

**OFFICE OF THE STUDENT OMBUDSMAN
and COMMUTER STUDENT SERVICES
Annual Report 2004-2005
Chris DeVos**

INTRODUCTION — OFFICE OF THE STUDENT OMBUDSMAN

Mission

To provide personalized services to UNF students in order to temper any negative impact of the University's growth and bureaucracy on students' experiences here, increase their satisfaction, and decrease the likelihood of legal liability for the institution.

Purposes

The primary purposes of this office are:

- To help prevent or to respond to student problems, whether academic or non-academic in nature
- To contribute to retention efforts, timely graduation, and successful accomplishment of other University-related goals
- To "humanize" the institution by demonstrating that the University cares about its students

The Ombudsman fulfills these purposes by services such as:

- Acting as an advisor, information resource, or referral agent in directing students to the appropriate place for addressing, investigating or resolving the student's concern
- Helping to resolve problems that have not been rectified through other university staff, faculty, or services
- Attempting to increase student satisfaction by educating students about the University's various policies and procedures, including grievance
- Serving as an advocate for fairness and due process by recommending the creation or revision of policies or administrative procedures relating to students

As a change agent, the Ombudsman is concerned with continuous improvement of the University's services, programs, processes, procedures, and policies, as they affect both current and future students, and accomplishes this by recommending corrective action at any institutional level. The cornerstone principles of any ombudsman office (according to the University and College Ombuds Association) are confidentiality, informality, neutrality, and independence of action.

During 04-05 the office consisted of the Student Ombudsman, Chris DeVos, and a part-time OPS student assistant who served as receptionist and errand-runner.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS/CHANGES

- Selected for the inaugural class of President Delaney's *LeadershipUNF* program and collaborated on a project which recommended the creation of a UNF-Community Outreach Council concerned with diversity initiatives
- Changed reporting line to report directly to the VP for Student and International Affairs
- Increased the number of students served from 404 to 582, a 44% increase in one year
- Helped solve student complaints about being unable to obtain SMS medical excuses for absences, through clarification of boundaries and faculty education
- Formed an advisory board and held first meeting
- Just after the end of the office's annual reporting period, a full-time assistant ombuds was assigned, in the hope and expectation that this will be a permanent addition to the office

BUDGET

Although the reporting structure changed to the VP for Student and International Affairs mid-way through the fiscal year, the Ombudsman continued to be a part of the Student Life budget until July 2005. The significant purchase this fiscal year was the printing of revised brochures (2,000 copies).

STAFF ACTIVITIES

Chris is a continuing member of both NASPA and the University and College Ombud Association (UCOA). She was an active member of the UCOA annual conference planning committee for communications (she was the primary developer of the printed conference program) and she of course attended that conference as well. Her professional development also included the *LeadershipUNF* program (with a project related to diversity), selective Banner training, and participation in the UCOA online case study list-serve.

Chris continued to be a member of the LGBT support network, served on the Matriculation Committee, and attended Academic Advisors Council meetings. She usually sat in on the Committee on Ethics and Civility in a consultative capacity. She became a member of the Disability Resource Center Advisory Board. And she also established an Advisory Board for the Office of the Ombudsman, for which she developed a guidebook.

In addition to issues addressed with SG (see "*Accomplishment of Objectives 04-05*"), Chris worked with professional staff, faculty, and administrators on issues such as response to charges of academic dishonesty, requests by parents for letters for their health insurance companies, campus building signs, LGBT student complaints, and how to increase awareness of the fee petition option. She recommended that the UNF Strategic Plan incorporate the review of policies and procedures in order to assess their "student

friendliness.” She also wrote a letter to the Spinnaker warning about possible identity theft.

ACCOMPLISHMENT OF OBJECTIVES 04-05

Collaborate with SG on e-mail as official notification issue.

Achieved. Several times Chris provided SG with information on the problems that have resulted when e-mail has been used as the only method of notification of important information. However, the student acting as “student advocate” did not appear interested in pursuing this issue.

Explore Blackboard as aid to communication with students

Changed objective. A web portal called my*Wings* was introduced to staff and it seems more appropriate to use that new technology for expanding communication with students. Chris will pursue training in content delivery. In addition, it was determined that students can already self-serve through Blackboard for such commuter issues as finding roommates. Student Affairs and Student Government recommended (directly to the Blackboard administrator) the addition of a ride board area.

