



# **ANNUAL REPORT ACADEMIC YEAR 2011-2012**



THE UNIVERSITY  
*of*  
**WISCONSIN**  
MADISON

# **Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff**

## **Annual Report for Academic Year 2011-2012**

### **THE VISITORS**

#### **Demographic Characteristics**

- 77 total number of Visitors
- 51% academic staff; 24% faculty (17 tenured, 1 non-tenured); 16% classified staff; 8% student employees, 1% non-university community members
- 16% targeted minority status
- 72 % female
- 68% employed at UW-Madison for more than 5 years

#### **Their General Concerns**

- 163 total number of issues presented
- 74% reported concern with evaluative and supervisory relationships
- 39% reported conflicts with peers or colleagues
- 30% reported concerns about career progression
- 17% reported concerns with values, ethics, standards
- 14% reported concerns with legal, regulatory, or financial issues
- 13% reported concerns with employee compensation and benefits
- 13% reported concerns with safety, health, or physical environment
- 12% reported problems with administrative and organizational matters or leadership

#### **Specific Examples of Concerns**

- position security or ambiguity
- potential termination or non-renewal
- performance appraisal and supervisory feedback
- renegotiating roles and relationships following promotion of a peer to a supervisory position
- co-worker or supervisory conflict involving incivility, disrespect, or bullying
- accuracy and timeliness of communication about benefits
- lack of clarity and regularity in procedures for performance reviews
- lack of support for persons with chronic illnesses

## **Ombuds' Actions with Visitors**

- 79% act as sounding board
- 60% assistance with clarifying issues
- 56% generation of alternative approaches to solve identified problems
- 3% with the agreement of the Visitor, we contacted the visitor's supervisor for information
- 9% sought information or assistance for our Visitor from other people within the University
- 5% arranged meetings among the visitor and University staff in a position to help
- 7% acted as intermediaries in informal mediation. We sometimes accompanied the Visitor to these arranged meetings.

## **THE OMBUDS**

### **Outreach Activities**

- consultations with individuals directly related to specific visitors
- hosted Director of Ombuds services for South Africa and her associates
- visits with campus leaders and units to prompt referral of Visitors: Letters and Science department chairs and directors; Academic Staff Executive Committee; Academic Staff Assembly; University Committee; Faculty Senate; Office of Admissions staff; Office of the Registrar staff; General Library System, Housing supervisory staff; Union representatives. We have been invited to participate in all Equity Workshops for graduate assistants for 2012-13
- participation at campus events to publicize Ombuds' services, e.g., Diversity Forum, Benefits Fair, Academic Staff Assembly, New Chairs and Director's Orientation; OVPDC Retreat; Safety conference; Academic Staff Leadership Institute; OVPDC leadership series
- liaison to Human Resources Working Group, Bascom working group, OVPDC, Medical and Pharmacy Schools ombuds
- Planned and hosted 10<sup>th</sup> Summer Meeting of Academic Ombuds. (See page 5 for summary)

### **Observed Problematic Trends On Campus**

- lowering of morale because of budget restraints and reorganization
- heightened insecurity regarding positions
- performance evaluation policies and procedures for academic staff
- civility among faculty, academic and classified staff
- impacts of ineffective human resource management by inexperienced or untrained supervisors on vulnerable staff

- timely communication to staff being affected by supervisory, location, and procedural changes in the unit, e.g., crisis management, fiscal concerns.

### **Future Directions For Ombuds Office**

- continue to address UW workplace climate problems
- accommodate ombuds' practice to HR re-design
- reach out to Classified Staff and underserved communities of workers, e.g., language and cultural minorities, late-shift workers
- continue to build a constituency of campus partners to support Ombuds' services
- identify and disseminate "Best Practices" for achieving workplace equity and improving workplace climate
- optimize opportunities for professional development of Ombuds staff
- provide leadership to Midwest community of academic ombuds

### **Accountability of Ombuds Office**

The confidential nature of the service provided by Ombuds precludes an outcome assessment by visitors or third parties. Thus, we gauge our effectiveness through such indices as the timeliness of making initial contacts with Visitors, the number and range of interventions provided to visitors, and unsolicited feedback from Visitors and other Ombuds and HR providers. Quality assurance is maintained through weekly staffing meetings in which all on-going cases are discussed in detail. In addition to visitor-centered activities, impact on the campus community can be observed in our modeling of effective communication and problem-solving strategies with others in the Visitors' work environments. Finally, we attempt to generalize what we learn in working with specific individuals to the larger campus community.

**10<sup>th</sup> Annual Summer Meeting of Academic Ombudspersons  
July 22-23, 2012**

**History:** At the 9<sup>th</sup> annual summer meeting of academic ombudspersons Tim Griffin of Northern Illinois University at DeKalb, IL announced that he would be retiring and thus would not be continuing the series of summer meetings and orientation for new ombuds that he had hosted for several years. With enthusiasm for continuing these traditions a committee, chaired by Rosa Garner of UW-Madison and Kerry Egdorf of Marquette University, was formed to determine the fate of the summer meetings. That committee decided that UW-Madison would be a suitable venue for the 10<sup>th</sup> summer meeting. Rosa and Kerry then chaired a planning committee that also included the four ombuds from the Madison campus (Sandra Guthrie, Chris Kleinhenz, Linda Newman, and Pat Wolleat).

**Date and Location:** July 22-23, 2012 at the UW-Madison Pyle Center and Lowell Center.

<b>Funding</b>	Registration fee, meals, and breaks Sunday evening reception Supplies, copying, A-V equipment, presenter expenses Student hourly	Participants' registration fee OVPDC—Vice Provost Williams Office of Provost DeLuca  SMPH Dean Robert Golden
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**Program**

**Day 1: July 22, 2012**

The **New Ombudsperson Workshop** was a self-contained, daylong program led by veteran presenter Tim Griffin of Northern Illinois University. Assisting were Chris Kleinhenz and Sandy Guthrie, UW-Madison Ombuds. 20 ombuds from 10 states plus Guam and Mexico were registered for the workshop. The program topics included history of the profession, foundations of practice, professional ethics and standards of practice, relationships with other campus entities, and legal issues, as well as operational issues such as record-keeping and evaluation.

**Pre-meeting Roundtable 3:00-5:00**

Jan Morse of the University of Minnesota led the opening conversation “Building Capacity for Academic Civility”. In addition to registrants, three staff of the OVPDC were invited to participate.

**Opening Reception 5:00-7:00**

The opening reception was open to registrants and guests. It included hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar.

**Day 2: July 23, 2012**  
**7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

**General Meeting:** 40 registrants from 16 different states and 3 countries participated in the general meeting. This was a twofold increase in attendance over the prior year. The agenda consisted of two plenary sessions with topics generated from an online survey and pre-meeting telephone calls to registrants. Three experienced ombuds facilitated the sessions. There were two concurrent sessions—one, a follow-up of the academic civility conversation and, two, a session on change management. A case study session focused on recovery from conflict. Time was also built into the day for planning of future meetings. Craig Mousin of DePaul University will host the 2013 meeting.

**Evaluation:** Attendance was doubled from prior years. The pre-meeting contacts—survey and telephone interviews—were successful in tailoring plenary sessions to participants' needs. Evaluations were very positive regarding both the venue and the program.