



# **OMBUDS** **REPORT**

## **2016 - 2018**



FAIR



CONFIDENTIAL



COLLABORATIVE  
SOLUTIONS

THE OFFICE **OF THE OMBUDS**  
ANNUAL REPORT

## **OUR VISION**

### **UNLOCKING POTENTIAL**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Provide pathways to success, an exceptional learning experience and a global outlook to meet student and employer needs.

## **OUR VALUES**

Focus on students, involve our communities, utilize resources wisely, embrace change, engage each other.

### **How will we meet the goals:**

- Focus on students
- Engage each other
- Utilize resources wisely
- Involve our communities



# **FANSHAWE**

## **College Strategic Goals**

April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2020



# OFFICE OF THE OMBUDS MISSION

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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](https://fanshawec.ca/ombuds)

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the Quality Assurance Process, the Office of the Ombuds provides confidential, impartial support and guidance for students and the College community with the goal of dispute resolution. While adhering to the principles of Independence, Impartiality and Confidentiality, the Office operates in the interest of fairness for all.

The Ombuds seeks to help promote student self-efficacy and to collaborate with academic units and student service departments to encourage informal resolutions to remove barriers and promote student success while respecting the academic integrity of the curriculum offered at Fanshawe College.

The Ombuds Office may also provide informal and formal recommendations for systemic change with the goal to achieve fair and equitable practices reflected in College policies and procedures. The Ombuds reports to the College President and is funded jointly by the College and the Fanshawe Student Union. Founded in 1993, this year marks the 25th anniversary of operation.

The Ombuds 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 to achieve fairness for all parties involved. The report highlights a summary of the Office activities, statistical information, recommendations to the College community and new initiatives underway. Due to staff transitions within the Office during 2016-17, and the timing of events in Fall 2017, this report is based on the analysis of data from September 1, 2016- August 31, 2018 provided through the office confidential records and input from the previous Ombuds.

Please accept the Office of the Ombuds Report for the combined academic years 2016-2017 and 2017-18. We will resume reporting on a single academic year in 2019.





# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The Office of the Ombuds would not be possible without the support of both Fanshawe College and the Fanshawe Student Union (FSU) community. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere appreciation to both the College and FSU Presidents and to thank the Senior VP Academic, the VP Student Services, Deans, Chairs, the Centre for Academic Excellence, FSU and OD&L for their leadership, support and guidance during my first year as Ombuds at Fanshawe. Your dedication to ensure continuous quality improvements in the teaching, learning and student life environments is commendable.

I would also like to thank the Ombuds Advisory Committee for their support during the 2017-18 academic year and to recognize Jennifer Gillespie and the previous Ombuds for their service in the Office of the Ombuds.

A special thank you to the students, administrators, academics and staff members who have consulted in the interest of fair dealings within Fanshawe College. Thank you also goes out to the FSU Publications and Communications Department, as well as Fanshawe's Reputation and Brand Management Department, for their contributions to the design of this report.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Rose Padacz, Ombuds  
Fanshawe College, Office of the Ombuds

# REFLECTIONS...

## A Year At A Glance

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to become part of the Fanshawe community to extend support to students, faculty and staff, to learn more about the exceptional academic program offerings and the comprehensive array of services available to create a successful student experience. Joining the College in May 2017, I witnessed an unprecedented year for Colleges and Ombuds across Ontario, filled with challenges, opportunities, successful resolutions and collaborative outcomes. The following provides the summary of activities.

## Student Support

In 2017-18, 557 student visitors contacted the Ombuds Office, an increase from 320 in 2016-17. The province-wide College strike impacted students, faculty and staff and may have contributed to the increase in activity level. Outreach activities including presentations to ASMT, Academic Schools, Student Service departments, revised promotional materials, and a robust Academic Integrity Campaign may have also been contributing factors.

Students contacted the Office to discuss concerns or issues of fairness, to seek confidential guidance and support with interpretation of College policies and procedures, particularly the Academic Appeals policies and procedures. Inquiries were also received relating to admissions, fees, health insurance and a variety of topics from students, Alumni, family members and the community at large.

The Office received referrals from academic and student services departments, requesting support for students struggling to navigate the College system when they were not sure where to turn for resolution with complex or unique situations.

