

RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
JOB DESCRIPTION

TITLE: Ombudsperson (Half-time, 17.5 hours); Director 3, D28

UNIT/DIVISION: President's Office

DATE: October 24, 2007

JOB SUMMARY

The college ombudsperson receives complaints, concerns or inquiries in confidence about alleged individual or systemic acts, omissions or improprieties regarding diversity or equity related issues on campus brought by staff, faculty and students, with priority to staff and urgent cases identified by the ombudsperson. The ombudsperson will attempt to resolve conflicts and issues through mediation and may make recommendations and referrals. The ombudsperson reports to the president, but acts independently and impartially in carrying out day-to-day responsibilities.

DUTIES

- Gathers information to research and make recommendations regarding diversity and equity related issues. The ombudsperson serves as mediator and does not replace any of the formal mechanisms available at the college for handling complaints nor does anyone choosing to seek assistance from the ombudsperson in any way lose his/her rights to pursue any and all other appropriate avenues.
- As an informal investigatory observer, identifies and proposes policy changes to the president to address larger patterns of discrimination or inequity in the design and administration of policies or procedures.
- Provides assistance to inquirers by clarifying issues and generating options for resolution. With the inquirer's permission, consults with all parties to clarify and analyze problems, focus discussions and develop a mutually satisfactory process for resolution.
- Works independently and autonomously, and reports directly to the president of the college for administrative and budgetary purposes only.
- Remains independent, neutral and impartial and has no assignment of duties that would present a conflict of interest to her/his duties as ombudsperson.
- Adheres to the general standards and ethics of the International Ombudsperson Association Standards of Practice (<http://www.ombudsassociation.org/>) and the standards of the University and College Ombuds Association (<http://www2.ku.edu/~ombuds/UCOASOP.html>.)
- Maintains confidentiality of all meetings and protects the identity of sources and prepares data and/or reports in anonymous and aggregate form to preserve confidentiality and prohibit identification of individuals. The ombudsperson's office is located in such a way as to protect the identities of those who seek assistance.

- Conducts informal fact finding to better understand an issue from all perspectives. The Ombuds does not take an advocacy role in any formal institutional investigative or adjudicative procedures.
- With the inquirer's permission, consults with all parties to clarify and analyze problems, focus discussions and develop a mutually satisfactory process for resolution.
- Whenever possible and appropriate, provides referrals to other resources.
- Has access to the president and the president's Cabinet and reports twice annually in writing to the Board of Trustees. In the event of an irreconcilable conflict with the president regarding the discharge of the ombudsperson's responsibilities, the ombudsperson and the president will consult with an ad-hoc advisory committee consisting of members appointed by the Board of Trustees.

REQUIREMENTS

EDUCATION

A master's degree in a relevant field.

EXPERIENCE

A minimum of five years of professional experience. Proven success in mediation and conflict resolution. Success includes excellent communication and listening skills, and demonstrated independence and integrity in creative problem-solving.

ADDITIONAL KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS/ABILITIES

Possess knowledge of social issues affecting higher education and legal/civil service matters and/or collective bargaining. Demonstrate a keen sense of fairness in investigating and resolving conflict. Demonstrate sensitivity to diverse populations and awareness of diverse cultures. Is results oriented.