

# Report on the Establishment of the CGU Ombuds Office

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Overview

In his first six months, the Ombudsperson has created an office in compliance with the prevailing standards for organizational ombuds; marketed the office to the CGU community; and started providing dispute resolution services to visitors from across the campus.

### Establishing the Office

Location and Hours – CGU leases space for the Ombuds Office from the Claremont University Consortium. Located on the lower level of the McAlister Center, the office is convenient, yet discrete for visitors with concerns about confidentiality. The office is furnished so that visitors feel safe and comfortable discussing emotional issues. The office is open Mondays, Tuesday afternoons and evenings, and Thursdays.

Written Protocol – In August, the Ombudsperson and University President signed a Charter Agreement, which defined the Ombudsperson's role and scope of duties with respect to the University. Later, the Ombudsman prepared written Office Policies and Procedures, which detail how the office operates day-to-day. The Ombudsperson also created a database to track general visitor statistics.

Budget – The Ombuds Office was allocated a first-year budget of \$65,080, of which \$56,250 was designated for salary and fringe benefits. Of the remaining discretionary budget, \$3,697 (41.9%) had been spent as of January 11, 2007.

### Promoting the Office

Presentations and Meetings – The President introduced the Ombudsperson in an email to all faculty, staff and students on July 27, 2006. Subsequently, the Ombudsperson made presentations to groups of faculty, students and staff. The Ombudsperson also met individually with administrators, deans, and student leaders to promote the new service.

Electronic and Print Materials – The Ombudsperson created a webpage for the Ombuds Office that explains how the office operates, what services are offered, who the Ombudsperson is, and what other resources are available. The Ombudsperson prepared a brochure that was distributed to incoming students, employees, and various schools and administrative offices.

### Visitor Consultations and Upward Feedback

In the first six months of operation, visitors brought 40 unique matters to the Ombuds Office. Visitors included students, staff and faculty of both genders and all ethnicities. From these meetings, the Ombudsperson was able to provide upward feedback to the appropriate administrators on approximately five occasions.

### Future Objectives

In the next six months, the Ombudsperson will work to increase awareness of the Ombuds Office among students. As the Ombudsperson compiles additional data and insights, there may be more opportunities to provide upward feedback and recommendations for systemic change and improvement. The Ombudsperson also will continue to provide mediation and conflict resolution services and advice to the campus community.

## Defining the University Ombudsperson

### Overview of Organizational Ombuds

An organizational ombudsman is a dispute resolution professional whose primary function is to provide confidential and informal assistance to employees and other stakeholders of an entity. As an internal employee, the organizational ombudsman carries no other role or duties in order to maintain independence and prevent real or perceived conflict of interest. Using alternative dispute resolution techniques, an organizational ombudsman provides options for stakeholders to safely and effectively discuss and resolve their concerns. Additionally, an organizational ombudsman offers coaching on dispute resolution, provides mediation to facilitate conflict resolution, helps enable safe upward feedback, assists those who feel harassed and discriminated against, and generally helps individuals navigate bureaucracy.

### Mandate for CGU's Ombudsperson

Tom Kosakowski was hired as the first University Ombudsperson for CGU on July 17, 2006, following a two-year evaluation and search process. The Ombudsman was charged with opening an office that serves the entire CGU community and complies with the prevailing professional standards.

### Relevant Professional Standards

The umbrella organization for the profession is the [International Ombudsman Association](#) (IOA), which publishes a [Code of Ethics](#) and [Standards of Practice](#). Additional guidance for the establishment and operation of an ombuds office has been published by the [American Bar Association](#) (ABA) and [IOA](#). The ethical tenets of practice are:

*Confidentiality* – The Ombudsperson does not keep records for the University, and won't disclose the names or concerns of visitors, without permission. (The only exception is when the Ombudsperson believes there is an imminent risk of physical harm.) The Ombuds Office thus is not an office of notice for the University.

*Neutrality* – The Ombudsperson is respectfully impartial with all parties to a conflict. The Ombudsperson does not take sides in any dispute, but rather advocates for fair process and equitable results.

*Informality* – The Ombudsperson listens, offers information about CGU policies, procedures and resources, and presents a range of options for resolving problems. With permission, the Ombudsperson will facilitate communication or mediate a dispute. The Ombudsperson does not arbitrate, adjudicate or participate in formal procedures.

*Independence* – To ensure objectivity, the Ombudsperson is not aligned with any administrative unit or school, and reports directly to the President for administrative and budgetary purposes.

These ethical tenets are absolute and non-negotiable, and belong to the Ombuds Office rather than the visitor.

## Written Protocol for the CGU Ombuds Office

### Charter Agreement

It is a “best practice” to have a charter agreement that clearly defines the ombudsperson’s role, jurisdiction and authority with respect to the organization. In August, the Ombudsperson drafted a proposed Charter Agreement, which was revised with input from Bill Everhart, Senior VP for Finance and Administration, Brenda Leswick, Associate VP of Human Resources, and Laura Saadeh, Esq., of Carlton DiSante & Freudenberger, outside counsel for CGU. On August 29, 2006, the Ombudsperson and President signed the [Charter Agreement](#).

### Office Policies and Procedures

On November 30, 2006, the Ombudsman finalized written Office Policies and Procedures. These policies and procedures explain how the Ombuds Office operates day-to-day in compliance with the professional standards and the Charter Agreement. Mr. Everhart and Ms. Leswick also reviewed and provided input on these policies and procedures.

