

Faculty Ombudsperson

Problems?

Conflicts?



Disputes?

Concerns?

What is an Ombuds?

An ombudsperson is an informal resource to attain information and assist with problem and conflict resolution. Relatedly, we provide information and clarity on University policies and practices. We also provide confidential and impartial assistance regarding university-related concerns and assist with evaluating available options. We can refer you to the proper person who can assist you further as well. In addition, we serve as a 'sounding board' and assist with communication, conflict resolution, and informal mediation.

Who may see the Faculty Ombuds?

Any faculty member or GA may ask for information, clarification, referrals, or help to address university-related matters or seek advice regarding a problem or conflict.

When should I see an Ombuds?

Anytime! Sometimes you may not know with whom to speak or what options exist to resolve a problem. Sometimes you may be unclear regarding University policies and procedures or CBAs. Sometimes you may have a sensitive question or problem you want to discuss with someone who is impartial and will keep it confidential. These are all great times to speak with the Ombuds! If you are uncertain whether I can help, please get in touch and find out!

What should I expect when working with an Ombuds?

The key facets of an Ombuds' work are trust and safety. We discuss the situation or problem with you 'off the record' to maintain confidentiality. You will be valued and respected during our interaction(s). We strive to earn and keep your trust by assisting you while adhering to the IOA professional standards of Independence, Impartiality, Confidentiality, and Informality.

Standards

There are four standards Ombuds follow. They are from the best practice guidelines of the International Ombuds Association.

Impartiality/Multi-partiality – Ombuds act as a third-party to assist with problems and conflicts and provide information. We can help you develop multiple options for problem/conflict resolution and determine possible next steps, having no personal 'stake' in the outcome.

Informality – Ombuds are a safe place to discuss concerns outside of official 'channels'. Our service is voluntary as well, so you have no obligation to act upon what is discussed or report back.

Independence – Ombuds are independent of other University entities to the highest degree possible. Being independent allows us to work confidentiality on your behalf, communicating depersonalized information to others when needed to meet your needs.

Confidentiality – All contact and communication with an Ombuds are held in strict confidence provided there is no imminent danger to self or others, or as required by law (e.g., court order, current Title 9 issue, report of child or elder abuse). Ombuds do *not* serve as a witness or offer information in any formal proceedings except as required by law.

How can an Ombuds help me?

- Actively listen and help clarify concerns 'off the record'
- Answer questions and provide guidance regarding University policies, procedures and 'formal channels'
- Provide a safe space to discuss sensitive topics and offer an impartial perspective
- Help you identify and evaluate possible options, strategies, resources, or alternative ways to address your problem or conflict
- Make informal, de-identified inquiries on your behalf and refer you to the appropriate person or office given the nature of your problem
- Facilitate communication between you and another individual at SIUC (may include coaching and role-playing if you desire)
- Provide assistance with conflict resolution by serving as an intermediary
- Informally mediate in an impartial manner
- Identify systemic problems and report them to administration in a deidentified fashion to reduce problem escalation
- Recommend modifications to upper administration regarding University policy

There is no limit to the number of concerns you can bring. If you are unsure of how to move forward with your problem/concern, I am happy to help you work through it.

An Ombuds does not:

- Provide legal advice or mental health counseling
- Act as an advocate or representative
- Accept 'notice' on behalf of the University or extend timelines or deadlines for formal complaints/grievances
- Participate in any formal proceedings, procedure or investigation, either within or outside of the University.
- Substitute for any process or procedure covered by SIU Policy or a CBA
- Adjudicate, arbitrate, or serve as a witness.
- Perform formal mediation
- Make binding decisions or make, revise, overrule, rescind, or enforce policies
- Make administrative decisions, assign sanctions, or determine guilt or innocence
- Get involved with any issue constituting a conflict of interest or commitment
- Maintain formal or official records or create records with identifiable information
- Discuss or address concerns/problems that fall outside of the University



Dr. Michelle Kibby (she/her)



Dr. Kibby has been with SIUC since 2004. She has served two Faculty Senate terms, including serving on Executive Council. She is a full professor within the School of Psychological and Behavioral Sciences and is a clinical psychologist. She also is a member of the [International Ombuds Association](#).

We can meet in my office, your office, another mutually agreed upon location, by phone, or virtually (e.g., Zoom).

Phone: 618-453-2533

Email: faculty.ombudsperson@siu.edu.

Email is not confidential. Please only use email to schedule an appointment.

Office: Anthony Hall 8

*If you are in administration but your problem/concern is related to your role as faculty member, please see Dr. Kibby. If your problem/concern is regarding a staff member under your supervision, please see Ms. Lori Foster for assistance.