

Ombuds Office

What's an Ombuds?

Stockton's Ombuds Officer

Active Member of the International Ombudsman Association (IOA)

Experience

- ▶ I am a veteran Higher Education Administrator with 30 years of experience, providing strategic planning and operational management to institutional leadership in the areas of:
- ▶ Complaint Investigation/Conflict Resolution/Mediation,
- ▶ Policy Review/Formulation/Compliance,
- ▶ Student Affairs (Residence Life, Activities, ADA, Counseling, Conduct, International Student Services),
- ▶ Behavioral Threat Assessment/Emergency Management/Risk Mitigation,
- ▶ Academics (Adjunct Faculty and Leader of an Academic Success Center).

Credentials

- ▶ MS in Counseling Psychology w/emphasis in Higher Education Administration from Gannon University
- ▶ BS in Human Development and Family Studies from Penn State University

Where I've served:

- ▶ Penn State University, Gannon University, Farleigh Dickinson University, and DeVry University.
- ▶ Adtalem Global Education, the parent company of: DeVry University (nationally), Ross Medical School, Ross Veterinary School, Chamberlain University, Carrington College, American University of the Caribbean, Becker CPA Review, and ACAMS (Association of Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialists).

What makes the Ombuds Office unique?

The Ombuds Office does not take sides, but it does consider the interests/ concerns of all parties in a dispute(s), with the goal of achieving a fair and mutually agreeable outcome(s) or solution(s)

The primary goal is to collaboratively work toward fostering a positive, productive, inclusive work environment for all community members!

What's an Ombuds Officer

“Professional sounding board/problem solver”

- ▶ The Ombuds Officer (a.k.a. ombudsman, ombudsperson) is a **safe, neutral, confidential, informal resource** available to all employees.
- ▶ An Ombuds Officer is a highly trained, third party positioned to resolve employee complaints/conflicts/disputes within the institution's community in an informal manner that is consistent with alternative dispute resolution best practices.
- ▶ Supports, advises, coaches and collaborates with the Stockton community by assisting employees in navigating the vast network of services, and policies/procedures available to them.
- ▶ The Ombuds Officer can best be described as “the person who has an ear to the people.”

Guiding Principles

Neutrality and Impartiality

- ▶ As a designated neutral party, I remain unaligned and impartial. I do not engage in any situation which could create a conflict of interest or compromise the integrity of my function. I don't take sides, but rather consider the interests and concerns of all parties in a dispute, with the goal of achieving fair outcomes. I don't arbitrate, adjudicate, testify, or participate in any formal grievance or complaint process.

Confidentiality

- ▶ I maintain all communications with those seeking assistance in strict confidence and do not disclose confidential communications unless given permission to do so. The only exceptions to this privilege of confidentiality is when I am required to disclose by law and/or there appears to be imminent risk of serious harm or danger. I keep no official records of visitors' names, affiliations, or concerns. If you wish for a problem or complaint to go on record, I will refer you to the appropriate office or person.

Informality

- ▶ I am an informal resource, and cannot participate in any formal adjudicative or administrative procedure related to the concern(s) brought to my attention.

Flexibility

- ▶ I provide an alternative to the formal grievance and/or complaint process. The office emphasizes non-adversarial problem-solving options, rather than formal, rights-based options. While formal processes are appropriate in many situations, they emphasize pursuing outcomes through rules and regulations. Problem-solving options focus on addressing underlying issues that may have given rise to disputes, so that future disputes can be avoided.

Services Offered

- ▶ Consultation
- ▶ Problem Solving
- ▶ Meeting Facilitation
- ▶ Coaching
- ▶ Referrals
- ▶ Policy & Procedure Navigation
- ▶ Mediation

Engagement with the Ombuds Officer is 100% Voluntary

What services we do NOT provide.

- ▶ Conducting and/or participating in formal investigations
- ▶ Serving as an arbitrator for a dispute
- ▶ Accepting or providing official notice of an alleged violation
- ▶ Serving as a witness or providing testimony in a formal proceeding
- ▶ Issuing investigative reports with binding decisions
- ▶ Participating in any formal grievance or complaint process
- ▶ Providing any legal or medical advice

Contact Information

Lisa M. Lyle, MS
Associate Director/Ombuds Officer

Office: J-111
609-652-4591

Lisa.Lyle@stockton.edu

Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
8:00 - 4:00 or By Appointment

Website:

<https://www.stockton.edu/ombuds/>