Attend UCOA conference for further ombud training

Achieved. Presentations attended included: legal and professional standards, adding value to an organization, case management and reporting, resolving claims of academic dishonesty, and assessment and marketing.

Research how other ombud offices conduct assessment

Achieved. Assessment is generally acknowledged as being complicated by the confidential nature of the ombudsman service. This office is already collecting the following measurements identified by other ombuds as safeguarding that standard of practice: number of cases and number of presentations, annual report summaries of activity, policy and procedural changes recommended in response to concerns brought to the office, unsolicited satisfaction feedback, responsiveness to and participation in university diversity efforts. For the coming year, Chris intends to supplement those measurements with (at the very least) a comparison of her office’s practices to all the Standards of Practice as defined by UCOA.

Create resources for commuter students

Partially achieved. Disseminated information on off-campus housing service. Stocked brochures from JTA and Melrose Apartments, Jacksonville apartment guides, brochures from several Student Affairs offices, and a great variety of forms and information from the Registrar’s Office. Decided not to expand notebooks of degree program information due to space limitations and did not develop display space for those that already exist.

Refine system of referral to other campus offices

Achieved, although later than the stated goal date. The referral slip based on that used by CADIC was created and will be put into use during the summer semester.

Continue working on quality relationships with administrators and offices

Achieved, with slight change in evaluation measures. Referrals from the ombudsman to other offices were not measured, but will be during the upcoming year. The ombudsman continued to give to and receive from other offices much positive feedback. The advisory board was used as one means of solidifying relationships with other staff members and requesting an honest discussion of areas that need improvement. Other measures related to this goal included the sharing of office statistics, recommending resource people to assist in other offices' goals, and recommending other offices' staff for awards and recognition. One disappointment with regard to the relationship with the Controller's Office was the loss of the privilege to make special requests to extend the deadline for fee petitions.

Work with SG Student Advocate (or similar position) to improve service to students

Partially achieved. Issues were identified and discussed with an SG representative, but that person did not usually inform Chris as to whether further action was taken. Issues discussed included:

- various student appeals
- need for attendance-taking with regard to Financial Aid requirements
- sexual harassment and the availability of the EOP office to students
(Chris made inquiry with EOP)
- need for administrative withdrawal of students who register for but do not attend classes
(Chris pursued with Academic Affairs; issue is ongoing)
- faculty expectation regarding medical documentation of absences
(Chris pursued with Student Medical Services and the Faculty Association)

Continue service on Matriculation Committee

Achieved. Attended almost all meetings and communicated information regarding the nature of medical withdrawals, among other issues. Kept all information provided at the meetings. This is a most valuable committee for Chris to be serving on.

Revise brochure and assist with website revision

Achieved. The Ombudsman's brochure was revised, and was distributed on a regular basis throughout the year. New information was included on issues such as the non-confidentiality of e-mail, and the fact that the Ombudsman's Office is not an "office of record" for the University. Chris gave her input to the Dean of Students on recommended revisions to the Student Life and Ombudsman's Office web pages. The Ombudsman's web pages will be revised during the next round of Student Affairs website revisions, according to the VP for Student and International Affairs.

PUBLICIZING THE OFFICE AND CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT

The office was actively publicized in the following ways: presence at orientations; updated information for the Student and Parent Handbooks; development of a revised brochure; regular and repeated distribution of brochures, business cards and cardholders to many offices around campus; mentor, tutor, and RA training; classroom presentations; and a front page Spinnaker article. Chris also attended or had representation at numerous

campus events; participated in various charity drives and showcases; presented workshops; and participated in other units' evaluations, studies, and awards nominations.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

In a number of cases, complete demographic information was not obtained due to lack of time, emotional state of client, possibility of misunderstanding, etc. Information on major fields of study and colleges of enrollment is available upon request.

The incredibly wide variety of reasons that the services of the Student Ombudsman are sought is worth noting. Beyond the major categories listed in this section, the reasons have ranged from a complaint that a faculty member slandered a student, to a parent's complaint that a student was charged with purchasing stolen merchandise, to attempting to obtain past class work of a deceased student for the parent's memory book.