Other student situations related to inappropriate or harassing behaviors, conflict in interpersonal relationships with classmates, professors or service providers, and interactions with the community at large. In many of these cases, information and education was shared regarding the College "Statement of Rights & Responsibilities" and the Code of Conduct policy. Guidance on possible informal resolutions, referrals, facilitated mediation, and the option of the formal Appeal process was also provided.

Consultations with academic units, the FSU and Student Services to share information, brainstorm possible fair remedies and alternative solutions to complex scenarios resulted in 87% of issues being resolved informally without need for a formal Appeal; ultimately reducing the amount of time, resources and the emotional impact that can accompany the Appeal process for students, faculty, staff and Administrators.

## Ombuds Approach: Promoting Student Self Efficacy

The majority of student issues related to a variety of academic concerns such as the timing and weight of evaluation methodologies, academic integrity issues, Appeals and interpersonal relationships with professors or classmates.

Each case was approached with integrity and respect for the individual(s) facing challenges or conflict. I helped to deescalate emotions and distill the issues down to salient, solvable pieces, provided education relating to College policies and practices and applied a solution-focused lens of inquiry.

I encouraged reflection and creative problem solving to determine possible remedies that would be fair, respectful and appropriate given the individual circumstances. I helped the students see the "bigger picture" and the perspective of other students, their professors or the service provider, involved in the dispute. The goal, to ultimately empower the student to feel equipped with strategies to have a "healthy, respectful conversation" with the decision-maker to achieve a fair outcome or resolution.

## Observations

Colleges across the province were impacted by the unprecedented events of Fall 2017 affecting the teaching, learning and student life environments. For some, the challenges, pending outcomes, and modified academic plans were overwhelming.

As a result, individual and groups were referred to the Ombuds Office to discuss their concerns, explore possible options, resources or remedies to help resolve their situation in a fair and reasonable manner.

Ombuds time was dedicated to help resolve concerns relating to classroom participation, academic performance, access to FOL and course materials, classroom schedules and possible alternative evaluation methodologies.

Consultations, primarily with the Academic Chairs, involved discussions to apply Academic policies such as A131 and A128 Student Appeals, Academic Integrity Policies and others in uncharted waters to achieve a fair outcome.

During this time period, I witnessed the “good will”, compassion and dedication of the Senior Academic VP, Senior Administration and members of ASMT engage in creative problem solving approaches to help interpret and apply College Academic policies with the goal of student success. As a result, new collaborative initiatives and alternate pathways to student achievement were implemented across the College.

Students who were not able to continue in their studies were offered the option to withdraw from their academic program and return at a future date. The College also provided access to a Strike Relief fund alternative options for continued education and academic accommodations.

The Students Services, FSU, and other departments also derived creative solutions to help reduce the need for students to navigate many systems to resolve their questions and initiated “One Stop” Collaborative Q&A sessions that will be emulated at the start of each academic semester moving forward.

## Macro Practice & Goals

Aligning the Office of the Ombuds goals with the iMAPP 2017-2020, the Student Services Priority Plan and as part of the of the Quality Assurance Process cycle, the Ombuds will continue to:

- Engage in collaborative practices with academic units, Chairs, Deans, Student Services, College departments the FSU and students to triage concerns, deescalate situations, and determine shared remedies to ensure fair and equitable outcomes
- Provide informal and formal recommendations for revision of policies and procedures to reduce barriers to student advancement while preserving the academic integrity of the curriculum at Fanshawe
- Research Best Practice Models to promote student success through Education, Prevention, Intervention and Post-vention strategies while promoting equitable, inclusive and innovative practices
- Encourage consultation and be available to help students and college community be proactive in conflict prevention while providing resources, information, and possible alternative resolutions.



# NEW INITIATIVES

## Informal Recommendations & Collaborative Partnerships

In 2017-18, the Ombuds collaborated with Academic Units, the Centre for Academic Excellence, the FSU, Students Services Departments, and the College community on several new initiatives. A few highlights are listed below.



