

Guiding Principles

The University Ombuds Office operates under the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice of the International Ombudsman Association and provides services based on the following guiding principles:

Independence

The Ombuds Office is independent of the university administration in structure, function, and appearance. The university ombudsperson reports to the President for budgetary and administrative purposes only but has access to senior administrators in order to convey perceived issues and trends on campus. The ombudsperson does not keep records for the university and will only furnish anonymous aggregate statistical data in annual reports.

Confidentiality

The ombudsperson holds all communications with those seeking assistance in the strictest confidence allowed by law. The identity of visitors and the substance of concerns raised will not be shared without consent. This commitment to confidentiality is unwavering; the only exception occurs where there appears to be risk of serious harm.

Informality

The ombudsperson does not participate in any formal adjudicative or administrative procedure or investigations, issue findings, or make or overturn administrative decisions. Contact with the ombudsperson is totally voluntary and not a required step in any university grievance process or university procedure.

Neutrality

The ombudsperson impartially considers the interests of all parties involved in a situation, in order to assist the parties in reaching mutually acceptable agreements that are fair, equitable, and consistent with the mission and policies of Auburn University. The ombudsperson will not serve as an advocate for the university or an individual.

Contact Us:

A face-to-face visit is often most effective and the Ombuds Office offers a confidential place in which to meet. The ombudsperson is happy to schedule a meeting with you at a time that works best with your schedule. To arrange a meeting, please contact the office at 844-7170.

We Are Located At:

Quad Center, Suite 005
(Located on the ground floor)

Phone: (334) 844-7170

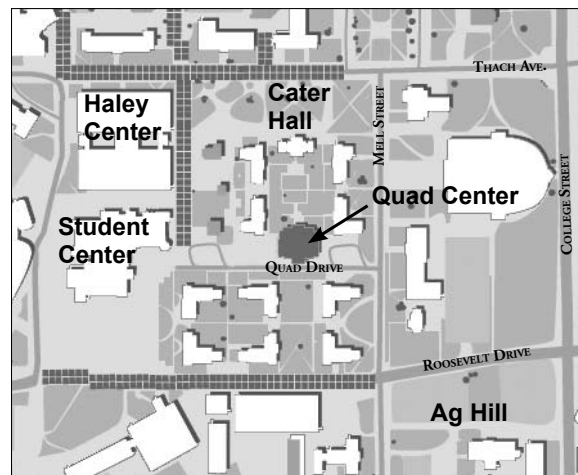
Fax: (334) 844-7089

E-mail: ombuds@auburn.edu*

www.auburn.edu/ombuds/

* *Please be aware that e-mail is not a secure or confidential method of communication.*

** *The Office of the Ombudsperson is independent, neutral, confidential and informal. Communications with this office therefore do not constitute notice to Auburn University. We can assist you in providing notice to the appropriate University office at your request.*



Auburn University is an equal opportunity
educational institution/employer.



AUBURN
UNIVERSITY

A safe place to talk...

Welcome to the Ombuds Office



Phone: (334) 844-7170

www.auburn.edu/ombuds/

Welcome to the University Ombuds Office

The Auburn University Ombuds Office offers confidential and informal assistance to all university employees with concerns relating to or affecting their work. The Office provides a confidential, neutral resource for students, staff, and faculty to express concerns, identify options to address workplace conflicts, facilitate productive communication, and surface responsible concerns regarding university policies and practices.

Contact the ombudsperson at any point during an issue when a confidential conversation or source of information may be needed. The ombudsperson will listen to your concerns, give you information about university policies, help you evaluate your situation, and assist you in making plans to resolve the conflict. You control the process and decide which course of action to take. Contacting the Ombuds Office is completely voluntary and you choose the course of action that is best suited to your interests.

Formal Processes and Procedures

Please be aware that the ombudsperson does not keep records or record formal complaints on behalf of Auburn University, and the ombudsperson is not designated by Auburn University as an individual authorized to receive official reports of any violations of university policy. Therefore, communications made to the ombudsperson regarding possible violations of university policies or of unlawful practices do not constitute notice to Auburn University. This allows the ombudsperson to preserve the confidential and impartial nature of the office. If you would like to make a formal complaint and put the university on notice, you will be provided with the appropriate method to do so and referred to the appropriate office and policy.

When To Contact The Ombuds Office

There are many circumstances during which people can benefit from an “off the record” conversation with someone knowledgeable about Auburn University and its policies. Topics you may want to discuss could involve conflicts with co-workers, supervisors or professors; communication problems; concerns about job status and work environment; and questions about what options are available for handling a problem according to Auburn University policy. Or, you may wish to learn what resources are available to you, request a reality check, or request information about the rights and responsibilities of all parties. Topics might include:

- Interpersonal difficulties with colleagues, subordinates, or supervisors
- Departmental and interdepartmental conflicts
- Preparing for a difficult conversation
- Harassment or discrimination
- Violations of university policy
- Workplace disputes
- Bureaucratic frustrations
- Ethical dilemmas
- Cultural misunderstandings
- Conflicts of interest
- Disciplinary actions
- Research misconduct
- Incivility or rudeness
- Health and safety concerns
- Unprofessional conduct
- Academic freedom and integrity
- Protecting your reputation
- Retaliation

What an Ombudsperson Does:

Responses to issues brought to the ombudsperson are tailored to the individual’s situation and informed consent. For example, the ombudsperson can:

- Actively listen to your questions and concerns
- Offer information about Auburn University policies, procedures, and programs
- Discuss your concerns and clarify issues
- Help identify and evaluate a range of options for resolving a problem
- Gather information and offer referral to other resources when appropriate
- Advise you on steps to resolve a problem informally
- Facilitate communication indirectly or, when given permission, through serving as an impartial third party
- Work for collaborative agreements through negotiation or mediation
- Track perceived issues and trends
- Make recommendations for review of policies or procedures to appropriate bodies

What an Ombudsperson Does Not Do:

- Make decisions, findings of fact, or determine the “guilt” or “innocence” of those accused of wrongdoing
- Establish, change, or set aside policies or administrative decisions
- Offer legal advice
- Offer psychological counseling
- Participate in grievances or other formal processes
- Serve as an agent of notice for Auburn University
- Serve as an advocate for any individual