

**Administrative Response to the Report of the
University Ombudsperson: 2004-2005**
(November 24, 2005)

Overview:

This administrative response is made in accordance with the direction made by Governing Council that the University Administration respond annually to the Ombudsperson's Report.

Response:

The Administration thanks the Ombudsperson for her dedicated work on behalf of the University of Toronto community, and commends the way in which she continues to be responsive to the requests for assistance and advice from our faculty, staff and students.

The Ombudsperson's 2004-05 Report is a thorough summary of her office's activities over the preceding year. This year's Report is remarkable in another way. It is the first Ombudsperson's Report that contains no specific recommendations. Rather, the Ombudsperson has chosen a more reflective approach to the Report; looking back over the Office's past several years. As such this Report supports the view that many of the issues raised in previous years have either been resolved or are in the process of resolution.

The Ombudsperson also acknowledges that her office and the Administration are currently working cooperatively and in a timely manner when issues do arise, and that they share a common view on areas that previously deserved the most attention. This indicates definite progress for which we should all be proud.

The Administration will continue its commitment to invest in the communication of information, the dissemination of best practices, and the training of administrators to ensure that issues that may arise are dealt with in a timely and effective manner.

The Ombudsperson draws attention to only one holdover from among last year's recommendations, that being consideration of revisions to the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (1995). This review is occurring during the current academic year. The Vice-Provost, Academic and Vice Provost, Students and legal counsel have begun work to review the administration practice and procedures under the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* with a view to identifying and addressing issues that may be identified such as consistency, timeliness, or other process concerns in the administration of the Code.

Another feature of recent reports is that the number of cases per person has fallen dramatically. This evolution is noteworthy. It can support the argument that everything is working better than in the past; or, it might equally reflect a dynamic situation in the context of an increased number of equity officers working at the University of Toronto. It is entirely possible, and in fact this is suggested by the Ombudsperson, that individuals who in the past might have seen the Ombudsperson's Office as their only option, are now taking their issues to other offices. In reviewing this data, the Administration would suggest that the Ombudsperson consider presenting future caseload data with a denominator as another way of reflecting the changing caseloads. This would help to set a baseline for the evaluation of future data.