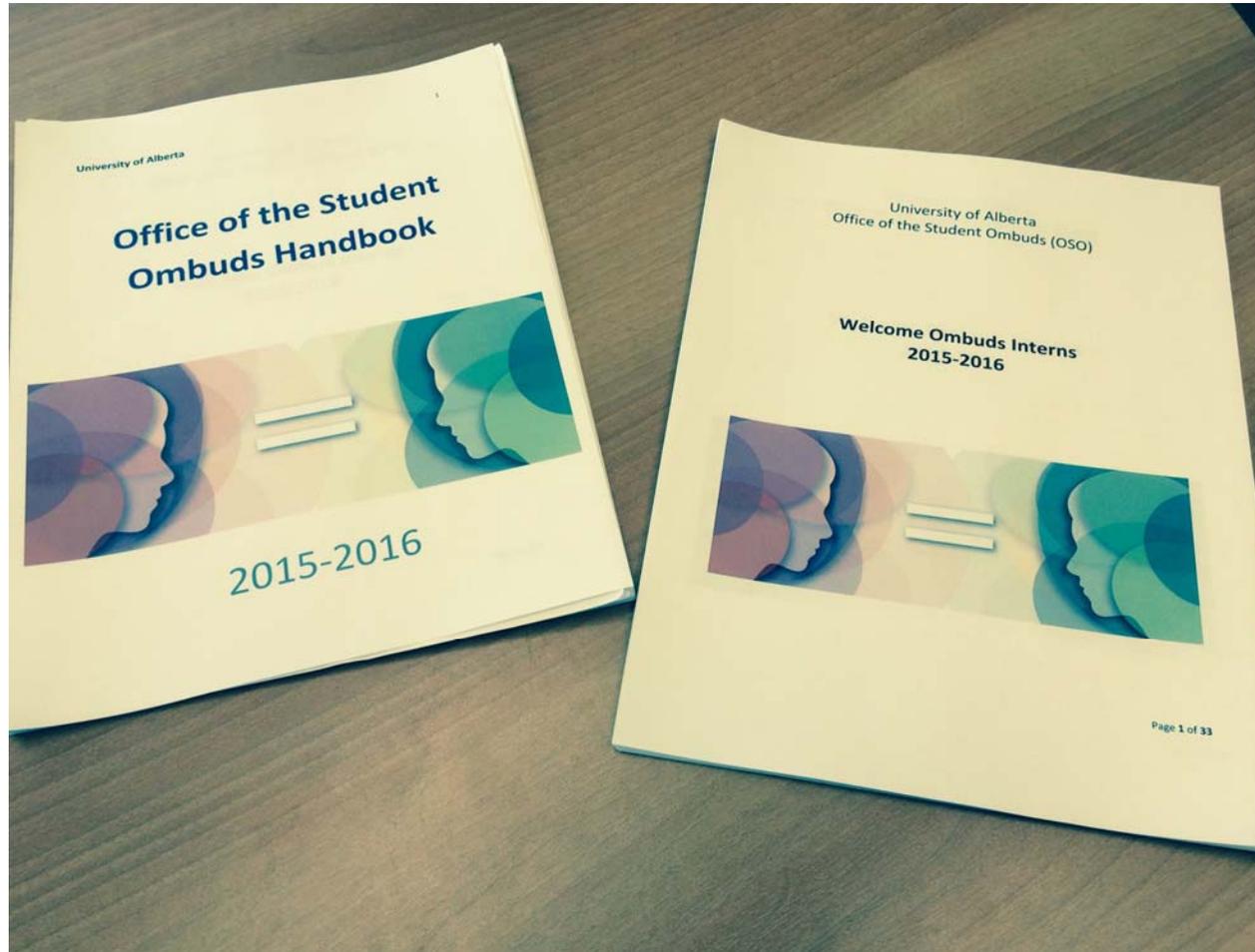
Collaboration with Career Services

- Current ombuds interns register in an internship course for credits
- Planning and developing skills scheduled in the course developed through career centre (set learning objectives)
- Development stages of ombudsing and feedback of ombuds interns to work out problems with 1st yr pilot
- University Ombuds learn new skills to improve supervision from the career services
- Additional resources at hand for skills in writing, presenting, etc.
- Respect at University when using an established career program

