OFFICE OF THE OMBUD
celebrating 50 - since 1969 -
Contents

> Note from the Ombud ..... p.4
> History of UW Ombuds .. p.5
> Our Team ......................... p.7
> What is an Ombud? ........... p.9
> 2018-19 ............................ p.11
> Student Scenario ............. p.14
> Employee Scenario .......... p.15
> Faculty Scenario ............. p.18
> A Look Back ...................... p.19
The Office of the Ombud was created at the University of Washington in 1969 by President Odegaard, who stated at the time:

“This isn’t the matter of having a quick fix... this is just one step, to add to the social machinery needed to deal with all of the conflicts that can emerge within the university community.”

While I imagine President Odegaard would be amazed by the changes at the University over the last half century, particularly the development of Tacoma, Bothell and our medical facilities, the Ombud Office continues to serve a role that he would likely recognize. Fifty years after its formation, the Office of the Ombud remains a place for students, faculty, and employees to go to resolve challenges and find positive solutions — so that they can return their attention to their passions.

Like the University, our office has grown — over the past six years, we have seen a 98% increase in case numbers. In the past year, our office met with 2,000+ people and worked on 631 official cases — in each interaction, helping members of the University community find their paths forward.

I am extremely proud to serve as the eighth Ombud here at the University of Washington. While we don’t know what our institution will look like fifty years from now, I am confident that we’ll continue to have amazing people, unique challenges, and an active Ombud Office to help us navigate it all.

Sincerely,

Chuck Sloane
- HISTORY OF UW OMBUDS -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ombudsman</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>George Aagaard</td>
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<td>1970</td>
<td>J. Benton Gillingham</td>
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<td>1978</td>
<td>Sumner Marcus</td>
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<td>1980</td>
<td>Marion Marts</td>
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Morton Kroll 1984
Lois Price Spratlen 1988
Susan Neff 2009
Chuck Sloane 2013
Prisca Youn  
Asst. to the Ombud

Guiding Quote:
“To get the full value of joy you must have someone to divide it with.”

Amidst the bubbling ideas, projects to be accomplished, goals to be met, I’m of the mind that what brings the most value to our experiences & accomplishments is the relationships that remain.

At the University and beyond, I value the diverse encounters & relationships built, and hope I bring this sense of connection in all that I do.

Chuck Sloane  
University Ombud

Guiding Quote:
“To whom much is given, much is expected.”

I have benefited from privilege in many ways throughout my life and was lifted up by a community that supported me in becoming the first person in my family to go to college. Without their sacrifices my career wouldn’t have been possible.

In my work here at the University, and elsewhere in my life, I try to mindful of what I’ve received and look for ways that I can help lift up others.
As we established this Annual Report over the summer, our longtime Associate Ombud, **Emma Phan**, left the university to pursue a wonderful opportunity at the City of Seattle.

Emma has been instrumental to the growth of the Ombud Office over the past 6 years and, while she’ll be missed, I am so grateful for her contributions across the University.

- Chuck
“So, what is an Ombud?”

When people ask this question, we often provide an explanation based in history. The word “ombudsman” is Swedish (where the concept originated in the early 1800’s) and literally means the “people’s advocate.” In 1969, the University of Washington created our office to help support students, faculty, and employees.

While this history is interesting, it doesn’t always get to the real questions, which are often:

*What do you actually do?*

*How can you help me as a member of the University community?*

In short, the UW Ombud Office meets with more than 2,000 people or small groups each year to find solutions to a wide array of challenges. We serve as an experienced ‘thought-partner’ and assist people in finding a path forward that makes sense for them, regardless of what they are facing.

