

Ombuds Office

Brody School of Medicine

A neutral, confidential resource for conflict resolution and mistreatment concerns for students

The administration and faculty of the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University want all students to learn in an environment free of intimidation or mistreatment. We recognize that educational and health care environments can be stressful, and that conflict and unprofessional behavior may occur. In order to assist students in these situations, Brody supports the services of an ombuds office to provide students with an informal, safe and confidential space to air concerns, seek guidance, or achieve resolution related to instances of interpersonal conflict or mistreatment in the learning environment.

The ombuds will work with students, upon request, to seek means and resources to effectively clarify and resolve issues in a neutral and collaborative manner.

The ombuds abides by the standards of practice of the International Ombudsman Association and as such keeps no permanent discoverable records, nor shares particulars of any case or situation with the institutional administration.

What we do

- Listen to your concerns
- Help sort out important issues and challenges
- Refer to other offices for information or action
- Develop courses of action and weigh alternatives
- Assist with navigating policies and procedures
- Coach to deal with difficult people and situations
- Mediate/Facilitate disputes on request
- Track patterns of issues to inform policy change

The BSOM Ombuds office provides an annual report to the Dean of the School of Medicine. Report contents aggregate service types and patterns of use. No identifying or specific case information is shared as part of the reports.

What we do not do

- Force decisions or choices on any individual
- Participate in the university grievance process
- Provide legal or psychological consultation
- Serve as an advocate for groups or ideologies
- Replace or revise official policy or procedure
- Testify or attest in a judicial or transactional setting

The Ombuds office is not part of, and does not take part in, any administrative or formal complaint processes. We do not serve as an office for "giving notice" or formally documenting complaints. However, we can assist with those processes.





Confidentiality

Per the IOA code of ethics and ECU policy, all contact and communication with the office is held in strict confidence barring an immediate danger to self or others. Any information shared is done in the aggregate – no revealing personal, demographic, or other identifying information goes beyond the office.

Informality

We function as an adjunct to, and fully outside of, the school administration and the university grievance process. Our discussions are off the record and do not substitute for any formal channels.

Impartiality

We maintain a neutral objectivity with regard to all conflicts and attempt to consider the rights and responsibilities of all involved parties. We are advocates for fair-mindedness and issue resolution.

Independence

We are a non-affiliated, separate and independent entity within the Brody School of Medicine, reporting to the dean and entrusted to maintain objectivity and impartiality.

About the Ombuds

Dr. John W. Howard III is the East Carolina University Organizational Ombuds and a Professor in the School of Communication. He completed his undergraduate education at State University of New York Binghamton and received a Master of Science in Policy Analysis from the University of Rochester. After earning a Master of Arts in Interpersonal Communication and a PhD in Communication Studies at Bowling Green State University, Dr. Howard arrived at East Carolina in 2003. His academic and professional backgrounds include conflict management, interpersonal communication, organizational communication, faculty governance, leadership, and policy. He is a member of the International Ombudsman Association.

**Contact us confidentially at: BSOMOMBUDSOFFICE@ECU.EDU
252-328-5304**



John Howard, PhD