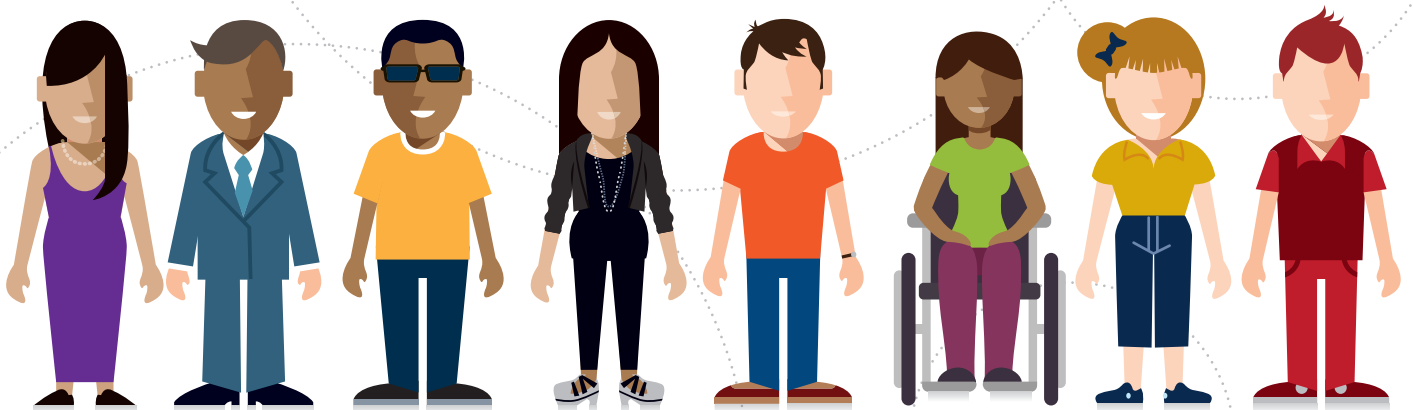


18

19

LISTENING & LEARNING



ANNUAL REPORT FOR JULY 1, 2018 TO JUNE 30, 2019 FOR THE OMBUDSPERSON AT RYERSON UNIVERSITY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Ryerson Ombudsperson	1
Essential Characteristics of the Office of the Ombudsperson at Ryerson University	2
Modus Operandi of the Office of the Ombudsperson at Ryerson University	
Individual Case Work	2
Systemic and System-Wide Analysis	2
Preventative Orientation	2
Making an Impact	
Policies 134 and 152: Undergraduate and Graduate Academic Consideration and Appeals Policies	3
Policy 164: Graduate Status, Enrolment, and Evaluation Policy	3
Commentary and Recommendations for 2018/2019	
Residence Appeals	5
Fee Appeals	7
Provost & Vice-President Academic's, and Vice-President, Administration and Finance's Response	9
Progress made on Ombudsperson's 2017-2018 Recommendations	10
Creating Accessible Learning Environments	11
Academic consideration and appeals	12
A general philosophy	13
2018/2019 at a Glance	14
Story in Numbers	16
Types of Concerns 2018-2019	17
Status of Individuals Bringing Forward Concerns & Complaints	18
Summary of Service Provided	18
Website Statistics for 2018/2019	19
Appendices	
Appendix 1: About the Office	20
Appendix 2: The Terms of Reference of the Ombudsperson	20
Appendix 3: Information Illustrating the Size of the Ryerson University Community	21

Note: This report follows the McGill Law Journal citation style.

MESSAGE FROM THE RYERSON OMBUDSPERSON

I am pleased to submit my first Annual Report for 2018/2019.

I feel extremely fortunate and honoured to assume the role of Ombudsperson for Ryerson University. My predecessor, Nora Farrell, was Ombudsperson at the University for nearly 20 years. She is recognized by her peers - both inside and outside of the University setting - for her experience and expertise in the Ombuds field.

Nora is the past President of the Forum of Canadian Ombudsman and has made significant contributions to organizations such as the Association of Canadian College and University Ombudspersons, and the European Network of Ombuds in Higher Education. I am thankful for the opportunity to build on the great foundation that Nora has established.

