

# **OMBUDS REPORT**

## 2018 - 2019



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

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# 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)



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Fanshawe College is exemplary in providing excellent educational programming and an exceptional student experience in the teaching, learning and student life environments. Similar to Colleges across Ontario who are multidisciplinary educational organizations involving thousands of students, faculty, staff and administrators with diverse backgrounds and perspectives, the laws of human nature will prevail and misunderstanding and policy interpretations may lead to concerns, conflict or disputes that may require resolution.

In 2018, the Provincial Ombudsman, Paul Dube recommended to the Legislative Assembly that all Ontario Colleges and Universities seek to establish an Ombuds Office to promote resolution at the Organization level. Fanshawe College was a pioneer establishing the Office of the Ombuds in 1993. Today, the Office provides confidential, impartial support, guidance, and consultation for students and all members of the College community with the goal of dispute resolution as part of our Quality Assurance Process (CQAAP 2018 Report). While adhering to the principles of Independence, Impartiality and Confidentiality, the Office operates in the interest of fairness for all.

Aligned with the College Vision and Mission, The Office of the Ombuds seeks to promote student success and retention by collaborating with academic units and student service departments to encourage informal dispute resolutions and student progression while upholding the integrity of the curriculum offered at Fanshawe College. The Ombuds Office may also provide 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 by the College and the Fanshawe Student Union.

During the 2018-19 academic year, 460 students contacted the Office of the Ombuds to seek resolution for a variety of concerns primarily related to participation or progression in their academic program, conflict resulting from interactions with their academic area, a service department or fellow students, or to discuss the options for an academic Appeal. Inquiries and referrals were also received from Alumni, family members of students, and the community at large.

Collaborative consultations to determine fair remedies to complex situations, resulted in the majority of cases 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.

The following report highlights a summary of the Office of the Ombuds activities, statistical information, recommendations to the College community and initiatives underway. This report is based on the analysis of data from September 1, 2018 - August 31, 2019.





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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 extend my sincere appreciation to both the College and FSU Presidents, the Senior VP Academic, the VP Student Services, the Ombuds Advisory Committee and members of College Council for their leadership, support and guidance. Your dedication to ensure continuous quality improvements in the teaching, learning and student life environments is commendable.

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 to Darby Deline, Creative Director in the FSU Publications Office for her contributions to the design of this report.

## THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDS



# STUDENT SCENARIOS AND APPROACH TO RESOLUTION, FAIR OUTCOMES

The Office of the Ombuds seeks to engage students and members of the College in the resolution of disputes with the aim to achieve fairness for all parties involved. The Ombuds promotes student self-efficacy, resilience and complex problem solving, while collaborating with Academic Schools and Student Service departments to encourage informal resolutions and alternative remedies, negating the need for a formal Appeal.

The Office may intervene where misunderstandings, “procedural error” or “grounds of compassion”, health, family crisis or other unfortunate life events, impact the students’ ability to perform, often resulting in interpersonal conflict. Fundamental to the Office is the goal to achieve fair process and the promotion of student success, while seeking to uphold the academic integrity of the curriculum offered at Fanshawe College.

This was another year of challenges, opportunities and successful outcomes for students and the College community. In 2018-2019, over 460 students contacted the Ombuds Office to discuss concerns or issues of fairness, to seek confidential guidance and support with interpretation of College policies, procedures and practices. Students primarily presented issues relating to



their academic programs, such as, concerns related to admissions, academic accommodations, fairness in evaluation methodologies or group work, academic integrity offences and options for Appeals. International students comprising 65% of Office visitors also presented concerns relating to academic program status and progression, fees, health insurance coverage, concerns relating to part-time status and academic integrity issues.

In some cases, the stakes were high with financial consequences and emotional impact, involving complicating factors, several departments and academic areas where they attempted to address their concern or issue without resolve. Sometimes the situation had escalated due to breakdown in communication or escalation in behaviors that perpetuated the conflict.

Other student situations related to conflict in interpersonal relationships with classmates, professors or service providers, inappropriate or harassing behaviors and interactions with the community at large. In many of these cases, information and education was shared regarding the “Respectful College” Policy, the College/Student “Statement of Rights & Responsibilities” and the Code of Conduct policy. The collaborative response involved guidance on possible informal resolutions, facilitated mediation, referral to campus services and community resources for additional support.

The Office also received referrals from Academic Schools and student services departments, requesting support for students struggling to navigate the College system when they were not sure where to turn for resolution of complex concerns or unique situations. In some cases, groups of students contacted the Ombuds Office together to address their collective concerns. Rather than submit multiple individual Appeals, the Ombuds explored possible options, informal remedies and facilitated mediation together with the Associate Dean, Dean, Academic Manager or Professor to help resolve their situation in a fair and reasonable manner, often resulting in alternative evaluation opportunities to demonstrate their core learning outcomes and academic progression.

Each student situation was approached with empathy, integrity, respect and dignity for the individual(s) facing challenges or conflict by helping to deescalate emotions and distill the issues down to salient, solvable pieces, providing education relating to College policies and practices while applying a solution-focused impartial lens of inquiry.

By encouraging reflection and helping students to see the “bigger picture” and the perspective of other fellow/other students, their professors or the service provider, involved in the dispute, we were able to determine possible remedies that would be fair, respectful, and appropriate given the circumstances. The goal, to empower the students to feel equipped with strategies to have a “healthy, respectful conversation” with the decision-maker to achieve a fair outcome or resolution.

