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## Ombudsman aids problem solving

By Peggy Reichardt

problems, Ombudsman Al grounds and custodial Dittmer deals with UNL workers. Sixty-three staff staff, faculty and student members in 1975-76 and 72 complaints on a daily basis. in 1980-81 came to him

Dittmer said as ombuds- with a problem to discuss. man, he tries to help people solve their problems on an informal, conversational basis. He said solving the problem informally is "basically the best way" to handle most of the complaints that he gets.

grievances. Dittmer said class.

1980-81.

staff members are those university employees earning If you think you've got an hourly wage, such as

> Staff grievances include problems with a supervisor, salaries, equity and working conditions, Dittmer

Faculty members used the ombudsman's services Most grievances come 52 and 54 times in 1975-76 from students, Dittmer said. and 1980-81 respectively. Dittmer said 475 stud- Their grievances include ents contacted him during questions and problems the 1975-76 academic year with promotion and tenure, and 431 students visited in evaluations of their performance, salary and academic Staff members constitute problems with students, the next largest group with such as student conduct in

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When someone comes to the ombudsman for help. Dittmer said the problem usually can be worked out. However, if it is more serious and needs special attention, Dittmer said there is a formal grievance process to be followed.

For staff members there is a three-step process, followed for grievances against a supervisor, Dittmer said. First, the employee must approach the supervisor and discuss the problem. If it cannot be solved this way. the employee then puts his grievances in writing and submits it to the supervisor, who in turn responds to the letter.

The grievances are reviewed by Gwen Combs, director of Personnel, Dittmer said. She renders a case opinion, and if her opinion differs from the supervissor's, hers supercedes. If it is the same as the supervisor's, the employee can ask for a hearing to solve the problem. The panel for a hearing would consist of three peers who work with the employee.

If faculty questions cannot be solved informally, Dittmer said he refers them to one of three committees.

The Faculty Senate Grievance Committee is a general committee, Dittmer said. The Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee handles questions pertaining to teachers' abilities to teach, in a free manner, however they choose. The committees also take care of problems concerning an instructor's tenure.

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