% of cases	03-04	04-05
Open/Ongoing as of 6/10/05	8%	4%
Closed by 6/10/05	92%	96%
Repeat customer	4%	13%

Year	Number of cases
98-99*	180
99-00*	200
02-03	229
03-04	404
04-05	582

(*Based on annual reports for previous ombuds working equivalent of half-time in the role. Data for 00-01 not available.)

Cases initiated by	03-04	04-05
Student	69%	65%
UNF staff/dept.	19%	10%
Parent	10%	18%
Other/unknown	2%	8%

Cases by gender	03-04	04-05
Female	63%	59%
Male	37%	38%
Unknown*	1%	3%

(*unknown, when e-mail contact name did not reveal gender, or when data is simply missing)

% cases by ethnicity (when known)	03-04	04-05
African-American	17%	21%
Asian, Pacific Islander	4%	1%
Caucasian	65%	68%
Hispanic	9%	7%
Multi-ethnic or other	5%	3%

(in 04-05, 379 of 582 cases = unknown. Ombudsman did not request such information when contact was purely by phone or e-mail, to avoid distraction of needing to explain why such information was being requested, as well as to avoid any possible misunderstanding.)

Age (when known)	03-04	04-05
Range	18 to 55 years	18 to 82
Average	25.3 years old	24.5

(in 04-05, 387 of 582 cases = unknown)

% at class level, at last enrollment (when known)	03-04	04-05
Freshman	19%	21%
Sophomore	14%	14%
Junior	30%	25%
Senior	23%	26%
Masters	10%	11%
Other	4%	3%

(in 04-05, 311 of 582 cases = unknown)

% at current student status (when known)	03-04	04-05
Registered	83%	85%
Current, but not registered	12%	8%
Former student	4%	3%
Alumni	<1%	1%
Other	1%	2%

(in 04-05, 106 of 582 cases = unknown)

Initial method of contact	03-04	04-05
Phone	49%	47%
Walk-in	29%	27%
E-mail	19%	15%
Letter/FAX/Other	<1%	1%
Unknown	3%	9%

Primary and secondary reasons for seeking assistance

The following tables represent the initial and the secondary requests of the student or the “solutions” considered, but do not imply that a course of action was necessarily followed through to completion.

Primary reason (when known)	03-04	04-05
Withdrawal (pre-deadline)	12%	10%
Withdrawal (regular, late)		3%
Medical withdrawal	11%	8%
Petition extend deadline to withdraw (same semester)	10%	5%
Petition extend deadline to withdraw (retroactive)		6%
Petition waive policy		
Academic advising	10%	8%
Absence notice (ill/injured/hospitalized)	8%	8%
Fee petition assistance	8%	9%
Appealing academic decision (incl. grade)	6%	5%
Financial Aid	4%	4%
Complaint about faculty	4%	4%
Complaint about staff/dept.	3%	2%
Hold	3%	N/A
Three-peat charge	2%	1%
Degree program complaint	2%	1%
Death of student	2%	1%
Academic misconduct charge	N/A	2%
Debt to UNF (incl. hold)	N/A	4%
Didn't know rule/option	N/A	1%
Failed drop/withdrawal	N/A	1%
Financial difficulty	N/A	1%
Other	15%	15%

Secondary reason (when known)	04-05
Financial aid	4%
Fee petition	26%
Academic advice	15%
Complaint about staff/dept/system	10%
Any form of withdrawal	11%
Other	34%

Referral source (when known)	03-04	04-05
Various administrative units	17%	14%
Records & Registration	15%	16%
Student Affairs	14%	3%
Advising (incl. ACE)	13%	14%
Counseling Center	9%	3%
Financial Aid	8%	5%
Disability Resource Center	5%	4%
Faculty member	5%	6%
Advertising, web, student	4%	6%
Student Life and SG	4%	5%
Residence Life	4%	1%
Self	N/A	13%
Controller/Cashier	N/A	6%
Other	2%	3%

(in 04-05, X cases of Y = unknown)

Case days of work*	03-04	04-05
Range	1 to 17 days	1 to 24 days
Average	2.6 days	2.7 days

*"Case days of work" refers to the total number of days on which the Ombudsman did something in support of the student's need or request. This might be as simple as an e-mail exchange, or as involved as a half-day's research. Generally, the greater the number of case days of work, the more complicated the student's problem or concern.

Consultation Statistics

This section concerns times when a non-student member of the UNF community and the Ombuds consulted about a student or issue that did not become an official "case."

