

Louisiana State University
OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON

Student Union, Rm 451 | University Admin. Bldg., Rm 123-E
(225) 578-2483 | RNiedecken@lsu.edu
RETHA NIEDECKEN

HOURS & SCHEDULE: A face-to-face visit is often most effective, and the Ombuds Office offers a confidential place in which to meet. The Ombudsperson will schedule a meeting with you at a time that works best with your schedule, and extended hours are offered to accommodate different shifts. The Ombudsperson will travel to Alexandria, Eunice, Shreveport, and New Orleans upon request. To protect your privacy and to avoid waiting, unscheduled or unannounced visits are discouraged. To arrange a meeting, please contact the Ombuds Office at **(225) 578-2483**. You may also schedule a meeting by email, but please note that email communication is not confidential.

MISSION: The Ombuds Office is a confidential, impartial and informal process for faculty, staff, administration, and students to seek assistance and guidance to resolve barriers to productivity and to increase the quality of their experience at LSU. The Ombudsperson encourages *fairness and equity* through:

Issue Resolution: Listening to concerns, identifying the core issue(s), creating and evaluating options for resolution

Communication & Outreach: Promoting awareness of the Ombuds Office and training (i.e. workplace civility, techniques on resolving disputes, having difficult conversations with supervisors or co-workers)

Systemic Change and Issue Prevention Identification: Listening, observing, contemplating, and gathering information to identify trends or practices to senior management for systemic change or issue prevention

PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE: The LSU Ombuds Office adheres to ethical standards established by the International Ombudsman Association and provides services based upon the following principles:

Informal: No records, No investigation, No mandates. Visiting with the Ombudsperson is voluntary and “off the record.” If you would like to make a formal complaint and put LSU on notice, the Ombudsperson can refer you to the appropriate office and policy.

Confidential: Communication with the Ombuds Office is confidential. You will not be identified or named without your consent. The Ombudsperson is **not** designated by LSU as an individual authorized to receive reports of any violations of university policy. Therefore, communications made to the Ombudsperson regarding possible violations of university policies or of unlawful practices **do not** constitute notice to LSU. This allows the Ombudsperson to preserve the confidential and impartial nature of the office.

Exceptions: when required by law or a reasonable belief of imminent harm to person or property. The decision to make such disclosures rests solely with the Ombudsperson.

Neutral and Independent: Ombuds Office is a neutral and impartial resource for resolving issues and voicing concerns. The Ombudsperson represents the side of **fairness and equity**. Ombuds Office is NOT aligned with any person or department and is NOT an advocate for any person, group, or organization. The Ombudsperson reports to the General Counsel for administrative and budget purposes.

When to Contact the Ombuds Office: Faculty, Staff, Administration, and Students on any LSU campus may seek guidance or assistance from the Ombudsperson on resolving a variety of issues:

- Interpersonal difficulties with colleagues, subordinates, or supervisors
- Departmental and interdepartmental conflicts
- Unfair Treatment, generally
- Policy application or clarification
- Bureaucratic frustrations
- Conflicts of interest
- Disciplinary actions
- Research misconduct
- Academic freedom and integrity
- Physical Environment
- Inappropriate Statements/Behavior
- Preparing for a difficult conversation
- Harassment or discrimination
- Violations of university policy
- Retaliation
- Ethical dilemmas
- Cultural misunderstandings
- Incivility or rudeness
- Protecting your reputation

**** Ombudsperson does NOT offer legal advice or mental health counseling.**

PROCESS: Ombudsperson meets with individual seeking assistance – Gathers Information – Proposes Solution(s) – Follow Up

NO RETALIATION: LSU Faculty, Staff, Administration, and Students may consult with the Ombudsperson without retaliation. Furthermore, since the Ombuds process is completely voluntary, individuals will not be retaliated against for choosing to not consult with the Ombudsperson.