- 1) A new Academic Integrity Campaign was launched in 2017 in collaboration with the Senior VP Academic, the Centre for Academic Excellence, the Fanshawe Student Union, the Library and others. The initiative resulted in a successful “Donut Cheat” Campaign. Please reference the website for valuable resources for students, faculty and staff **[www.fsu.ca/donutcheat](http://www.fsu.ca/donutcheat)**
- 2) With the support of the College President, the Ombuds became a new member of College Council to help proactively provide input on the development and implementation of College Policies, Procedures and Practices.
- 3) In consultation with the Registrar’s Office the student “ Notice of Appeal” form has been made public and posted on the Fanshawe website as a featured link with the Appeals Policy (A128) to ensure transparency and accessibility for students studying at all Fanshawe regional campuses.
- 4) With the development and launch of the revised COMMS, the Ombuds worked in collaboration with the Centre for Academic Excellence and the FSU President to dedicate a section in the course syllabus in COMMS on Academic Integrity. The goal, to help build awareness and educate students on the importance of integrity in their scholarly work and the consequences of Academic Integrity offences.
- 5) Time was dedicated to contribute to the iMAPP, the Student Services Priority Plan, the Quality Assurance Audit and other strategic initiatives to help support the College Vision, Mission and Values aligning with the Ombuds mission.
- 6) In collaboration with the Centre for Academic Excellence, the Ombuds participated in the Quality Assurance Audit Process. The Auditors Report noted that the existence of the Ombuds Office on campus is a “Best Practice College Model” as part of the quality assurance cycle. (CQAAP 2018 Report).

# FIVE YEAR SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION (2013-2018)

## Includes Updates on Outstanding Recommendations

The College, under the direction of the College President, FSU President, the Senior VP Academic and VP Student Services, is committed to continuous quality improvements of Policies and Procedures to achieve fair, inclusive and equitable practices for student participation in the teaching, learning and employment environments. As a result, the Ombuds Report includes annual recommendations and a summary of achievements on a five year cycle. Please find the recommendations below for 2013-2018, the current status, and resulting outcomes.

### **2012-13 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.

### **2017 Update:**

Following this recommendation, a process review occurred and the new Course Mapping and Management System (COMMS) was developed and implemented in 2016-17 under the guidance of the Centre for Academic Excellence.

### **2013-14 Recommendation:**

That the "Academic Offences" form be reviewed with the goal to improve the content and language to ensure clarity for all parties, and student acknowledgement.

### **2017-18 Update:**

Under the direction of the Senior VP Academic, this review is in progress with members of the College Council, Academic Policy Review Committee and the new Academic Integrity Advisory committee. The revised "Academic Offences" form will be implemented at the outcome of the 2018 Review of the Academic Integrity Policy with the goal to ensure that the process prescribed on the form parallels the new College Academic Integrity policy.

### **2013-14 Recommendation:**

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

### **2017-18 Update:**

In consultation with the Registrar's Office the student "Notice of Appeal" form has been made public and posted on the Fanshawe website with a featured link to the Appeals Policy (A128) to ensure transparency and accessibility for students studying at all Fanshawe campuses.

### **2013-14 Recommendation:**

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 Students be advised that any special needs or accommodation requests need to be reviewed by the appropriate parties to ensure the suitability and, if required, that work placement accommodations or modification assistance be provided.

### **2017-18 Update:** Employment and Student Entrepreneurial Services(ESES)

Every student registered in a Co-operative Education program is required to complete a 6 hour workshop which covers the following topics:

- Co-op policy overview roles and responsibilities
- Resumes and Cover Letters
- Independent job searching and Job site
- Health and Safety (taken directly from the Government of Ontario's website)
- Networking
- Workplace expectations

Students also complete 4 pass/fail assignments (Resume, Independent Job Search, Health and Safety, and apply to a mock job posting)

Counselling & Accessibility Services also help students to develop individual academic accommodation plans and ESES Consultants work in partnership with students, employers and academic programs to help students develop strategies for workplace accommodations.

### **2014-15 Recommendation:**

That the College establish a working group, consisting of internal stakeholders to determine 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.

### **Update: Completed in 2016**

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.

### **2015-16 Recommendation:**

The Office of the Ombuds recommended moving the annual report recommendations and presentation from the winter term to the fall term. This would provide an opportunity to share observations and recommendations to be considered and implemented to effectively impact the subsequent academic year.