Ombuds Action	03-04 (Total = 95)	04-05 (Total = 108)
Provided information (with or without referral)	71%	51%
Provided advice	24%	24%
Provided other service	4%	22%
Relayed complaint	N/A	3%

The percentage shift since 03-04 from provision of information (and possibly referral) to provision of some service is most likely due to a greater recognition of the usefulness of the ombuds office among faculty, staff, and administrators, as well as the provision of a large number of training workshops.

Offices consulting with ombuds, listed from most to fewest contacts:

1. College/Department/Faculty/Administration
2. Various student service offices

3. Advising (includes all ACE personnel)
4. Counseling Center
5. (Tie) DRC and Student Life
6. (Tie) Off campus people and Residence Life
7. (Tie) Financial Aid and SG

Summary and implications of statistical information

(Comparisons between 03-04 and 04-05)

- The percent of clients who are recognized as “repeat” jumped from 4 to 13% as an artifact of: the longer time period the students have had in which to re-contact the ombuds, the growing number of past clients, and the ombuds closing out cases a bit faster this year.
- The total number of clients increased by 44%, while the number of consultations with non-student members of the campus community increased by 14%
- A greater percentage of parents initiated student cases with the ombuds, although a smaller percentage of UNF faculty or staff did so. The reason for this change is unclear.
- There was relative stability in the gender breakdown, ethnicity, age, class level, and registration status of clients. In future, this data may only need to be reported every other year or so.
- In 04-05, 32% of the clients were ethnic minorities.
- The following categories, reported as primary issues of clients, have unreliable numbers due to a change in data collection: debt to UNF, didn’t know rule/option, failed drop/withdrawal, and financial difficulty.
- Changes in referral source percentages are explainable as follows. The categories of self and controller/cashier were just added this year. The drop in referrals from Student Affairs is likely due to greater awareness of the Ombuds Office so that students go (or are sent) there directly. The drop in referrals from the Counseling Center is due clarifying what constitutes an appropriate referral.
- Differences between reporting years with regard to consultation statistics is likely an artifact of refining the definitions of various ombuds activities or as noted beneath the chart.

EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT

Due to the confidential nature of the office, assessment is recognized by UCOA as an area requiring forethought and caution. Chris is continuing to explore appropriate methods of assessing the quality of service provided by the ombuds office. See *“Accomplishment of Objectives 04-05”* for a complete description of current office evaluation practices. Also note the implied client satisfaction in the fact that 13% of this year’s customers had used the office before. In addition, Chris collected the following spontaneous comments (made on cards or by e-mail) from users of the office’s services:

- “Again, my sincere thanks for all your efforts. I truly feel that this would not have had the conclusion it had without your help.”
- “Thanks very much for listening to me and giving me some direction in my pursuit to stay in school.”

- “Thank you so much for being so great about getting answers and getting stuff done. I wouldn’t be back in school without your help! I really appreciate everything you’ve done for me.”
- “Thanks for taking us in the right direction with [our son’s] medical withdrawal. We greatly appreciate all your time and help.”
- “Thank you so much for your help in removing... [the Fs] from my transcript. You were very helpful and I appreciate your time and effort.”
- “...thank you again for the wisdom and knowledge you shared... during my process of rekindling my life and opportunities out at UNF.”
- Records & Registration – “Great job Chris! Thanks for all you do!”
- Budget Office – “Thanks so much, Chris. I wish more kids knew about you and what you can do to help them...”
- President’s Office – “Once again, thank you. Your reputation for excellence reaches far beyond your job description.”
- Student Medical Services – “I really am serious when I tell people that [you are a marvelous resource]. Chris, you are a very valuable asset not only to the students but also to folks like me...”
- Academic Affairs – “Thanks for your support this year... [you] made my job a lot easier.”

Unhappy “customers”

There was only one client this year who expressed direct unhappiness with the Ombuds Office, complaining that Chris’s explanation of the ombuds’ role (which doesn’t include personal advocacy) only meant that yet another UNF office had failed to serve her as requested.

Comparisons to other institutions

The following information was from a spring 2003 survey conducted by The Ombudsman Association.

