Guiding Principles

Confidentiality*

Neutrality

Informality

Independence

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Office of the Ombudsperson
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Drop by Wed.-Fri. or setup an appointment
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This brochure is available digitally on the Office of the Ombudsperson website: www.mtholyoke.edu/offices/ombuds/

* Exceptions to confidentiality are determined by the Ombudsperson and include situations where there appears to be a threat of imminent serious harm to self or to others.
WHAT IS AN OMBUDSPERSON?

I am a neutral and confidential* party whose mission is to ensure that all members of the MHC Community receive fair and equitable treatment and to assist in the cultivation of mutual respect and understanding through informal conflict management services. My office works independently of all other College academic and administrative offices (including not being an “Office of Notice” for the College) and is guided by the principles of informality, neutrality, independence and confidentiality to help resolve conflict.

LISTENING - I am willing to listen to your concerns without passing judgment and help you clarify your thoughts, feelings, and goals. I can assist you in creating strategies for resolving problems or conflicts, even if you are not sure you want to take any action at the moment.

FACILITATION & INFORMAL MEDIATION - When disagreements or problems arise between people or groups on campus I provide a safe, confidential environment to assist you in assessing your needs, evaluating alternatives and coach you in ways to communicate more effectively to resolve issues. Specializing in informal mediation and conflict resolution techniques, I can help you communicate effectively and work towards mutually satisfying outcomes to your concerns.

ADVISING - Although I have no direct authority to change College policy, I can recommend administrative policy changes that are equitable to everyone and that help College departments and offices address frequently occurring issues.

EDUCATING - Teaching people how to approach conflict and manage differences is an important part of my mission. I offer strategies and resources for dealing with difficult and sensitive situations. I understand that managing conflict may require learning and practicing new tools. I can provide a safe place for this to happen.

CONFIDENTIALITY*

The Ombuds Office was created to provide a safe way to identify and address concerns involving equity and fairness within the Mount Holyoke Community. I promise to protect your privacy and maintain strict confidentiality*, to the best of my ability. I will not move any issue forward without your knowledge and consent. I do not keep records for the College; my annual reports contain statistical data and broad-based recommendations meant to help identify concerns (not individuals) and help the College develop strategies for addressing those concerns.

SOME TYPICAL ISSUES

- Roommate Disputes
- Understanding Academic Regulations and Requirements
- Ethical dilemmas
- Incivility in the Workplace
- College Policies or Practices questions
- Managing Family pressures
- Sharing Resources on Campus
- Work/Life balance
- Grievance Procedures questions
- Working within a Student Org
- Discriminatory or unprofessional conduct by a faculty or by staff member
- Diversity Issues
- Grading disputes
- Harassing/Bullying behavior
- Challenging Co-workers
- Interpersonal conflicts
- Postings on Facebook/Social Media
- Student Honor Code violations
- Work Environment concerns

NEED A TIME TO TALK? CONTACT CAROL STEWART:
Email: cstewart@mtholyoke.edu
Office phone: 538-2413 or drop by 5 Safford Hall
Office hours Wednesday – Friday
Visit our website www.mtholyoke.edu/office/ombuds/

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Helping to resolve conflicts one conversation at a time...