

Ombudsman gives sanction to UNL's faculty, students

By Patti Gallagher

Where can a staff member who has been fired without explanation, a student who has paid tuition for a class they've dropped, or a professor who can't control a wild class all go for solace and sanction?

The office of the Ombudsman can serve all their needs.

The UNL Ombudsman is Al Dittmer, assisted by Marilyn Overcast, who work in being the "middle man" for the university. Their office is located at 116 Lyman Hall, and is open 8 a.m. Monday through Friday.

Dittmer describes his office as the "informal route to solving the problems of students, administration, faculty and staff."

The Ombudsman can handle the problems of the entire university community, Overcast said.

Dittmer said an average day, if such a thing existed, might include a call from a student wanting to know when his instructor was going to tell his class about the grading policy, or a visit from an instructor who doesn't know what to do with a student who seems to constantly disrupt class.

Both Dittmer and Overcast emphasized the fact that an "average day" does not really exist in the Ombudsman's office.

"Every situation is different. They all have their own unique wrinkle," Dittmer said.

Because the Ombudsman is open to every member of UNL to "air their problems or at least be directed," according to Overcast, it is unique from any other advising-type committee that exists on-campus.

The Ombudsman stresses confidentiality and impartiality, according to Dittmer. They never take a side in an issue, serving only as a neutral advisor or director.

When a person brings a problem to the Ombudsman, Dittmer and Overcast have two approaches to solving it. First, the Ombudsman advises where they can go for immediate action. Secondly, he intervenes in the source of the problem to solve it.

In advising alternative solutions to a problem, both Dittmer and Overcast have come to know who solves what, and where they can be found.

According to Overcast, the Ombudsman's office deals with the widest range of problems on the university campus.

"We strive to keep channels of communication open," she said, "and strive to meet the needs for documentation in treating individuals equally and fairly to answer questions as accurately and thoroughly as possible."

Overcast encouraged persons to bring their problems in early, when their job can be effective. She advised not waiting until the last day of finals to come to the office and ask for help.

Rebuttal sent to NU regents

Rebuttal information concerning the Daily Nebraskan's coverage of an alleged incident in English 253A Women and Poetry class has been forwarded to the Board of Regents, members of the School of Journalism faculty, Chairman of the English Department John Robinson, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences Max Larsen, and members of the Daily Nebraskan's publication board.

In a cover letter, the rebuttal's author,

English instructor Maria M. Lemon repeated her demands that the Daily Nebraskan publish a full retraction to its coverage of the alleged incident, and an apology to class instructor Linnea Johnson.

In addition, it recommends removing all those directly involved in printing the stories from the paper and restructuring the quality of supervision provided the Daily Nebraskan.

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