

Ombudsperson Annual Report, 1 July 2017 - 30 June 2018

General

This year brings to a close my fifth year as University Ombudsperson. In addition to attending to individual cases as they arose, I continued to sit on the Academic Standing and Admissions Policy Committee (ASAP) as a non-voting member for all monthly meetings. As in the past, I was privy to all information and communications and actively participated in discussions leading to decisions. I am satisfied that the committee performed its work with fairness and due diligence.

I maintained wider professional contacts with the national and provincial umbrella organizations Association of Canadian College and University Ombudspersons and Association des Ombudsmans des Universités du Québec. I am a voting member in good standing with both groups.

Case Statistics

Academic (total 40)

- Dishonesty: 1 Soc Sci
- Grades: 5 Soc Sci, 4 Hum, 1 Bus, 3 Edu
- Must Withdraw: 1 Bus, 4 Sci, 3 Edu, 7 Hum,
- Medical/Compassion: 2 Hum
- Program Issues: 3 Hum, 1 Soc Sci, 3 Sci, 1 Bus
- Scholarships: 1 Hum

Professor Student Relations (total 10): 4 Hum, 2 Soc Sci, 3 Sci, 1 Bus

University Life (total 1)

Contract Faculty (total 1)

Harassment (total 2)

Other (total 1)

Total: 55 Cases

Recommendations

As indicated in last year's report, the important policy *Responsibilities of the Academic Staff to Students* still requires revision. Minor changes would be to harmonize its language with the updated University Mission Statement and the University policies to which it refers, including, but not limited to, the Code of Student Conduct, Student Accommodations and Accessibility (which needs to be uploaded to the BU website under Administration and Governance), and the renovated Harassment Policy. The policy should also refer when applicable to new online practices and communication with students, such as posting class cancellations on MyBU.

In consultation in 2016 with SRC VP Academic Morgan Gagnon and University Registrar Hans Rouleau, we have come up with a list of the following recommendations:

- Introduce language that limits scheduling course-related events outside of class time without student consent
- Add a clause that Academic Staff shall comply with the regulations set out by Senate to ensure the due administration of course evaluations
- Implement language to clarify that students are entitled to timely feedback on coursework
- Introduce language that students are entitled to receive a substantial portion of their course work (e.g. 30%) and feedback prior to the WP date
- Strengthen and clarify the clause on inappropriate or offensive language in communications with students
- Add a clause that the Ombudsperson is available for consultation regarding the policy

I urge the ASAP committee to review the policy document and present any changes to Senate in the fall 2018 semester.

I will continue to occupy the position of Ombudsperson for the 2018/2019 academic year and look forward to serving the University in this capacity to the best of my ability.

Submitted respectfully to Principal Michael Goldbloom,
31 August 2018

Shawn Malley, Professor, Department of English