Within academic ombuds offices:

- More than 50% reported directly to the university president
- 4% of their possible constituents use the ombuds office during the year
- 2/3 of the ombuds have that role as their sole responsibility
- Each office sees approximately 312 customers per ombuds per year

Based on my own “survey” of 43 university ombuds websites (members of UCOA), only 30% serve only or primarily students. The rest serve the entire campus community. A dozen or so UCOA members responded to my direct request for information about their offices; although the number of customers served per year varies widely, the average is about 425 cases per ombuds.

Therefore, the UNF Office of the Student Ombudsman differs from the majority of academic ombuds offices in: reporting to the VP level, seeing only students (these first two “differences” are presumably related), and annually serving somewhere between 38% to 88% more students per ombuds. The UNF ombuds does, however, match the 4% figure quoted above in terms of the per cent of possible constituents served in the year.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS/CHALLENGES

Handling growing numbers

The continuing growth in the number of students served suggests that there could be as many student concerns and problems presented as there are Ombudsman working hours available. This is despite only a small part of the potential clientele being aware of the Ombudsman's existence. At times it is very difficult to serve students on a walk-in basis, so in future more emphasis will be put on promoting appointments. The addition of an assistant ombudsman will not only allow the office to expand the number of students served, but would hopefully allow time for more proactive education of that population. Chris is considering methods of ensuring that students using the office truly need the ombuds' assistance; currently a fair percentage of her customers could be obviously and adequately served elsewhere on campus. The creation of the One Stop Center by Enrollment Services may siphon off some students that would otherwise be referred to the Ombuds by improving communication among formerly separate units.

Access and legitimacy

Another challenge is to have the office perceived, as the UCOA Handbook states, "as an influential campus resource.... [having] the ear and the support of the university's highest level administrators." Again from the UCOA Handbook: "For ombuds who work with one constituency, it is important that all constituent groups be informed that the ombuds is not an advocate for members of that group but rather one who attempts to promote fair processes." Reporting to the Vice President for Student and International Affairs has already given and will continue to give the Ombuds greater legitimacy, access to resources, and the opportunity to speak regularly with the University's highest administrators about perceived trends in student issues and the benefits (including monetary savings) that the Office of the Student Ombudsman provides to the University as a whole. The newly purchased ombuds-specific, case management and reporting software should be of enormous benefit in identifying trends and producing high quality presentations.

Physical space

The office location, while convenient and visible due to a central location, is not large enough to accommodate more than one client at a time, requires moving a chair out of the office before admitting a wheelchair into the office, is not soundproofed, provides no space for an assistant ombudsman to see students in privacy, has an inadequate and too visible "waiting area," and has no heat or air conditioning. Of these issues, private space for an assistant ombuds is the most pressing. Several years from now when the new student union comes online, all these problems should be resolved.

Moving petition forms

When a student wishes to make a petition to waive university policy or extend a deadline date (usually the latter, to retroactively withdraw from a semester's worth of classes), reinstate classes, or petition fees or debts, the Ombuds offers to move the paperwork for the student if the student is ill, working a full time (inflexible) job, or lives out of town.

Because most departments will not route the forms for the student, the Ombuds' assistance is the only way these students can actually use their right to petition. However, this imposes a serious time burden on the office. If a student is trying to retroactively withdraw from 4 courses, this would require 4 forms, each needing 4 different signatures before being submitted to the Registrar for forwarding to the Provost's Office. So for the average student's request there would be 16-20 persons and/or places with whom the Ombuds interacts. Any of the forms may encounter roadblocks such as the instructor being unavailable due to not teaching during the current semester, a signer wanting to debate the request because they assume the Ombuds is advocating for approval, a request for further information, the form being lost within the department, a long wait for someone to sign which then holds up the processing of all the other forms (the forms must be submitted in a group to the Registrar). Recently Chris was told that a department (typically a most helpful one) was holding on to the form until the instructor returned from Romania in several months! For several types of student petition, the Ombuds created a special explanation sheet to e-mail to students because merely explaining the bureaucratic process had become so cumbersome. And then there is the issue of preparing the forms for routing (attaching documentation, identifying who the signers would be and their campus locations), and often needing to move them with urgency when the withdrawals must occur in time for some next step with a deadline. If the University could create a system for a student to handle such petitions electronically, that alone would save the Ombuds office several hours a week, and save many students enormous amounts of time and frustration.

