



STUDENT OMBUDS SERVICES

Kennedy Library, room 113
California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407-0010

WHAT IS AN OMBUDS?

An Ombuds is a person who assists individuals and groups in the resolution of concerns or conflicts confidentially and informally. The name “ombudsman” (om budz man) comes from Swedish and literally means “representative.” Originally: “an official appointed by the Swedish parliament to investigate complaints against... central government and the civil service.” (Oxford English Dictionary)

WHEN SHOULD YOU VISIT THE OMBUDS?

- When you don't know where to go or who to ask
- When you feel you are getting the run-around
- When you feel that you have been treated unfairly
- When you want to discuss a sensitive question or issue
- When you are unsure what policies or procedures apply

TYPES OF ISSUES

- Academic Concerns
- Incivility
- Disciplinary Matters
- Cultural Conflicts
- Grade Disputes
- Student Employment
- Records Appeals
- Roommate Concerns
- Student/Instructor Misunderstandings

THE OMBUDS DOES:

- Provide a safe place to discuss issues
- Communicate informally, off the record
- Confidentially listen to you and your concerns
- Assist in clarifying issues
- Answer questions
- Explain university policy and procedures
- Provide info regarding campus resources, suggest referrals
- Brainstorm and explore options
- Mediate
- Track trends and general issues
- Recommend policy changes to remedy recurring problems

THE OMBUDS DOES NOT:

- Advocate for any individual or group
- Make decisions for you
- Offer legal advice
- Hear formal complaints
- Participate in any formal process
- Maintain records

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

The Office of Student Ombuds Services provides students with a confidential, informal, impartial, and independent resource to assist in the resolution of university-related issues, concerns, conflicts, or complaints.

CONFIDENTIAL

The Office of Student Ombuds Services holds all communications with those seeking assistance in strict confidence, and does not disclose one's identity and confidential communications unless given permission to do so. The only exception to this privilege of confidentiality is where there appears to be imminent risk of serious harm to self or others. No permanent records are maintained other than general demographic and incident data for reporting trends.

INFORMAL

The Office of Student Ombuds Services operates informally. All communications are “off the record.” The Ombuds does not make any judgments or participate in any internal or external formal processes.

IMPARTIAL

The Office of Student Ombuds Services operates impartially. The Ombuds does not take sides in any issue. The Ombuds does not advocate on behalf of the student or the university but rather promotes fair and equitable processes and procedures.

INDEPENDENT

The Office of Student Ombuds Services operates independently of administrative structures. The office reports directly to the University President.

FORMAL COMPLAINTS

The Office does not receive formal complaints to be investigated and processed within existing university procedures. The Ombuds can refer students to the appropriate university office that does receive formal complaints. The Office of Student Ombuds Services is informal and not a university office of notice.

The Office of Student Ombuds Services operates according to the International Ombudsman Association Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice.

OFFICE: Kennedy Library, Bldg. 35, Rm. 113

STAFF: Patricia Ponce, Ph.D. - Student Ombuds

HOURS: 10 a.m. to 12 noon M-F and by appointment

PHONE: 805.756.1380 **FAX:** 805.756.7142

E-MAIL: ombuds@calpoly.edu

URL: www.ombuds.calpoly.edu

Contact us at the first step, or last resort, or anywhere along the way.