OFFICE OF THE OMBUDS MISSION

To Promote a College community environment where all students may address and resolve concerns or issues in a manner that is consistent with the Office of the Ombuds’ mandate of impartiality, independence, and confidentiality.

fanshawec.ca/ombuds
STATEMENT OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The College and FSU value the following principles of trust, confidentiality, respect, fairness, equality, dignity, diversity, security and safety in order to offer the highest quality education, learning experience and student life in this academic community.

These principles encompass all student activities under the banner of Fanshawe College and/or FSU, on and off College campuses. All participants entering into this moral and social contract will commit to the following principles:

STUDENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO:
• a safe, secure and accessible College environment, suitable and reasonable for learning, study and wellness
• a positive environment conducive to learning characterized by equality and mutual respect that remains free from personal bias, and unlawful harassment and discrimination
• timely, objective, fair and reasonable academic evaluation methods that are reflective of academic, occupational and industry standards and competencies
• timely notification of all academic and administrative decisions that affect their College community life (in writing and including supporting rationale where required by College policy)
• timely and appropriate services and supports to foster a positive and meaningful educational experience
• seek clarification of, or recourse on, all decisions under College policies that affect them without fear of reprisal
• the protection of privacy and confidentiality of personal information, subject to limits in accordance with the law

STUDENTS HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITIES TO:
• abide by all applicable federal, provincial and municipal law
• treat members of the College community with respect
• follow all reasonable direction provided by the College and/or FSU
• be engaged in the pursuit of learning within an ordered academic environment
• adhere to the Student Code of Conduct and other relevant College/FSU practices, policies and procedures
• be honest and truthful and not make any false, misleading or inflammatory statements or allegations
• report any wrongdoing or unlawful activities to the College and/or FSU officials
• ensure all College and/or FSU visitor(s) are informed of the expectations outlined in the Code of Conduct
• adhere to the “fair information principles” and abide by College policies respecting the privacy of others and the confidentiality of personal information

COLLEGE AND FSU HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITIES TO:
• abide by all applicable federal, provincial and municipal law
• act in the best interest of students following the principles of 1) act in good faith, 2) be reasonable, 3) adhere to set standards and 4) place appropriate weight on information gathered against set criteria
• provide an environment conducive to learning that is safe, secure and accessible, suitable and reasonable for learning, study and wellness
• provide students timely and relevant advice and guidance
• publish accessible and relevant information (e.g. program and course content and academic progression criteria)
• ensure no changes to practices, policies or procedures will apply retroactively to the detriment of the student
• adhere to the “fair information principles” and collect, use and disclose personal information in accordance with the law, including the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Personal Health Information Protection Act
• protect the security of students while maintaining the physical facilities to government, educational and appropriate industry standards
• promote dispute resolution through the assistance of the Office of the Ombuds

The College and the FSU will meet annually to review and, if both parties agree, to renew the Statement. In signing this document, the Presidents are committing the College and the FSU to the principles set forth.

Signed and dated by:
Peter Duviv, President Fanshawe College
Date: May 6, 2015

Signed and dated by:
Alan Bushell, President Fanshawe Student Union
Date: May 4, 2015
Please accept the Office of the Ombuds 2015-2016 annual report, covering operations from September 1, 2015 to August 31, 2016. This report is based solely on the 304 visitors guided through 353 issues of concern.

The report highlights a summary of the Office activities, statistical information, identifies trends and recommendations to the College community. Due to staff transition within the Office, this annual report is based solely on the analysis of data provided through the Office confidential electronic records. Reflection on the timing of the annual report due to the Office staff transition has informed the 2015-2016 recommendation.

The annual report is intended to ensure transparency in the Office of the Ombuds, working to assist in the resolution of disputes and concerns with the aim in achieving fairness for all parties involved.
UPDATES ON OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS:

2012 – 2013: Recommendation:
That each school within the College community review their departmental procedures and course information sheets to ensure compliance and alignment with existing College policies. Where inconsistencies with College policies exist, that these areas be identified and brought forward to College policy makers for consideration and review.

Update:
This recommendation is outstanding as of the report date. Following the recommendation, a process review occurred and a new program called COMMS (Course Mapping and Management System) has been developed which is currently being implemented. The final policy approval is expected Winter 2017.

Recommendation:
That the following form be reviewed by relevant departments with an eye to improving the content and language to ensure clarity and student acknowledgment — the Academic Offences Form.

Update:
This recommendation is still outstanding as of the report date. A recommendation has been put forward to review the Academic Offences Form, with the evaluation scheduled for Winter 2017.

2014-2015: Recommendation:
That the College establish a working group, consisting of internal stakeholders to identify best practices when identifying and implementing individual accommodation requirements and that the College promote these best practices amongst its academic and service teams by the end of the 2016/17 academic year.

Completed:
The College established a working group with internal stakeholder representation to review the process for individual accommodation requests. The group has identified best practices and implemented various learning tools and communication strategies to support faculty, staff and students. The working group will continue to identify and implement additional recommendations as they arise.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to take the opportunity to share my appreciation to the College community during a time of transition in the Office of the Ombuds. It has been a privilege to be given the opportunity to step in and assist Office visitors in their pursuit of fairness.

Additionally, I would like to take an opportunity to recognize and thank Greg Hessian for his seven years of service to the Office of the Ombuds. Thank you for your contributions to Fanshawe and your dedication to assisting students in their pursuit of fairness and resolution.