Communications: Website and other methods

The Ombuds needs to be prepared for the next Student Affairs website update by planning a comprehensive set of web pages for her office. For now, Chris is trying to locate (or recreate) a PDF made from her office's brochure and get that attached to the present dead-end link. Once trends in student issues are more clearly identified and discussed with pertinent offices, the Ombuds can help lead the way in producing new, trend-related informational materials for students. Through personal presentations and web pages, Chris intends to make data collected by her office available to all segments of the campus community, in an attempt to make the office functions more transparent and to communicate the value that the office adds to the university.

Demonstrating value

The Office of the Student Ombudsman has a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate its value to UNF during this early period of "branding" of the institution. This office clearly helps foster "an environment conducive to learning" though the brand aspect of *individualized attention*. The ombuds intends to seek opportunities to make formal presentations about office services (including statistics recorded and important trends identified) to administrators at many levels and in many areas, with an emphasis on how the office adds value in multiple ways to UNF.

Other offices' communication and follow-through issues

The ombuds has identified a continuing issue that consumes precious office time, but she is not yet completely certain how to address the problem. Offices may refer student to the

ombuds when they could have served the students themselves by going up their own chain of command, by communicating directly with other campus offices involved in the issue, and/or by being more thorough in their explanations to students. Continuing discussions during Advisory Board meetings and future meetings with high level administrators may lead to improvements with these problems.

OBJECTIVES FOR 05-06

1. Compare office practices to UCOA Standards of Practice
2. Hire and train an Assistant Ombudsman to help handle cases
3. Develop office charter and seek administrative approval
4. Continue working toward expanding office's physical space
5. Recommend to other offices how fee petition option can be better communicated
6. Develop informational brochure explaining all forms of course withdrawal, comparing benefits and drawbacks
7. Re-route withdrawal questions through advisors first
8. Continue to pursue administrative withdrawal for non-attendance
9. Complete plans for ombuds facilities in future Student Union
10. Attend training on the use of focus groups and develop plan for doing such groups in relation to office services and facilities

CONCLUSION

The Office of the Student Ombudsman saw a busy and productive year, assisting over 400 students and having over 100 consultations with faculty and staff on other student-related matters. Providing information, personalized service, and assistance with decision-making were some primary activities of the office. One significant problem area for students may eventually be rectified due to the Ombudsman's initiative of recommending that administrative withdrawals be done for non-attending students.

A number of other problem areas have been identified for continuing work. UNF should continue to improve: the ways it provides important information to students, cross-department collaboration, following problems through to completion, and going up the administrative chain before referring problems out-of-department. Students want a defined procedure to complain about faculty, with some idea of whether the complaint will be taken seriously and acted upon. Academic appeals continue to be burdensome, with students considered guilty until they can prove themselves innocent, and a time frame that is far too lengthy. And the electronic routing and signing of forms is an idea whose time has come; making this possible would save much time and frustration for everyone.

There is significant diversity in the clientele served by the Office of the Student Ombudsman, with 32% of student clients identifying themselves as non-Caucasian. Withdrawal from one or more classes is the most common presenting problem. Students are referred from many and various areas of campus, with the top three being Records &

Registration, the advising centers, and self-referrals. The biggest challenge ahead is the rapidly increasing demand for services from the Office. Other challenges include developing further office-assessment methods, encouraging better University-wide communication with students and among offices, and recommending the streamlining of the bureaucracy on many fronts.

COMMUTER STUDENT SERVICES

Commuter Student Services, originally envisioned as comprising a lounge space where commuters could congregate both during the day and after normal business hours, has been bundled together with the Office of the Student Ombudsman. Currently there is no lounge area and a very limited number of “services.” The tiny waiting area holds as many wall display racks as possible, and these are filled with forms, brochures, and handbooks from all over campus. This area is open 24/7, so these materials are available to students on demand, but they are not much used. The Student Ombudsman is available for after-hours meetings with commuter students on request; in the past year there has been not one request, as most business can be easily transacted by phone and e-mail. About 5 people have identified themselves specifically as a commuter student when requesting a service.

To expand into a programming and/or educational function for commuters is beyond the Student Ombudsman’s available time, nor does the role combination make much sense. It seems disingenuous to advertise Commuter Student Services, given the current available offerings. I would recommend repositioning this service within the student activities area or quietly dissolving it until the Student Union is built and new staff and facilities have been added. An ombuds office at a university of this size and increasing complexity must have ombuds responsibilities as its only focus if it is to attain excellence and campus-wide credibility.