Purpose of the Ombudsperson:

The GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences established the Ombudsperson Program to provide a confidential, independent, impartial, and informal resource for students and residents in the School of Medicine and Health Sciences to address problems and concerns. Current students and residents who are part of the SMHS community may consult with an Ombudsperson on academic or personal matters, interpersonal conflicts, harassment, or any other concerns.

The Ombudsperson must provide a safe, non-judgmental, and unbiased environment without engendering any fear of retaliation. Consulting with an Ombudsperson is not part of the established University grievance process and does not follow any time requirements outlined in those policies.

The Ombudsperson is not part of the administrative structure of the School of Medicine and Health Sciences and should be free from any internal interference. The Ombudsperson does not make any binding decisions or policies for the School.

The Ombudsperson must:

- Listen to complaints or issues
- Offer an impartial perspective
- Discuss and help evaluate appropriate options
- Refer to the appropriate authority or resource
- Help with problem resolution
- Engage in conflict resolution with the consent of the individual
- Provide information to clarify school policies
- Provide information on school resources
- Maintain confidentiality

The Ombudsperson may not:

- Offer legal or psychological counseling
- Conduct a formal investigation
- Participate in any grievance procedure
- Share student information (unless obtains permission to do so in accordance with student privacy policies)
- Guarantee a solution
- Keep records of discussions
- Advocate for any particular point of view

Confidentiality

An Ombudsperson may disclose confidential information if they feel there is a risk of harm to an individual or individuals or a threat to public safety. In addition, as Designated Reporters,
Ombudspeople must comply with requirements to report to the Title IX office any potential sexual assault or harassment.

**Selection and Description of Service**

Ombudspeople are appointed by the Executive Committee of SMHS. They serve a term of 3 years and may be reappointed. There should be, at a minimum, Ombudspeople representing:

- Health Sciences faculty
- Basic Science faculty
- Clinical faculty (2)
- Graduate Medical Education (2)

Each Ombudsperson reports to the Chair of the Clinical Learning Environment Committee regarding general or systemic problems or trends. The Ombudspeople are non-voting members of the Committee on the Learning Environment. An Ombudsperson may be removed from the role prior to the end of their three year term at the request of the Executive Committee of SMHS.