There are no situations that are too small, or too big, for us, and we relish the opportunity to really understand our clients and help them achieve their own vision of success here at the UW.
To Faculty, Staff, and Students of the University of Washington

I wish to inform you that I plan to appoint a person who shall be known as the Ombudsman for the University, and that I am asking a committee of faculty, students, and administration to advise with me on this appointment. The committee members, consisting of two students, two faculty and two administrators are:

Dr. Solomon Katz, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Chairman
Mr. Thom Gunn, President, ASUW
Mr. John W. Harding, Director, Physical Plant
Professor Kenneth M. McCaffree, Vice Chairman University Senate
Professor Robert O. Payne, Chairman, Faculty Council on Faculty Affairs
Mr. Stephen White, President, Graduate and Professional Student Senate

The function of the Ombudsman is described as follows: The Ombudsman is established to assist in the protection of the rights and interests of individual members of the student body, the faculty, and the staff against arbitrary or capricious action or lack of appropriate action by University agencies; the student body, the faculty, or the staff. In pursuance of this purpose he shall (1) act as a source of information and assistance available to all members of the University community concerning rules, regulations, and procedures of the University both academic and non-academic; (2) receive complaints from students and members of the faculty and staff with regard to alleged inequities; (3) bring the complaint to the attention of the appropriate University agency, if it has not already been heard by the agency; (4) investigate complaints which have already been heard when the individual concerned still feels aggrieved and seek to resolve the difficulty between the aggrieved individual and the University agency involved; (5) recommend to the President redress when the Ombudsman believes that an individual has been improperly treated and when the Ombudsman has been unable to resolve the matter himself; (6) recommend to the President and to appropriate authorities such changes in rules, regulations, and procedures as he deems necessary or desirable.

The appointment of an Ombudsman will not displace the existing system of University governance or its established internal appeal procedures. It may, however, improve communications about the University’s methods of operation on different subjects and enable members of the University community to present an inquiry or complaint more effectively or more expeditiously. And it may reveal gaps or errors of commission or omission which need attention and remedy.

The appointment of an Ombudsman in a university setting is still comparatively rare and certainly largely untried. Whether an analogy of the government Ombudsman in Scandinavia as applied to an American university will prove productive and useful in this very different setting remains to be seen. At this point in time we need not prejudge the case beyond attempting the experiment to see how it works.

If you have any suggestion as to a possible Ombudsman, please address them by letter to the chairman of the committee, Dr. Solomon Katz, 308 Administration Building.

Sincerely yours,

Charles E. Odegaard
President

CEO:ka
This data reflects the work of the Ombud Office from July 2018 - June 2019.

631 TOTAL CASES

5,250 + miles traveled between campuses by Ombuds

HOW WE ASSIST

Our work is, at times, visible (mediation), somewhat behind the scenes (shuttle diplomacy), or fully confidential and focused on the individual (1-1 client work) depending on our client’s needs.

Facilitation, Mediation, Conciliation

67 CASES

1-1 Client Work

523 CASES

Shuttle Diplomacy

41 CASES
**Location**

- Seattle: 6% of 631 cases
- Tacoma: 6% of 631 cases
- Bothell: 6% of 631 cases
- Harborview: 6% of 631 cases
- UWMC: 80% of 631 cases

**Client Type**

- Faculty: 12% of 631 cases
- Staff: 40% of 631 cases
- Grad Students/Post-Docs/Fellows: 6% of 631 cases
- Undergraduates: 15% of 631 cases
- Other: 27% of 631 cases

**Total Cases**: 631
Carrie met with the Ombud after being accused of plagiarism by her professor. She was very worried as her professor had stressed the severity of the potential consequences of academic misconduct. Carrie was scheduled to meet with the professor again later in the week to discuss the situation.

During our meeting, Carrie shared that she hadn’t cheated, but that her roommates, who were also in the course, had looked at her work without her knowledge and copied her answers. However, the professor seemingly hadn’t questioned their work and, for the past day, her roommates had been avoiding the house and were not responding to Carrie’s texts. She was extremely angry with them, but also didn’t want to get her roommates in trouble and lose these friendships.

