
Evaluation 1

8a: The contribution of the ombudsperson to higher education institutions

Daniel More (Israel)

Is the ombudsperson a foe or a friend to higher education institutions?

The ombudsperson's inquiries and recommendations may challenge or even impede the institution's decisions and its authority. I believe, however, its advantages, clearly outweigh the disadvantages:

A. Reduction of tension: Students derive comfort that an objective and professional person will carefully examine their complaints, and should he deem those justified-would recommend to the institution to act accordingly. It reduces conflicts and diminishes hard feelings and tension.

B. Communication: The Ombudsperson acts as mediator between the student and the institution, and helps facilitate better communication between both parties.

C. Deterrence: The very existence of an ombudsperson incentivizes institutions to consider more carefully students' interests in their decision making.

D. Effecting changes in practices and regulations.

Presenter(s):

Daniel More: Ombudsperson of Tel Aviv University and former law professor at the university.

8b: The Value of the Ombuds' Narrative in Program Evaluations: Revisiting Larry B Hill's The Model Ombudsman (1977)

Natalie Sharpe (Canada)

Larry B. Hill's "The Model Ombudsman" (1977) used a politico-anthropological perspective to evaluate the program's effectiveness in a complex bureaucracy. He examines the ombuds' casework approach and demonstrates its value in relationship building and policy reform. Hill's systemic evaluation of the ombuds program "measure(s) the effects of the program against the goals it sets out to accomplish and attempts to weight its potential costs in terms of the relationships to larger institutions." (Fitzgerald review:AA1978:80) As we use our ombuds' narrative to measure our qualitative and quantitative value in systemic reform, Hill's seminal work is worth a revisit.

Presenter(s):

Natalie Sharpe: Director of Office of the Student Ombuds at the University of Alberta. She leads a team of Graduate Ombudsperson, Undergraduate Ombudsperson and three ombuds student interns (two undergraduate and one graduate). Natalie is also the Past President of the Association of Canadian College and University Ombudspersons. Natalie holds an Honour Bachelor's Degree in Anthropology, a Master's Degree in Political Anthropology, and Certificates in Ombudsing, Mediation and ADR. She also teaches university courses on gender roles, women and work, women and unions, and ADR.