### **2017-18 Update:**

The 2015-16 Annual Report was presented to College Council in April 2017. The new Ombuds joined the College in the summer semester 2017 and a province wide College strike occurred in October 2017. As a result, it was recommended that the 2016-17 data be presented to Council in the Fall 2018 combined with the activities in 2017-18 collapsed into one report. We will resume reporting on a single academic year in 2019.

### **2017-18 Recommendation:**

That a review of the College Code of Conduct Policy and the Sexual Violence Policy be undertaken to develop and implement a revised process or "Response Model" that takes into account the intended "spirit" of the Sexual Violence Policy balancing "Duty of Care" and compassion with fairness for all parties involved.





# APPENDIX I - DATA:

## Diagram #1

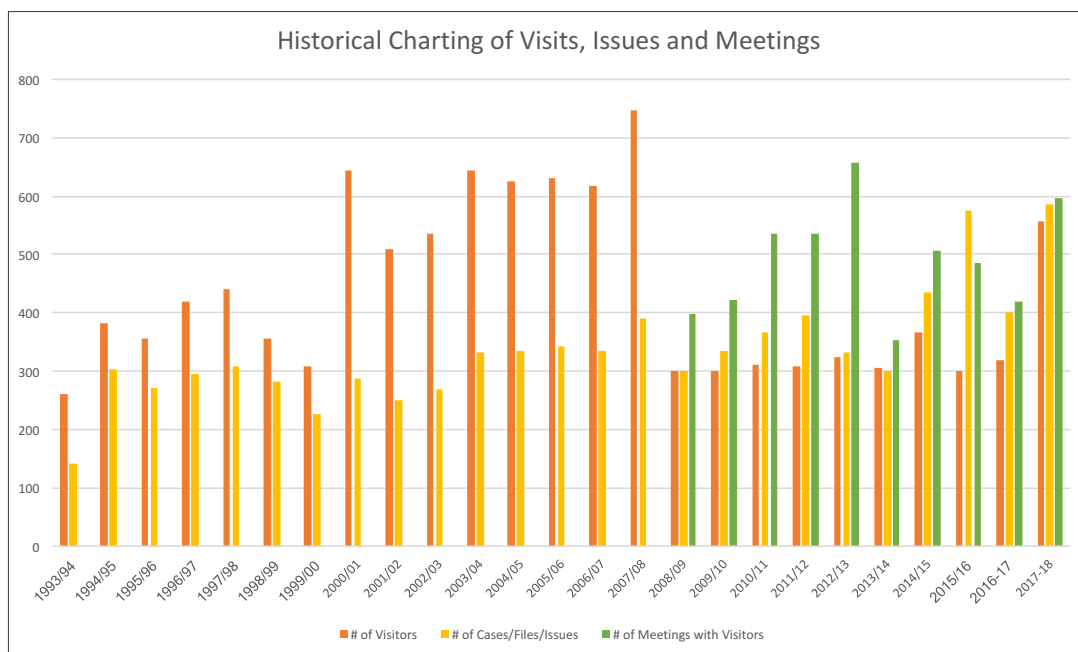
Provides the total number of visitors for each of the past five years. This chart also captures data related to whether the student's fairness issue falls within the Ombuds mandate.

\*Promotes Student self-efficacy, within the Ombuds mentoring model

	Inside Mandate		Outside Mandate	TOTAL
	Resolution without Direct Intervention*	Resolution with Direct Intervention		
2013/14	267	33	7	305
2014/15	257	3	5	366
2015/16	300	2	6	304
2016/17	285	34	1	320
2017/18	480	76	1	557