Balancing the scales of compassion and fairness, efforts were dedicated to ultimately provide students and other visitors with feasible options in collaboration with Academic Schools, Student Services, the Fanshawe Student Union and College departments.

For many complex cases, the “good will”, compassion and collaborative problem solving applied by the Senior Academic VP, Senior Administration and members of the Academic Services Leadership Team (ASLT) resulted in innovative College practices, alternate pathways to student achievement, retention and graduation.



# INITIATIVES & COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

In 2018-19, the Office of the Ombuds collaborated with Academic Schools, the Centre for Academic Excellence, the FSU, Students Services Departments, and the College community on several initiatives and participated in Professional Development opportunities. A few highlights are listed below.

1) Academic Integrity Initiatives included participation in the development of the new Academic Integrity Policy, Procedures and the new E-Learning Modules for students, a campus wide campaign in collaboration with the Senior VP Academic, the Centre for Academic Excellence, the Library, and the Fanshawe Student Union resulting in a successful “Donut Cheat” and the new Academic IntegriTea’s. Reference [www.fsu.ca/donutcheat](http://www.fsu.ca/donutcheat) for valuable resources for students, faculty and staff.



2) The Ombuds Office participated as a member of College Council to provide input on the development of College Policies, Procedures and Practices and the revision of the Council’s Terms of Reference.

3) Contributed to the iMAPP, the Student Services Priority Plan, and strategic initiatives to help support the College Vision, Mission and Values.

4) 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).

5) Outreach activities included presentations to Academic Schools, Student Service departments, participation in College Open House events, Student Services Fairs and the “Here for You Campaign”.

6) The Office of the Ombuds relocated to a newly renovated space in 2019 to ensure a private, impartial, confidential meeting area accessible to students, all members of the College community and campus visitors.

7) Professional development opportunities included attending Senior Leaders Workshops and Osgoode Hall Law School Training Program as a member of the Canadian Association of College and University Ombuds (ACCUO) and gained certification in the “Essentials for Ombuds”.

# FIVE YEAR SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS (2014-2019)

## 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 2014-2019, the current status, and resulting outcomes.

### **2014-15 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.

### **2018-19 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.

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

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

### **2018 Update:**

In consultation with the Registrar’s Office the student “ Notice of Appeal” form was 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.

### **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 2016-17**

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 and students. The working group will continue to identify and implement additional recommendations as they arise and now hosts “Lunch and Learns” to relay updates and address faculty questions on how to best support students.



**2016 Recommendation:**

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

**2018 Update:**

The 2016 Annual Report was presented to College Council in April 2017. The current 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.

**2018-19 Update:**

The Review was completed and resulting recommendations implemented within the revised Code of Conduct and Sexual Violence Policies, Procedures and Protocols. Under the direction of the Vice President Student Services, multi-disciplinary committees were implemented and meet regularly to achieve consistency in practice and applications of policies ensuring outcomes for students are fair, balancing compassion and justice.

**2018-19 Recommendation:**

The Office of the Ombuds will provide feedback from Office visitors to help inform the revisions to Policy A128 Student Appeals in preparation for the review of the policy and procedures in 2021.

**2018-19 Recommendations:**

That the Student Services Review and the “Here for You” campaign seek opportunities to enhance partnerships with Academic Schools to collaborate on early intervention, further reducing barriers to navigate the College system, promoting a holistic student centric approach to student success.

# APPENDIX 1 - DATA:

## Diagram #1

Provides the total number of student 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. In 2018-19, there were 460 visitors and (0) were outside of the Ombuds Mandate.

	Inside Mandate		
	Resolution without Direct Intervention*	Outside Mandate	Total
2014/15	361	5	366
2015/16	298	6	304
2016/17	319	1	320
2017/18	556	1	557
2018/19	460	0	460



# APPENDIX:

SAMPLE OF THE ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CAMPAIGN [WWW.FSU.CA/DONUTCHEAT](http://WWW.FSU.CA/DONUTCHEAT)



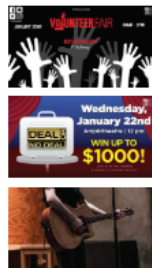
YOUR FSU SERVICES FOOD EVENTS PHOTOS/VIDEOS INTERROBANG VOLUNTEER MENTAL HEALTH CONTESTS DOCUMENTS JOBS MARKETPLACE ADVERTISE



**FSU newsletter**  
The FSU's email newsletter contains updates on current events, contests and much more! Sign up

**FSU texts**  
Text FSU to 71441 to opt-in to our text messaging service. We send texts out (usually 1 per week) about FSU news, events and contests.  
More info

## Upcoming Events



## 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 Chelsea Bancroft, Advocacy and Communications Coordinator, if you have any questions:

FSU Office - SC 1000  
519.452.4109 ext. 6341  
[c\\_bancroft68524@fanshawec.ca](mailto:c_bancroft68524@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](#)

### Get Connected



# 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 7, 2018

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jahmoyia Smith, President Fanshawe Student Union

Date: April 18/2018

# 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.

### Contact

Rose Padacz, Ombuds, Office of the Ombuds, Fanshawe College, B1050-1





[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)

**OFFICE OF THE OMBUDS**

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