I have worked in the Ombuds field for the majority of my career, and while I am new to the education sector I believe that my experience at Ombudsman Ontario and Ombudsman Toronto have prepared me well for this role. Since assuming the job in early June, I have had an opportunity to meet with many individuals from the Ryerson University community, including senior administrators, faculty and staff. I have also delivered presentations to employees at a number of student service offices. I look forward to meeting many more students, faculty, staff, and others from the Ryerson University community in the upcoming year through our work and public education efforts.

Webster's dictionary defines a complaint as an expression of grief, pain, or dissatisfaction¹. By definition, therefore, a complaint is viewed negatively but it does not always have to be. Faculty, administration, or staff can potentially learn a lot from a complaint if they choose to. The real measure for an Ombudsperson is not how many complaints a department or Faculty receives, but how they respond to the complaints that are raised.

During the 2018/2019 school year, Ryerson University's Ombudsperson's office handled 502 complaints. Of that total, we conducted eight fairness reviews, or investigations. As you will see in the report, academic advice, academic appeals (grade and academic standing) and conduct (instructor, staff, and student) comprised the majority of the concerns handled by our office during this timeframe.

Although our office has seen a decrease in the number of complaints concerning accessibility and accommodation, these issues remain a concern. Students continue to raise issues with respect to access to facilitators, difficulty implementing accommodation plans, and support from Academic Accommodation Staff.

In last year's Annual Report, accessible learning environments were addressed and a review of Policy 159, Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities, was recommended along with additional resources for the Academic Accommodation Support Office. An update on the University's progress is included in this year's report along with the status of the other recommendations from 2017/2018. Again, while progress has been made, there is still work to be done.

Before I close, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues Gemma Kerr and Ayesha Adam, the Assistant Ombudspersons, for their contributions to the office and for helping to make my transition a smooth one. I also want to say a special thank you to Gabriella Trotta, George La Rosa, and Garvin De Four for the service they provided to the office this past year.

Yours sincerely,



Kwame Addo

Ombudsperson

¹ Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, sub verbo "Complaint", online Merriam-Webster <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/complaints>>.

ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON AT RYERSON UNIVERSITY

CONFIDENTIALITY:

All information provided to the Office of the Ombudsperson is kept confidential, unless the Office has explicit permission for names and/or identifying details to be released and the Office considers it to be appropriate to do so.

IMPARTIALITY:

The Office of the Ombudsperson considers all of the information it receives and collects with the highest degree of objectivity. We strive to ensure that everyone involved believes their perspectives have been understood and considered and that they have been treated **fairly**.

INDEPENDENCE:

The Office of the Ombudsperson and staff operate independently of the University, including all administrative and academic structures and student government.

MODUS OPERANDI OF THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON AT RYERSON UNIVERSITY

INDIVIDUAL CASE WORK

- discussion about concerns or complaints;
- review of relevant options and assist in the assessment of these options so that the student can decide in an informed manner the viable routes available for moving forward;
- assist with 'reality testing' of expectations for a resolution or a response;
- coach people on how to approach the resolution of a dispute in a kind, calm and respectful manner;
- if a student has tried to resolve a problem and not been successful and it appears there is a gap in information or a possible misunderstanding we may call to seek clarification;
- if an opportunity for a mutually satisfactory and fair outcome emerges we may engage in shuttle diplomacy or mediation;
- if it becomes evident there is no other means to resolve the situation and the student has identified concerns that relate to fair treatment, process or outcome, we may initiate a fairness review to investigate what has transpired and determine if the University has acted fairly.

SYSTEMIC AND SYSTEM-WIDE ANALYSIS

- review concerns and complaints to identify common trends;
- analyze individual complaints to see if they are indicative of a potential systemic or system-wide concern.

PREVENTATIVE ORIENTATION

Online presence

- provide detailed information on our website on how to access policies, procedures and relevant forms along with explanations for the routes available for addressing all manner of concerns and complaints.

