

Ombuds Statement for Visitors

Thank you for contacting the Ombuds Office. My name is [] and I am from [state current role]. Before we talk about what the role of the ombuds office is, we first want to clarify that this office does not provide mental health counseling. [For lawyers, add this: Even though I am a lawyer, please understand that I am not authorized to give you legal advice].

Have you ever visited an Ombuds Office before?

This is a safe place where you can share you story.

My conversations with you are intended to be **confidential** which means I will not share your identity, our communications, or even that we met unless you give me your permission to do so. The only thing we are obligated to track is that we have had contact, but we do not use names—we only report aggregate statistics at the end of the year. One of the statistics we are obligated to track, among others, is the race of our visitors. What is your race?

There are also some exceptions to confidentiality. If I become concerned that you are at imminent risk of harming yourself or others, I need to report that. Also, under what is called the Clery Act, we are required to report instances of crime on campus so if you were a victim of such a crime, we need to report that.

We are an **independent** resource, which means we operate separately from our other roles on campus.

We are an **informal** resource. That means we do not make binding decisions, mandate policies, or formally adjudicate issues for the University. Participation in this process is completely voluntary on your part, and visiting this office is not a required step in any formal grievance process.

We are a **neutral** party interested in a fair and equitable process. We will not take sides or judge who is right or wrong. Rather, our role is to identify a range of options to help resolve your concerns. The decision about which option to pursue is yours and yours alone.

The Ombuds Office is not an official office of notice for the University. This means that I will not share the information you give me with the University to investigate or follow up on your concerns. If your intent is to put the University of notice of an issue, this is not the place, but we will work with you to get you to the proper place if that is what your intent is.

Finally, by utilizing the Ombuds Office, you agree not to ask us to testify in the event this matter results in litigation. Do you agree to this?

Now it is your turn. Feel free to share your story.