### Visitor Database

The Ombudsperson has also created a database to track general visitor statistics. In keeping with best practices, the database is password protected and does not contain the names of office visitors.

## Marketing and Outreach

### Presentations and Meetings

The Ombudsperson was first introduced to the CGU community in an [email](#) from the President on July 27, 2006. Subsequently, the Ombudsperson made presentations to the following groups:

SISAT New Student Orientation	August 8, 2006
SBOS/SES/Religion New Student Orientation	August 25, 2006
SPE New Student Orientation	August 25, 2006
Drucker New Student Orientation	August 26, 2006
Convocation	September 20, 2006
Female Faculty Forum	September 21, 2006
Faculty Assembly	September 25, 2006
All Staff Meeting	October 5, 2006
Graduate Student Counsel Town Hall	October 5, 2006

The Ombudsperson also met individually with the following individuals to introduce himself and to learn about the CGU community firsthand:

Yi Feng (Provost)	July 20, 2006
Prof. Linda Perkins	July 24, 2006
Jim Whitaker (Dean of Students)	July 27, 2006
Teresa Shaw (Vice Provost)	August 3, 2006
Wanda Walker (Finance Dept.)	August 9, 2006
Christina Wassenaar (Drucker)	August 17, 2006
Brenda Barham-Hill (CEO, CUC)	August 17, 2006
Prof. Barbara DeHart	August 21, 2006
Tharon Smith (GSC/MMP)	September 6, 2006
Betty Hagelbarger (Sp. Asst. to Provost)	September 14, 2006
Charlene Martin (Intl. Place, CUC)	September 14, 2006
Prof. Jean Lipman Blumen	September 25, 2006
Dean Karen Torjesen (Religion)	October 2, 2006
Rev. Catherine Carlson (CUC)	October 10, 2006
Dean Lorne Olfman (SISAT)	November 6, 2006
Grantland Rice (Advancement)	November 7, 2006
Dean Stewart Donaldson (SBOS)	November 9, 2006
Dean Ira Jackson (Drucker)	November 9, 2006
Rebecca Kornbluh (Counseling Ctr., CUC)	November 27, 2006

### Electronic and Print Materials

The Ombudsperson has created a series of Internet webpages for the Ombuds Office that are located within the pages for the President's office. The website explains how the Ombuds Office operates, what services are offered, and who the Ombuds person is. The website also provides links to other resources for faculty, students and staff. Copies of the IOA Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Charter Agreement and the President's introductory letter can be downloaded from the [website](#). With the assistance of Creative Services, the Ombudsperson also prepared a [brochure](#) that was distributed to incoming students, all employees, and various schools and administrative offices.

## Visitor Consultations and Upward Feedback

### Overview

In the first six months of operation, visitors brought 40 unique matters to the Ombuds Office. Visitors included students, staff and faculty of both genders and all ethnicities. Based on information disclosed by visitors, the Ombudsperson was able to provide upward feedback to the appropriate administrators on approximately five occasions.

### Summary of Visitor Statistics

The following data describes only individuals initiating contact with the Ombuds Office. In the course of working with visitors on their concerns, the Ombudsperson had contact with many more individuals and addressed additional ancillary concerns.

<u>Description</u>	<u>Share<sup>1</sup></u>
<b>Gender</b>	
Women	60%
Men	40%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
White (non-Hisp./Lat.)	65%
Asian / Pac. Is. / Hawaiian	10%
Black / African Am.	8%
Hispanic / Latino	8%
<b>Status</b>	
Employee	45%
Staff	23%
Administrator	23%
Student	33%
Doctoral	15%
Masters	5%
Unknown	13%
Faculty	20%
Other	<1%
<b>Nature of Primary Concern</b>	
Employment/Workplace	30%
Academic/Pedagogic	20%
Policies/Procedures	18%
Bias/Discrimination	10%
Housing	8%
Other/Unknown	15%

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<sup>1</sup> Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding errors and because three cases were brought by returning visitors. Readers are also cautioned that the data may not be statistically reliable as an overall indicator for CGU due to the small sample size and self-selection characteristics. Therefore, these data should not be interpreted as confirming or refuting any observations about the overall campus climate.

## Interpreting the Data

To put these preliminary results in context, comparative data are available from a survey of academic ombuds conducted by The Ombudsman Association (TOA) in 2003:

- The CGU Ombuds Office was established in response to a faculty initiative. Similarly, 83% of academic ombuds in the TOA study said that their offices were established to “fulfill a need identified by key constituents within the organization.”
- The overall usage rate for the CGU Ombuds Office was approximately 2% of the total population in a 6-month period. The TOA survey showed that the average caseload of academic ombuds was equal to about 4% of the population per annum.
- Relative to the results of the TOA study, the CGU Ombuds Office saw more staff (45% vs. 33%) and faculty (20% vs. 14%) visitors, and fewer student (33% vs. 44%) visitors.
- Visitors to the CGU Ombuds Office were concerned far more about workplace and academic issues than bias and discrimination. Similarly, the academic ombuds in the TOA study found that just 8% of the visitors to those offices complained of “discrimination or harassment.” Moreover, the concerns brought to the CGU Ombuds Office are similar consistent with the Ombudsperson’s first-hand experience at larger institutions (UCLA and UCR) and anecdotal information from other ombuds in higher education regionally.

In short, the early data for CGU’s Ombuds Office were within the range of expectations.