Consultation and Training

- consult on development of policy and procedure as an independent and objective resource; and consult on University training initiatives, particularly those related to fair decision-making and effective conflict resolution and lead training developed by the Office of the Ombudsperson.



The following are examples of how the work of the Ombudsperson can result in improvements to University policies and procedures.

Policies 134 and 152: Undergraduate and Graduate Academic Consideration and Appeals Policies

An intervention by the Ombudsperson's Office brought about a change in the process for students who are filing a grade or standing appeal on the grounds of prejudice. Policy 134 (for undergraduate students)² and Policy 152 (for graduate students)³ allow students to submit an academic grade or standing appeal on several grounds: health, compassionate, prejudice, course management (for grade appeals only), and procedural error.

When filing an appeal on the grounds of prejudice, students are required to first submit a copy of their appeal to Human Rights Services (HRS). HRS will conduct an assessment and make a recommendation to the Chair/Director before the appeal can proceed⁴. The undergraduate Policy 134 (Section 2.1.4.3) and the graduate Policy 152 (Section 5.2.1.3) state that:

If Human Rights Services determines that there is insufficient evidence to support a claim of prejudice on a prohibited ground and the student wishes to proceed on the basis of personal bias or unfair treatment, the appeal may be amended to be filed on the ground of Course Management. (*Undergraduate Academic Consideration and Appeals Policy*, Section: 2.1.4.3)⁵

If the Human Rights Office determines that there is insufficient evidence to support a claim of prejudice on a prohibited ground and the student wishes to proceed on the basis of personal bias or unfair treatment, an appeal may then be filed on the ground of Course Management. (*Graduate Student Academic Consideration and Appeals Policy*, Section: 5.2.1.3)⁶

The Senate Office had advised our office that it receives very few appeals on the grounds of prejudice and its practice has been to forward the appellant's original appeal package to the respondent, if HRS has determined that a claim of prejudice cannot be supported. However, the wording of the Policy suggests that the student may be afforded an opportunity to amend their appeal if the student's claim of prejudice is not substantiated.

The Ombudsperson's Office asked the Senate Office to consider amending its protocol to include the additional step of contacting the student to confirm whether they intend to amend their appeal submission. If an amended appeal package is not received by the stated deadline, the Senate Office will send the appellant's original appeal submission to the respondent for a response.

The Senate Office agreed to adapt its current protocol in response to our suggestion, making the process clearer for students.

Policy 164: Graduate Status, Enrolment, and Evaluation Policy

In winter 2019, the former Ombudsperson became aware that in addition to the annual Progress Report required under Policy 164, some students were required to submit a Program Progress Report on a more frequent basis.

With respect to Progress Reports, Policy 164, section 6.5 states:

6.5 Progress Report and designation

Once students have begun SRC (Scholarly Research and Creativity Activity) requirements, they will be assigned a performance designation by their supervisor/Supervisory Committee based on their annual progress reports.

6.5.1.1 INP (In progress) is granted for satisfaction; or

6.5.1.2 UNS (unsatisfactory) is granted for unsatisfactory progress⁷

The procedures that describe how Policy 164 is to be implemented are set out in section 18 of the policy.

18. PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress Reports are used to maintain a record of student progress toward degree requirements and to assign an annual performance designation for progress in non-course program requirements (research progress for MRP/thesis/creative work/dissertation) where appropriate.

18.1 Every student in a degree program is required to submit one Progress Report per year, normally at the end of the winter term in the form and format set out by YSGS.

18.2 Individual programs may set requirements for additional program level reports.

18.3 The student will initiate the process by completing the student portion of the report.

² Ryerson University Senate Office, "Senate Policy 134: Undergraduate Academic Consideration and Appeals" (August 15, 2016) online: Ryerson University <<https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/policies/pol134.pdf>>.

³ Ryerson University Senate Office, "Senate Policy 152: Graduate Student Academic Consideration and Appeals" (June 5, 2017) online: Ryerson University <<https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/policies/pol152.pdf>>.