The Ombud and Carrie talked about her goals for the upcoming meeting with her professor and, more broadly, for her academic career. With those goals in mind, Carrie developed a plan to reach out to her roommates and offer them a chance to set the record straight with the faculty. If they were unwilling to do so, Carrie recognized that this reflected poorly on their friendships and she would plan to share the truth of the matter with her professor. Carrie later informed the Ombud that her friends ultimately stepped up and communicated with the professor, which absolved her of the plagiarism charge.
The Ombud Office was contacted by a few UW employees who were having real difficulty getting to work and home in a safe manner. The staff had a variety of disability and mobility challenges and as a result, relied on a combination of buses and shuttles. However, the parking area they regularly used felt unsafe and they weren’t sure how to best raise their concerns to University officials.

The Ombud met with the employees and gathered their concerns as well as their ideas for potential improvements. While they were not interested in meeting directly with University officials associated with the parking area, the staff felt comfortable with the Ombud relaying their concerns and, to the extent possible, helping to find solutions.

Using the information provided, the Ombud convened a meeting with parking and disability resources from across the University. The meeting occurred on-site at the parking area, which allowed for a productive discussion of the concerns and potential systemic solutions. Following this meeting, the University officials worked expediently to help re-direct traffic in a manner that addressed the employees’ safety concerns and the parking area was dramatically improved for all users within a matter of weeks.

Scenarios have been adapted from a variety of cases to protect client identities.
administrative role research funding work:life colleagues sexism clinical duties political hostile family leave authorship emeritus mentor appointment P.I. awkward merit review insulted funding impasse pedagogy travel dialogue conciliation publications grading retirement proud miscommunication investigation transition lonely irritated chair retention apology acknowledgments
Rich, a faculty member, was facing an emerging challenge with a graduate student in his research lab. The graduate student (Serena) had made considerable progress over the past three years; but, she had recently shared with another faculty member that Rich made her so anxious she was considering taking medical leave from her graduate program. Rich didn’t know how to approach the matter as he did not want to make the situation worse for Serena, but also sincerely wanted to provide support.

According to Rich’s colleague, Serena had said her communications with Rich created a great deal of uncertainty. While she said Rich was usually easygoing, he would sometimes become very frustrated and “blow-up” about seemingly small details. She was now actively avoiding the lab and rescheduling their 1:1 meetings because their interactions had become so anxiety-provoking for her.

In the Ombud session, Rich was encouraged to not only consider his relationship with Serena, but his work with other graduate students over the past decade. In a moment of clarity, Rich acknowledged feeling great anxiety about his own research and funding; but, in his attempts to shield his students from this stress, he wasn’t being honest with them. At times, he was unable to hide this underlying stress and realized these cracks or “blow-ups” likely came across as anger.

Working with the Ombud over two or more meetings, Rich developed a plan to improve as a mentor. By working with a colleague who excels in mentorship, reading about better communication methods, and soliciting feedback from some of his prior graduate students, Rich began to make changes as a mentor and research advisor. Over time, he was able to build a more open and supportive relationship with Serena, who remained with his lab and successfully completed her graduate studies.

*Scenarios have been adapted from a variety of cases to protect client identities.*
The office of Ombudsman was created last February and Dr. George N. Aagaard, professor of medicine and former dean of the School of Medicine, was chosen to fill the position for the first year.

The function of the Ombudsman is to assist in the protection of the rights and interests of individual members of the student body, faculty and staff against arbitrary or capricious action or lack of appropriate action by University agencies.

In fulfilling his responsibilities, Dr. Aagaard receives complaints with regard to alleged inequities, brings the complaint to the attention of the appropriate University agency for resolution and recommends to President Odgaard redress when he considers that an individual has been improperly treated and the matter has not been satisfactorily resolved.

Dr. Aagaard also receives the appropriate University agency such changes in rules, regulations and procedures as he deems necessary or desirable.