The Office of the Ombuds’ success would not be possible without the support of both Fanshawe College and the Fanshawe Student Union community. Your dedication to ensuring continuous improvement and pursuit of equality for all is admirable. Thank you to the Ombuds Advisory Committee for their work and support during the 2015-2016 academic year.

A special thank you to all Office visitors, particularly the students, administrators, academics and staff members who have consulted, in the interest of fair dealings within Fanshawe.

Respectfully,

Jennifer Gillespie, MA
Acting Ombuds
Recommendation
As previously mentioned, the Office of the Ombuds experienced staff transition during the 2016-2017 academic year. Due to the annual reporting cycle, the Ombuds report is presented to the college community in the winter term, seven months from the end of the reporting year. Shifting the reporting cycle would allow for the annual report to be presented to the College community in the fall term, allowing for recommendations to be more impactful to the current academic year. Such a shift would also allow the Office to focus on the annual report and follow up on recommendations during the summer term, when the Office receives less visitors.

2015/16 Recommendation:
The Office of the Ombuds recommends moving the annual recommendations and presentation from the winter term to the fall term. This would allow timelier sharing of observations and recommendations to be considered and operationalize to effectively impact the subsequent academic year.

Agreed by the College and Fanshawe Student Union.
A FIVE YEAR SUMMARY OF PAST RECOMMENDATIONS (2010 – 2015):

2010 – 2011 • To incorporate the “Duty of Care” concept and the “act in the best interest of the student” belief in the most appropriate College policies and documents.

2011 – 2012 • To develop and promote an on-line fairness course, which includes educational components that will be available to all College community members, free of charge.

2012 - 2013 • That each school within the College community review their departmental procedures and course information sheets to ensure compliance and alignment with existing College policies.

• Where inconsistencies with College policies exist, that these areas be identified and brought forward to College policy makers for consideration and review.

• That students have access to Notice of Appeal of a Grade / Academic Decision form via electronic format.

• That the following forms be reviewed by relevant departments with an eye to improving the content and language to ensure clarity and student acknowledgement.
  • The international fee extension form; and,
  • The academic offence form.

• That where a program requires a student to attend any form of a work placement that the following be considered:
  • That a mandatory workshop for students be delivered prior to the student attending placement; and,
  • That Student be advised that any special needs or accommodation requests need to be reviewed by the appropriate parties to ensure the suitability and if required work placement accommodations or modification assistance [be provided].

2013 - 2014 • N/A

2014 - 2015 • That the College establish a working group, consisting of internal stakeholders to identify best practices when identifying and implementing individual accommodation requirements and that the College promote these best practices amongst its academic and service teams by the end of the 2016/17 academic year.

Please note the annual report has moved away from reporting historical recommendations from inception, to a five year summary. This is to align with the historical data provided in this report. The recommendations are reported on, whether completed or outstanding.
Diagram #1: Provides the total number of visitors for each of the past five years. This captures data related to whether the student’s fairness issue falls within the Ombuds mandate. An example of where a fairness issue would not fall within the Office’s mandate would be a student who is denied their transcript due to owing fees.

*Student self-advocacy, within the Ombuds coaching/mentoring model

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011/12</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
<th>2013/14</th>
<th>2014/15</th>
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<td>267</td>
<td>357</td>
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<td>without Direct</td>
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<td>43</td>
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<td>Intervention*</td>
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Diagram #2: Provides a breakdown of the five fairness categories that the Ombuds uses to classify complaints.

**Diagram #2: Visitor by Fairness Category**

- Completeness
- Trueness
- Consistency
- Openness and Transparency
- No Fairness Issue

**APPENDIX I - DATA:**
Diagram #3: Provides the nature of the dispute or difficulty and what is the area of concern. It is interesting to note that academic issues continue to account for the majority of the student complaints.

**Diagram #3: Visitor by Dispute or Difficulty**

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<th>Category</th>
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<td>Accessibility</td>
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<td>Facilities</td>
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<td>Fee</td>
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<td>FSU Service</td>
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<td>Inter. with Professor</td>
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<td>Inter. with Student/Peer</td>
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Diagram #4: Outlines the school that the student is attending, and not necessarily the area responsible for the concern. It is important to note that the difficulty or dispute may be with a service or other department within the College. This chart simply outlines the school where the student is registered.

Diagram #5: Provides a breakdown of the GPA of the student. Interestingly, the GPA by visitor has remained consistent over time. The “not applicable” includes visitors within CE, anonymous or not registered, and students within their first semester when GPA is not yet calculated.
Diagram #6: The chart below categorizes the visitor by gender. There are no significant changes in the ratio of female of male visitors for this reporting period.

Diagram #7: Shows the age distribution of students at the time of their visit, during this period of time. Not surprisingly, the largest category continues to present with students who are between the ages of 20 to 24 years of age.
Diagram #8: Provides an interesting historical perspective of the level of Office activities since the creation of the Office in 1993. Although the Office saw fewer visitors over the course of the 2015-2016 academic year, the data suggests that some of the visitors would seek information or assistance regarding additional issues.

Office OF THE OMBUDS

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ombuds@fanshawec.ca

Location
Room T3016, London Campus
Unlocking Potential

Whether it’s a student developing new skills and knowledge to prepare for a future career, an innovative faculty member preparing curriculum for flexible learning opportunities, or a staff member collaborating with colleagues on services and programming for the downtown Centre for Digital and Performance Arts, learning and working at Fanshawe is both rewarding and transformational.

Fanshawe’s new vision, Unlocking Potential, gives us the guidance, purpose, and inspiration we need to adapt to an ever-changing world.

Be a part of the future of Fanshawe.

Learn more: fanshawec.ca/vision