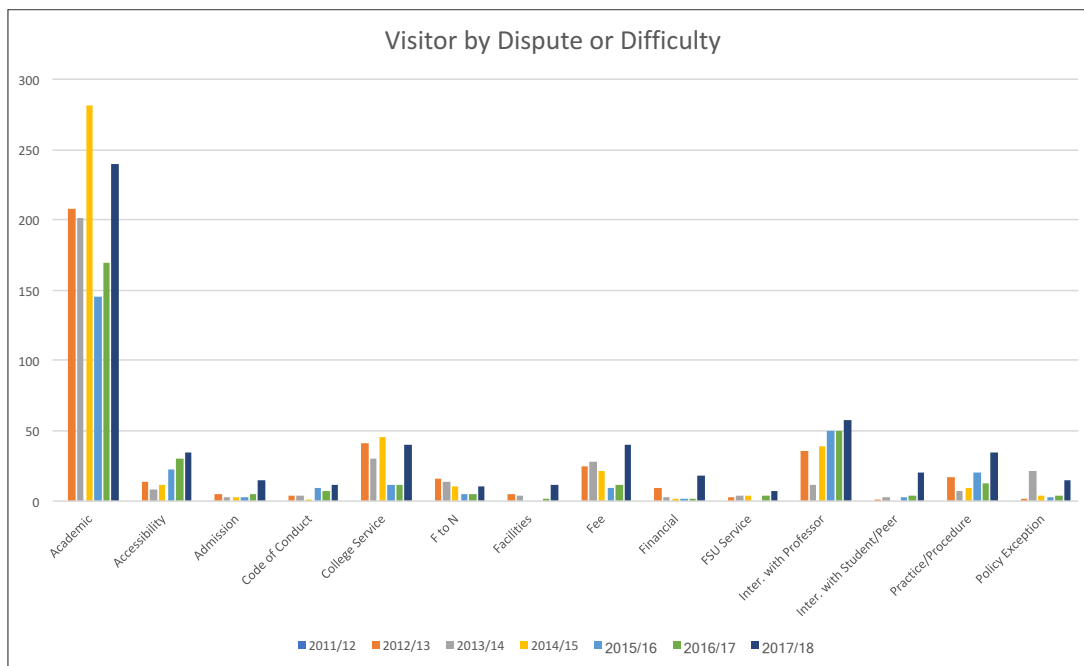
## Diagram #2

Provides a historical perspective of the level of Office activities since the creation of the Office in 1993.



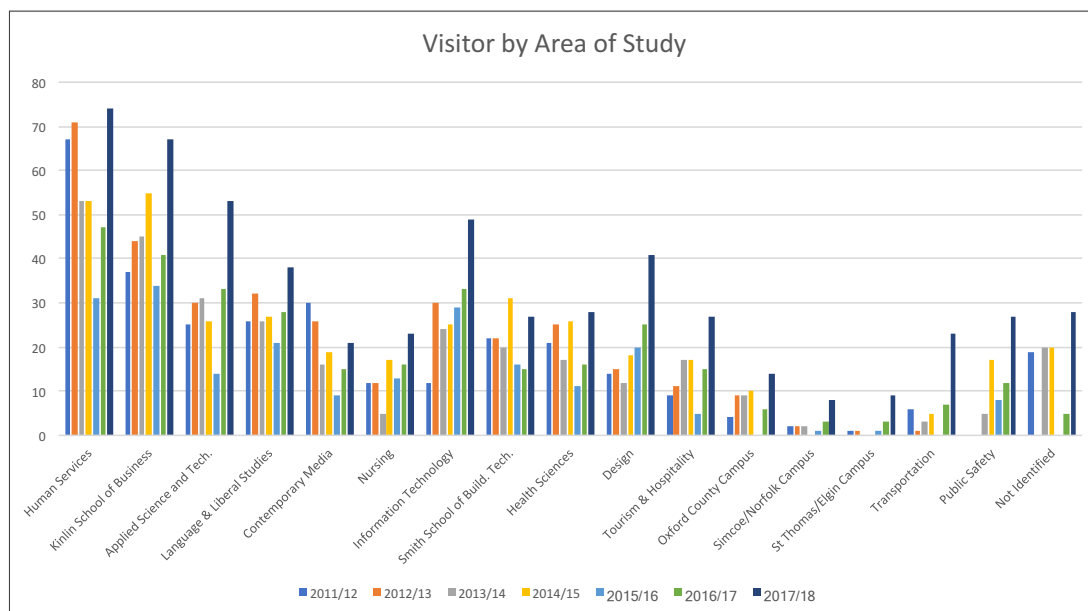
## Diagram #3

Provides the nature of the presenting issue, dispute or concern.



## Diagram #4

The Chart data indicates 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.



## Appendix: Sample of the Academic Integrity Campaign [www.fsu.ca/donutcheat](http://www.fsu.ca/donutcheat)

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY



#### WHAT IS DONUT CHEAT ("DO-NOT-CHEAT")

Donut Cheat is a compilation of Academic Integrity related resources from across the College. This webpage will outline the importance of Academic Integrity and provide resources and tools to be a successful student in College.