⁴ *Supra* note 2 and 3 at Sections 2.1.4.2 and 5.2.1.2

⁵ *Supra* note 2

⁶ *Supra* note 3

⁷ Ryerson University Senate Office, "Senate Policy 164: Graduate Status, Enrolment, and Evaluation" (May 29, 2018) online: Ryerson University <<https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/policies/pol164.pdf>>

- 18.4 Where appropriate the supervisor will assign a performance designation of:
- INP (in progress) for satisfactory progress; or
 - UNS (unsatisfactory) for unsatisfactory progress.
- 18.5 If UNS is assigned:
- 18.5.1 a detailed reason for this judgement must be included;
 - 18.5.2 specific instructions on deliverables for the following term must be outlined; and
 - 18.5.3 the student's Academic Standing will become Provisional.
- 18.6 In the event that the student does not present a Progress Report for review, the supervisor will complete one, a UNS will be assigned and the student's Academic Standing will be adjusted accordingly;
- 18.7 The GPD will add any additional comments.
- 18.8 A copy of the report must be given to the student and the GPD.⁸

If a student obtained an unsatisfactory Program Progress Report at a time other than the end of the Winter semester, a UNS was assigned, which resulted in a Provisional Academic Standing. Neither the UNS nor the Provisional Standing stemming from the Program Progress Report was noted on the student's RAMSS account or transcript. However, the Provisional Standing required the student to sign a Provisional contract or Provisional agreement. If the student did not sign this, they could be removed from the program.

The University took the position that students could receive a UNS at a time other than at the end of the Winter term (see section 18.1 of the Procedures)⁹ and be put on Provisional status at any time.

The former Ombudsperson maintained that the University's interpretation regarding Program Progress Reports was not supported by the Policy. She believed that the University's position could have serious consequences and potentially affect many students and departments. The practice would be particularly problematic for a student who obtained a UNS from a Fall Program Progress report (not recorded on RAMSS or their transcript) followed by a second UNS designation at the end of the Winter semester through the process outlined in Policy 164. The second UNS would trigger a "Withdrawn" standing and this information — both the UNS and the academic standing — would be recorded on RAMSS and the student's transcript.

The Ombudsperson was concerned that the application of the rules did not seem clear. Last Spring, the Ombudsperson wrote to the then Associate Dean, Student Affairs, Yeates School of Graduate Studies (YSGS) with her concerns. The Dean advised that the review committee had been reconvened to re-draft the policy.

The current Dean, YSGS, has confirmed that a review of Policy 164 is scheduled for Winter 2020. The revised Policy is expected to be in place for the Fall 2020 semester.

**“I FEEL RELIEVED
AND SATISFIED
WITH SUCH A
POSITIVE OUTCOME.
THANK YOU AGAIN
FOR YOUR HELP
AND SUPPORT.
I APPRECIATE IT
A LOT.”**



⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

COMMENTARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2018/2019

Nota bene: In order to provide recommendations that are likely to benefit the whole community, we analyze the complaints received for indicators or trends that have systemic or system-wide implications. In addition, we deliberately do not provide descriptions of the individual cases dealt with by the Office of the Ombudsperson at Ryerson University (RU). The reason for taking this approach is that all Ombudsman/person work must be undertaken in private so that the complainants' confidentiality is protected. In order to ensure that none of the people we work with conclude that their confidentiality has been compromised, the outcomes of our reviews and any specific recommendations that are made on individual cases are not included in this report. Rather, we report on cases in the aggregate and make only systemic and system-wide recommendations. As a result, the case references are necessarily generic in nature so as not to reveal the identities of those who have raised the concerns and complaints that are the basis for the following recommendations.

Residence Appeals

Living in residence can have many benefits, particularly for first-year students who may be living away from home and on their own for the first time. Students do not have to worry about planning meals, dealing with a landlord, shoveling snow, and more. Students in residence may also find it easier to meet and make new friends, and immerse themselves in the University experience.

