The Ombuds Office at RIT 2006 ~ 2007

RIT Advisor's Council 12/12/06

Lee Twyman, Ombudsperson (Interim)

The Ombuds Office is a confidential, neutral, informal and independent resource.....

- To assist members of the RIT community in the process of resolving and managing any RIT-related conflict, concern, or issue.
- To identify recurring problems or issues and communicate that information to appropriate personnel who can resolve them.

~ Examples of Student Concerns ~

- Harassment and discrimination
- Issues of equity and fairness: grades, student conduct, decisions made by administrators, faculty, staff
- Questions and concerns related to RIT policies and procedures
- Interpersonal conflicts

Ombuds Offices at RIT

~ History and Evolution~

Evolution of the Office:

- Office of the Student Ombudsperson ~ established as a pilot program ~ 1989
- Student Problem Resolution Office name change 2003
- The RIT Ombuds Office function and title change 2006

RIT Student Ombudspersons:

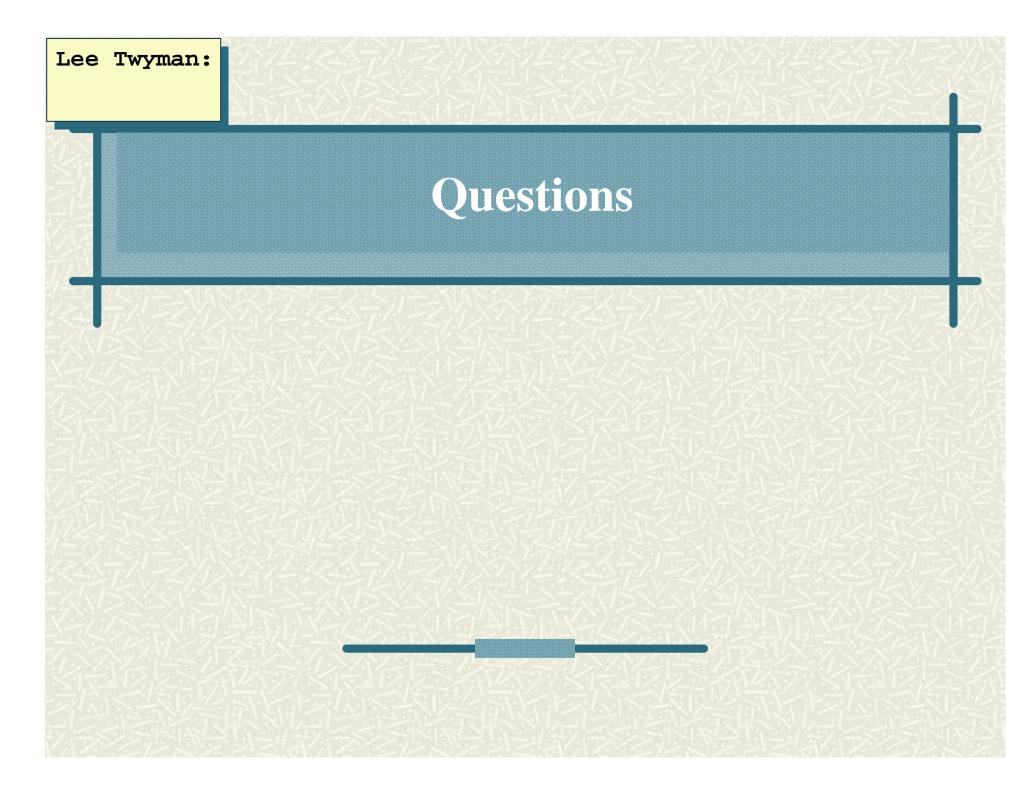
- -Dr. Barry Culhane 1989 1998
- -Dr. Laura Tubbs 1998 2003
- -Ms. Lee Twyman 2003 present

The Ombuds Office 2006 ~ 2007 New and Expanded Resource

- The Ombuds Office a major change in service
- Serving "anyone in the RIT Community" ~ students, staff, faculty, administrators
- Same goals to help manage and resolve RIT related conflicts, disputes, concerns
- Same major types of concerns: fairness, equity, harassment and discrimination, policy and procedures, interpersonal and/or professional conflicts, decisions affecting groups within the RIT Community
- Expanded scope and concerns brought to the ombuds office
- A comment about our contacts and role with parents

~ Advisor Connection ~

- Referrals by you or faculty members
- Questions and concerns related to RIT policies and procedures
- For issues that cross college boundaries
- Other?
- Student awareness of the Ombuds Office
- Your connection ~ to consult with the office or as a member of the RIT Community



Optional Slides

~Transition Year~

- Open the Ombuds Office to the entire RIT community
- Inform community members of the Ombuds Office ~ role, services, access information
- Modify the office practices to accommodate expanded role
- Ombuds Advisory Committee expand membership
- Revise policy governing the ombuds office
- Develop charter for office
- Develop position description for Ombuds
- Produce all new materials for the Office: brochures, website, signage, etc.
- Possible space modification to allow for more privacy and a neutral meeting space for those who come to the office
- National search for ombudsperson

Ombuds Office - Human Resources

Ombuds Office and HR:

- In the "people part" of RIT
- Prevention and solving problems for RIT
- However, by definition, HR and Ombuds cannot do each other's jobs.
- The ombuds and HR roles and responsibilities are radically different

Ombuds Office - Human Resources Contrasting Roles

Human Resources	Ombuds Office	
Function: Help run RIT	Function: "Safety net" for problems within RIT	
Part of the management structure	Independent, neutral and informal, operates outside of formal channels	
Creates and maintains policies and procedures	Identifies problematic or observed inconsistencies in policies/procedures and/or recurring problems.	
Represents and protects the interests of RIT	Neutral and impartial	
Cannot ensure confidentiality	Confidential communications (except in cases of potential harm ~ self/others)	

Ombuds Office - Human Resources Contrasting Roles

Human Resources	Ombuds Office	
"Office of notice" - as are all managers/supervisors	Not an "office of notice", but can help explore and refer to those resources	
Can conduct formal investigations to inform management decisions	Does not conduct formal investigationsdoes informal information gathering, as needed, with consent.	

The RIT Ombuds Office

~Transition Year~

Ombuds Advisory Committee

OAC Membership	Current Member	Appointed By
3 Student Members	OPEN	Student Government
1 Exempt Staff Member	OPEN	Staff Council
1 Non-Exempt Staff Member	Sandra Whitmore OAC Chair	Staff Council
1 Tenured Faculty Member	OPEN	Academic Senate
1 Non-Tenured Faculty Member	William Leonard	Academic Senate
1 Staff Administrator	Lisa Cauda	Administrative Council
1 Academic Administrator	Linda Tolan	Academic Council
3 Ad hoc members (as needed)	OPEN/TBA	TBA