These tools include:

- Sessions about Academic Integrity and APA/MLA citation
- Links to citation resources (Owl Purdue and Turnitin)
- Information on grade appeals

Contact Christine Belanger, Advocacy and Communications Coordinator, if you have any questions:

FSU Office - SC 1000

519.452.4109 ext. 6341

[c\\_belanger@fanshawec.ca](mailto:c_belanger@fanshawec.ca)

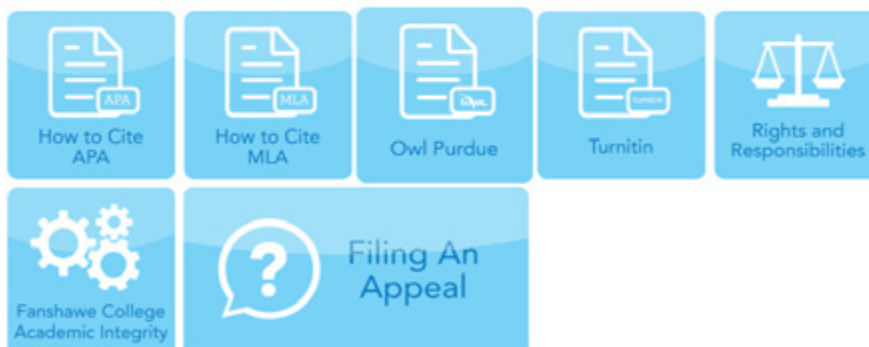
CLICK HERE TO  
**Attend a Session  
 to make sure you  
 Donut Cheat!**

#### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY - WHAT IS IT AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

▶ **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AT FANSHAWE COLLEGE**

▶ **EXAMPLES OF AN ACADEMIC OFFENCE**

▶ **PENALTIES FOR AN ACADEMIC OFFENCE**



#### FANSHAWE COLLEGE POLICIES - ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

- A203: Academic Integrity
- A128: Student Appeals Policy



## Appendix: 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 wrong doing 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 Devlin, President Fanshawe College

Date:

*May 1, 2017*

  
Morganna Sampson, President Fanshawe Student Union

Date:

*May 1<sup>st</sup> 2017*

## Appendix : Office Brochure

### Fanshawe College, Office of the Ombuds

The Ombuds provides confidential, impartial and informal support with the goal of dispute-resolution to all members of the Fanshawe community. The Office of the Ombuds reports to the College President and is funded by both Fanshawe College and the Fanshawe Student Union.

Fanshawe's Ombuds is available to help you be proactive in conflict prevention and provides resources, information and possible alternative resolutions. The Ombuds will help guide toward fair policies and procedures that will help avoid disputes.

Are you out of options? If you have a difficulty or dispute that you've tried to resolve or you believe you've been treated unfairly, the Ombuds may be able to help.

Fanshawe's Ombuds, provides the college community members a safe and comfortable place to discuss concerns. When you don't know who to talk to, where to turn, or what options are available, consider meeting with the Fanshawe College Ombuds.

### The Ombuds

- Listens and helps to analyze your concerns respectfully
- Helps make sense of College policies and procedures and explains how they affect you
- Will brainstorm together with you to explore options or alternative solutions to help resolve your concerns informally
- Provides guidance for students on appeal policies, procedures and practices
- Provides referrals to a support person at the FSU who will be able to help students write their appeals and may be available to accompany students during their appeals process

### The Ombuds may also...

- Connect with academic units or Student Service departments on your behalf
- Make referrals to campus and community resources
- Recommend changes to College policies or procedures with the goal to promote fair and equitable practices

### \*Please Note:

The Ombuds does not act as an advocate or an adjudicator.

### Confidentiality

Protection of your privacy is very important and the Ombuds Office takes its commitment to confidentiality very seriously. Except in cases where there is potential for harm, the Ombuds will never reveal your identity or act on your behalf without your consent.



[fanshawec.ca/ombuds](https://fanshawec.ca/ombuds)

HERE FOR YOU

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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London Campus



[fanshawec.ca/ombuds](https://fanshawec.ca/ombuds)

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