The appointment was made by President Odgaard upon the recommendation of a special Ombudsman committee, composed of faculty, staff and students. More than 80 persons were nominated by the University community.

The Ombudsman Office Open to You

“Tall it to your Ombudsman.”

From: Student

Dear George,

This cartoon from the May 24 Saturday Review is passed along for your enjoyment.

Cordially,

Howard A. Cross

May 26, 1969

A LOOK BACK

Dr. Aagaard also has looked into matters relating to student residence, parking permits and parking violations.

“Each problem must be handled individually. Some people are referred to the appropriate person who can handle the situation, or we make inquiries into the problem. We might try to modify a decision or explain why we agree with one,” he continued.

The Ombudsman’s office is not committed to any regulation of the University in the sense that it might want to change any rules, or it might want to help someone.”

“We often help a person to understand a decision if he can discuss it with someone who is objectively wrong, who’s not necessarily a person who is a real person,” he said.

The Ombudsman has dealt with a variety of problems, including those related to academic issues, getting into a college or program at the University.
Ombudsman's Office

Students are welcome to visit the Ombudsman's Office, 301 HUB, to discuss any problems arising in the course of their relationships with the University. There are many avenues through which grievances may be pursued, formally or informally, toward resolution. A visit or call to the Ombudsman's Office is a good way to learn where to take a problem and how to present it effectively.

The Ombudsman's functions, among others, are to facilitate internal appeal methods and, in general, provide information about University procedures. The Ombudsman is also charged to recommend desirable changes in rules, regulations, and procedures. Grievances responsibly pursued help to delineate those areas. 543-6028.

Intercollegiate Athletics

The University of Washington competes in nineteen intercollegiate sports and annually plays some of the finest teams in the country. It has nine women's teams: cross-country, volleyball, gymnastics, basketball, swimming, track, tennis, golf, and crew. Men compete in 10 sports: football, soccer, cross-country, basketball, swimming, baseball, track, golf, tennis, and crew.

Facilities include Husky Stadium, Edmundson Pavilion, swimming pool, shell house, indoor and outdoor tracks, tennis courts, and baseball fields.

All events are open to the public. For student ticket information, 543-2200.

September 21, 1971

Dr. Charles E. Odgaard
President

Dear Charles:

With reference to the recommendations of the Faculty Committee on University Governance concerning the role and position of the Ombudsman, I have reviewed the file and believe that the practices as well as mandate to the Ombudsman are consistent in fact with the recommendations of the committee. The committee proposes that the Ombudsman's powers be enlarged to permit him (1) to investigate and bring to the attention of appropriate members of the University administration, faculty, staff and student body, actions and procedures which are inefficient or ineffective or are causing or are likely to cause dissatisfaction to a significant part of the University community; (2) to recommend to the appropriate person or persons within the University methods of improving existing organizational arrangements or procedures that are sources of dissatisfaction, ineffectiveness, or that interfere with the effective pursuit of excellence in the University's academic programs. In your letter to faculty, staff and students of the University at the time of the appointment of Professor Gillingham as Ombudsman, in describing the role of the Ombudsman, you included a statement that he shall (1) act as a source of information and assistance available to all members of the University community concerning rules, regulations, and procedures of the University both academic and non-academic; and (2) recommend to the President and appropriate authorities such changes in rules, regulations, and procedures as he deems necessary or desirable.

Dr. Aagaard, as the first Ombudsman, as you recall, did issue a fairly substantial report at the end of his first year of service, gleaning from complaints that had come to him, various kinds of problems and regulations which needed to be revised. Similarly, Professor Gillingham, in his recent letter to you of April 19, which you circulated to Deans, Directors and Chairmen on May 14, speaks to a number of rules and regulations and policies of departments of the University which are causing problems for students and others. It seems to me, therefore, that the Ombudsman is performing at present in accordance with the recommendations of the Faculty Committee on Governance.

Sincerely,

Philip W. Cartwright
Executive Vice President