Ombuds Intern Benefits

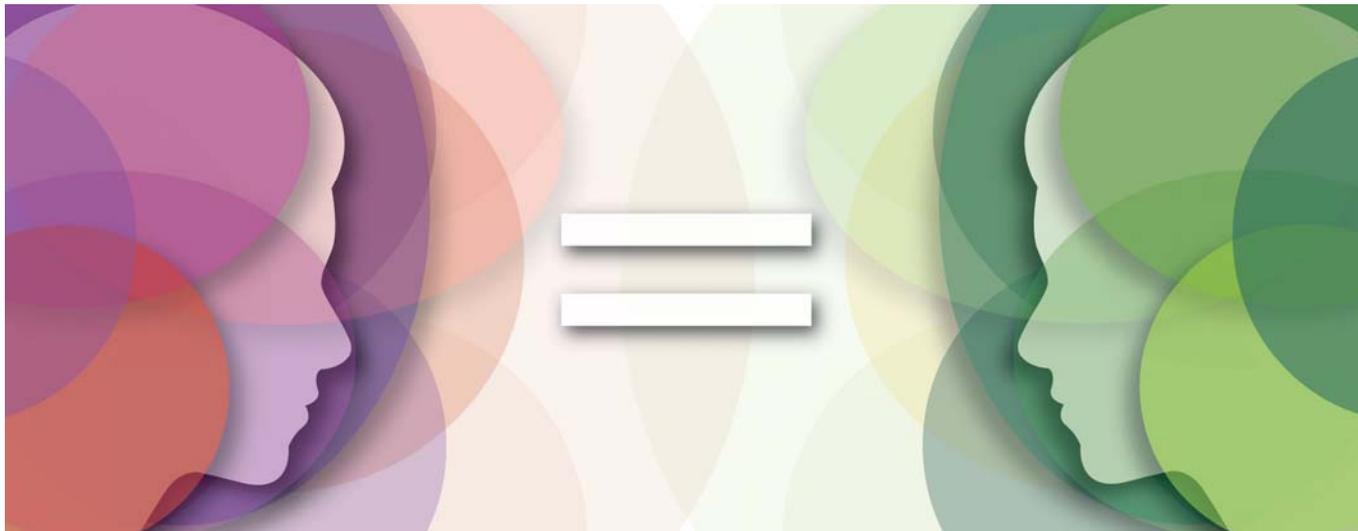
- No political posturing over their positions
- Separate office helps in monitoring to ensure that their training is of high calibre
- Intern learns ombuds skills incrementally with simpler forms of casework
- Intern can focus on a project to improve ombuds skills and/or learn about the ombuds profession
- Ombuds interns will provide critical feedback to improve the program
- Office of the Ombuds Handbook provides office policy and protocol (52 pages)
- Ombuds Intern training manual outlines training and tutorials (35 pages)

And here we are May 1st, 2015



University of Alberta
Office of the Student Ombuds (OSO)

**Welcome Ombuds Interns
2015-2016**



OMBUDS INTERN TRAINING MANUAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Training Schedule Tutorials

Documents, Articles and Websites

Weekly Schedule

First Month Weekly Details

Year Highlights

Office Information

Scheduling, Recordkeeping and Statistics

Staff Meetings and Professional Development

Being an Ombuds Intern

Detailed Meeting Checklist

Guided Practice Time: Case Scenarios

Solo Practice Time: Case Scenarios

Shadowing Reflection Questions

Appendix A. Resources from UCR Extern Ombuds Material

Appendix B. Client Checklist Summary

Appendix C. Office of the Student Ombuds Training Assessment

Appendix D. The Fairness Triangle

Appendix E. Understanding Fairness

Appendix E. Administrative Fairness Checklist

TRAINING SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

Introduction to Being an Ombudsperson – The Role and the Responsibilities

TUTORIALS will be delegated among Ombuds Staff – ½ hr to 2 hr

ACCUO Standards of Practice

Mentoring and Shadowing

Staff Meetings

Ethics and Professionalism

Confidentiality

Impartiality

Phone Call and Email etiquette

Communications and Social Media Restrictions Tutorial

Empathetic Listening Skills

Dealing with Difficult Students

Dealing with Suicidal Students (HIAR)

Fairness Triangle

Administrative Fairness Checklist

Establishing Boundaries

Statistics and Recordkeeping

University Governance

Conflict Resolution (Level 1)

Faculty Appeals - RTW and Grades

What can and cannot be appealed

Meeting Checklist

Note-taking and File Maintenance

FOIP and Records

Preparing Appeal Letters

Preparing Students for Appeal Hearings

Preparing Witnesses for Appeal Hearings

Conflict Resolution Tutorial (Level 2)

General Faculties Appeals Tutorial

Restorative Justice Process in Residence Disputes

Acknowledgements

- Andrew Larratt-Smith and Emma Williams, former ombuds interns and CCCUO colleagues, for resources and discussions on Internships
- Pictures are at Pyramid Lake and Mountain, Jasper National Park, Canada, Skater Mercedes Sharpe Zayas, Resident Deer and Elk

Ombudsing – A State of Mind Flexible for Climate Change



Ombuds Potential is Everchanging

