

UMCES Ombuds Program

The **UMCES Ombuds** are a resource for collaboration and conflict resolution of individual and systemic problems affecting the workforce. Ombuds create a safe place to **discuss** concerns, **understand** all sides of issues, and **explore** ways to improve the work environment. This in turn can help reinforce a workplace where all employees can thrive and contribute fully to the mission.

Professional and Ethical Standards for Organizational Ombuds

UMCES Ombuds adhere to the [International Ombuds Association](#) standards of practice and code of ethics:

<p>Impartial</p> <p>Approaches matters without bias and does not take sides or advocate for either side. If anything, the ombuds advocates for fairness.</p>	<p>Confidential</p> <p>Ombuds have an obligation to protect the identities of everyone who shares workplace concerns with them.</p> <p>The exceptions to confidentiality include; disclosure of imminent harm, when given permission to share, and as mandatory reporters under Title IX in the State of Maryland.</p>
<p>Informal</p> <p>The ombuds are not investigators and do not process formal complaints, keep, or create formal records.</p>	<p>Independent</p> <p>The ombuds are not part of management and have full access to all information and people needed to perform their duties, including access to the President and other senior UMCES leaders.</p>

Practical Functions of an Ombuds

- Give everyone the freedom to voice concerns and frustrations.
- Explore ways to prevent future conflict.
- Help to make sense of what is going on and get questions answered.
- Raise issues or trends with senior leadership.
- Provide: group facilitations, train, and help with climate survey data gathering as an impartial, confidential resource.
- Understand all sides of a problem.
- Improve working relationships.
- Help employees find their own solutions to difficult problems.
- Elevate situations requiring urgent action.
- Enhance what already exists within UMCES through a collaborative partnership (HR, DEIC).
- Make recommendations based on systemic issues identified.

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