

## Ombudsperson Report for 2005

January 26, 2006

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At the outset, I must ask for your forbearance with this report. It is somewhat difficult to give a public report about matters that one is forbidden to discuss in public—if the following description of the Ombudsperson’s activities in 2005 is at times vague, the vagueness is intended only to protect all the parties involved.

### Activities for 2005:

- 1) Individual consultations with graduate students. During 2005, sixteen individual graduate students and former graduate students sought the advice and the assistance of the ombudsperson. (Three of these students had already met with the ombudsperson in 2004. They continued to meet with him in 2005 because of ongoing concerns.) Among the issues brought to the ombudsperson were:
  - Accusations of sexual harassment and/or physical assault by fellow graduate students
  - Accusations of unprofessional behavior by faculty: the public ridiculing of students, racial and ethnic bias, theft of graduate-student intellectual property by faculty, unfair grading practices, and so forth
  - Bureaucratic tangles as regards student access to the health center, the payroll department, and so forth
  - Inquiries concerning the college’s policy with regard to consensual amorous relations between graduate students and undergraduates, as well as the college’s policy on maternity leave for graduate students
  - Inquiries from graduate students about how to deal with a situation where the College’s administration forbade them to have contact with a faculty member for an unknown duration

For good or for ill, as regards the nature of the matters brought to the ombudsperson’s attention, there was very little change between 2004 and 2005. Likewise, the number of students who came to the ombudsperson for the first time in 2005 (thirteen) was almost identical to the number of students who came to the ombudsperson for the first time in 2004 (twelve).

In advising and assisting these graduate students, the ombudsperson consulted with faculty members, directors of graduate programs, directors of interdisciplinary programs, department chairs, the director of equal opportunity, the dean of graduate studies, and the provost, as needed.

- 2) The ombudsperson held “mass meetings” with the graduate students enrolled in two different programs. One meeting came at the request of that program’s

director of graduate studies, and the other request came from the students themselves.

- 3) The ombudsperson participated in the orientation program for new graduate students and in the training program for first-time teaching assistants
- 4) The ombudsperson attended meetings of the Committee on Graduate Studies and made recommendations to the Dean of Graduate Studies about how the office of ombudsperson might be made even more effective.
- 5) The ombudsperson held three office hours per week that were reserved for graduate students and the business of the ombudsperson's office