

Administrative Response to the *Report of the University Ombudsperson for the Period 1 July, 2010 to 30 June, 2011*

October, 2011

Overview

The Terms of Reference for the Office of the University Ombudsperson stipulates that the Ombudsperson shall “make a written annual report to the Governing Council, and through it to the University community”. In addition, the Governing Council requests an administrative response to each annual report.

The *Report of the University Ombudsperson for the Period 1 July, 2010 to 30 June, 2011* is Professor Foley’s fourth annual report as University Ombudsperson. Once again, it reflects her understanding of the University of Toronto, her respect for the role of Ombudsperson, and her expertise, sensitivity, and sense of fairness in handling complex and often difficult situations.

The Administration extends its sincere thanks to Professor Foley for her dedication to the University of Toronto and for her service in the role of University Ombudsperson. The Administration also acknowledges and is grateful for Professor Foley’s committed attention to her Office’s mandate as contemplated by the 2006 *Review of the Office of the University Ombudsperson*.

Response

The *Report of the University Ombudsperson for the Period 1 July, 2010 to 30 June, 2011* is carefully considered, objective, and constructive. The Report makes one recommendation, follows up on a number of matters from earlier annual reports, and details the Office’s outreach efforts.

Recommendations

The Report recommends that academic divisions and departments be reminded annually of the University’s *Policy on Ancillary Fees* and urged to ensure that any cost recoveries from students in relation to courses and/or programs under their auspices conform to the *Policy*.

The Administration accepts this recommendation and will remind and urge departments as advised.

Additional Observations

The Ombudsperson continues to follow-up on matters raised in earlier annual reports and administrative responses.

To take one example, concerns about privacy were once again raised with the Ombudsperson this past year. She brought these concerns to the attention of the Vice-President, Human Resources and Equity, while noting that breaches of the University’s policies remain rare.

In response, the Vice-President convened a group to review our current practices and enlisted the help of our Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Office. As the Ombudsperson's Report highlights, the Administration has revised and improved our practices both with respect to ensuring that employees are aware of their responsibilities regarding the protection of privacy and to providing support as necessary in meeting those responsibilities.

The Administration applauds the Office of the Ombudsperson's ongoing outreach initiatives. The Ombudsperson is an important resource in our community. Raising awareness about the Ombudsperson's role and function is valuable in fulfilling the Office's mandate.

In this context, the statistics presented in the Annual Report are helpful. They show that the steady increase in number of requests for assistance has marched in step with the increase in numbers of students. They also show the Office of the Ombudsperson to be responsive and efficient. This suggests that the systemic approach adopted by the Ombudsperson has been effective, even as awareness of the Office grows. The Administration continues to respect the Ombudsperson's balanced approach to addressing individual cases while setting them in a wider, system-focused context.