Ombudsperson

If you have a problem or conflict with a university policy, procedure, or decision, the Office of the Ombudsperson may be able to help you resolve your issue. You'll be able to express your concerns confidentially and work with the ombudsperson to identify a solution to the problem.

We can help if you have a concern about a faculty member or academic issue, administrative policy or procedure, fees on your student account, disciplinary actions, interpersonal conflicts, or campus services. Sometimes it just helps to gain an understanding of conflict and how to respond.

Ask yourself the following questions, and if the answer is yes, the ombudsperson can help:

- Are you unsure of the policies and procedures that may apply to your situation?
- Do you believe a policy or procedure has been applied unfairly?
- Do you have a complaint about a university office or service?
- Do you want to discuss a sensitive issue so you can evaluate your options?
- Are you unsure about what resources to use?

The ombudsperson will not:

- · represent you in a grievance procedure
- advocate for you in a dispute
- overturn prior decisions
- give you legal advice or representation
- mediate disputes with private individuals or organizations

Visiting the Ombudsperson

When you visit the ombudsperson, you'll be asked to explain your issue and answer the ombudsperson's questions. Before the ombudsperson can help you explore and evaluate your options, he or she needs to know exactly what has happened, who is involved, what actions you've already taken, and how you feel about the situation.

The ombudsperson remains neutral in this discussion and helps you identify your options, including whether you can access other campus resources for assistance. You'll decide what to do next, and before you leave the office, the two of you will clarify the next steps for you to take to resolve the issue.

Understanding Conflict

Depending on your point of view, you may embrace conflict as a good thing—something that enhances your educational experience or supports our democratic society. Or you may try to avoid conflict at all costs. But let's face one fact: on a college campus where a diverse group of students is pursuing individual education goals as well as learning to live together, conflict will exist.

University campuses are places where people from different disciplines, personal points of view, cultures, ages, and experiences must relate to one another in classrooms, meeting rooms, lounges, residence halls, sports arenas, and outdoor spaces. In addition to the exchange of ideas and opinions that occurs in the classroom and elsewhere, people on college campuses will clash over ordinary daily interactions with one another as well as the interpretation and application of policies and rules.

It's important to provide support so that conflict doesn't escalate to cause distrust, fear, or violent behavior within the university setting. At Ball State, we have many ways to respond to and address conflict.

Phone: 765-285-1545 800-382-8540, select 6 TTY: 765-285-9173

Fax: 765-285-2464

or visit us in the Administration Building, room 238

Hours:

8 a.m. to 5 p.m., academic year 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., summer sessions

Link to Office of Ombudsperson:

http://cms.bsu.edu/About/AdministrativeOffices/StudentAffairs/StudentServices/Ombudsperson.aspx