

Resolution to Recommend the Establishment of a University Ombuds Office at Northwestern University

WHEREAS, Ombuds programs provide neutral, independent, informal and confidential assistance in conflict resolution, problem-solving, upward feedback, and confidential trend-tracking to universities, private industry, and government, and Ombuds programs act as an informal and independent mechanism to facilitate confidential inquiry and provide additional expert advice on working to achieve fair solutions to a wide range of issues of concerns, and

WHEREAS, Ombuds programs have operated at US institutions of higher learning since the 1960s and, recognizing the benefits to their University communities, over 300 universities across the country have established Ombuds programs,

WHEREAS an Ombuds carries out its duties independently of the various university bodies and acts autonomously and objectively,

WHEREAS, an Ombuds program gathers data on trends to help identify possible systemic issues requiring attention for university leaders,

BE IT RESOLVED, that Northwestern University Faculty Senate recommends to the President of Northwestern University that the Northwestern University Ombuds Office for students, staff, faculty and administrators be established.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Northwestern University Ombuds Office will be led a full-time Ombuds supported by an administrative staff, and will report directly to the President and will provide an annual, public report to the President and the Faculty Senate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Northwestern University Ombuds will be a full-time professions Ombuds who will perform the functions and duties listed below:

Northwestern University Ombuds Position Description

The Office of the Northwestern University Ombuds is dedicated to improving the quality of university services delivered to students, faculty and staff by providing individual case assistance, as well as making recommendations to improve the administration of Northwestern University. The Northwestern University Ombuds is a designated impartial, neutral, and confidential third party independent of Northwestern University who assists students, faculty, staff and administrators. The Ombuds directs all aspects and functions of the University Ombuds Office: formulating, managing, and monitoring the overall goals, programs, budget, and direction of the Ombuds Office; developing and maintaining confidential notes and statistical data for purposes of identifying trends in complaints and concerns; identifying problem areas in university policies and practices; recommending revision and development of policies; and providing an annual report to the President and the Faculty Senate.

Description of Duties:

Responds to the issues, concerns, or problems of others and can also proceed on his/her own initiative to investigate issues, concerns or problems.

Recommends ways to fix systemic problems that students, staff and faculty face when they interact with Northwestern University.

Advises senior administrators and departments responsible for policies and procedures that affect the welfare of the campus community. Makes appropriate recommendations to modify practices in order to reduce or eliminate recurring problems. Works collaboratively with other offices and personnel.

Consults with campus departments and academic units to understand and resolve complex problems through informal discussion; develops cooperative strategies to prevent future problems.

As appropriate, acts as liaison between individuals or groups both within the campus administration and between individuals or groups by serving as a consultant, facilitator, and informal mediator.

Stays informed about best practices for professional Ombuds offices, through engagement with professional Ombuds organizations or peers in private universities.

Develops and maintains an appropriate professional leadership role, consistent with Northwestern University's position in higher education and academe.

Not later than June 30 of each calendar year, the Ombuds shall report to the President of Northwestern University and the Faculty Senate on the objectives of the Office of the Ombuds for the fiscal year beginning in such calendar year. Any such report shall contain full and substantive analysis, in addition to statistical information, and -

(A) Shall identify the recommendation the Office of the Ombuds has made on improving services and responsiveness of Northwestern University

(B) Shall contain a summary of the most pervasive and serious problems encountered by students, staff and faculty, including a description of the nature of such problems;

(C) Shall contain an inventory of the items described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) for which action has been taken and the result of such action;

(D) Shall contain an inventory of the items described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) for which action remains to be completed and the period during which each item has remained on such inventory;

(E) Shall contain recommendations for such administrative action as may be appropriate to resolve problems encountered by students, staff and faculty

(F) Shall include such other information as the Ombuds may deem advisable.

Draft budget for NU Ombuds Office

Director	\$ 57,000.00
Program Assistant (level 2)	\$ 38,000.00
Office computers, printer & supplies	\$ 9,000.00
**Total annual estimated direct expense	\$ 104,000.00

**Not included in the estimate are benefits and employer overhead expenses for the salaried positions.

Ombuds Director salary estimate from

<http://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Ombudsman/Salary>

Program Assistant salary estimates from Weinberg College:

PA1: \$30,800 - \$39,000: Provides standard & routine clerical & administrative support which may include word processing, data entry, ordering supplies, opening & sorting mail, copying, filing, faxing, answering phones, greeting visitors, providing information, &/or scheduling meetings.

PA2: \$33,200 - \$42,000: Provides a variety of clerical & administrative support which may include drafting & typing letters, reports, charts, graphs, etc. using word processing, spreadsheet, database, &/or presentation software; basic bookkeeping; screening calls & visitors; preparing agendas & making arrangements including travel, etc. for meetings & special events; &/or managing supervisor's &/or dept calendar.

Office computers, printer & supplies estimated from a small Weinberg College department with an office staff of 3 people. Costs include copier lease (\$4K/year), office supplies, printer & computer accessories, and purchase of 3 computers, each on a 4-year cycle.