Ryerson University has four residence buildings for student housing: Pitman Hall, the International Learning and Living Centre, the Daphne Cockwell Complex, and HOEM.

The University owns and operates three of the four buildings: Pitman Hall, the International Living and Learning Centre, and the Daphne Cockwell Complex. The fourth building, HOEM, which opened to students in the Fall of 2018, is an example of a P3 partnership (Public Private Partnership) between the University and HOEM's owner, Canadian Student Communities Inc. (CSCI). CSCI developed and constructed the residence and owns the building at 186 Jarvis Street.

In many respects, the residence experience and the rules that apply to students who live at HOEM are the same as those of the students living in a University-owned residence.

For example, Ryerson processes HOEM applications for residence, assigns rooms, and collects residence fees on behalf of HOEM. Ryerson also employs professional and student staff who live in HOEM and

provide support to students. HOEM residents are expected to follow the Residence Community Standards and residence policies developed by the University. Further, Ryerson "may withhold a [HOEM] Resident's transcripts and degree until such time as all financial obligations... are satisfied,"¹⁰ just as it does when any other student has an outstanding charge owed to the University.

That said, HOEM is also distinct from the other residences in several ways. Students only have the option to sign a 12-month rental agreement, versus an 8-month agreement for students living in a University-owned property. Meal plans are not mandatory for HOEM residents, and students are responsible for their own utility costs¹¹.

One difference of note between students living at HOEM and other Ryerson Residences concerns their respective residence agreements. A student facing a difficult situation may be required to withdraw from class — and, therefore residence — for health, academic, or other reasons. Both the HOEM Residence Agreement and the Residence Agreement used for University-owned buildings set out the process students need to follow to withdraw from residence. However, there is a difference between the documents. Section 6.3 of the Ryerson Residence Agreement describes how students can request a release from their Resident Contract "due to exceptional circumstances beyond their control."¹² There is no equivalent section in the HOEM agreement. However, HOEM residents can still request a fee agreement release from their residence agreement.¹³

A fees agreement release request can be made on academic, medical, or compassionate grounds. For Ryerson-owned residences, the Residence Assignments & Marketing Coordinator for the University reviews the request. Should the student receive an unfavourable decision, they have access to three levels of appeal, with a final decision made by the Director, Student Housing and Community Care.¹⁴

Students who reside in HOEM also have access to an appeal process, and can submit a fees agreement release request either using the Ryerson form or a HOEM Appeal document. The HOEM Operations Assistant reviews the initial request. If the student is dissatisfied with the decision, they can appeal the matter to the General Manager and, ultimately, to Senior Management within HOEM.¹⁵

¹⁰ Housing & Residence Life, "HOEM Residence Agreement" online: Ryerson University <https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/housing/Future%20Students/Applying/Residence%20Agreement/2018-2019_Residence_Agreement_11.5month.pdf> at 4.

¹¹ Housing & Residence Life, "Residence Fees", online: Ryerson University <<https://www.ryerson.ca/housing/future-students/fees/>>

¹² Ryerson University Housing and Residence Life, "Residence Agreement – 8 Month Term – 2018-2019" online: Ryerson University <https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/housing/Future%20Students/Applying/Residence%20Agreement/2018-2019_Residence_Agreement_8month.pdf> at 8.

¹³ Ryerson University Housing and Residence Life, "Refunds and Withdrawing" online: Ryerson University <<https://www.ryerson.ca/housing/current-students/fees/refunds-and-withdrawing/>>.

¹⁴ Housing and Residence Life, "Residence Withdrawal Policy/Procedures", Ryerson University

¹⁵ CSCI, "HOEM Appeal Process", Canadian Student Communities Inc.

Students living in residence, which includes HOEM, are also required to “abide by the policies outlined in the Standards” [Housing & Residence Life Community Standards]¹⁶. The Community Standards are broken down into several categories:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Personal and Community Safety
- Facilities
- Community Standards Regarding Cannabis¹⁷

Each of the categories identifies and describes the community standard and its importance. For example, the Community Standard, Under Age Drinking (Health and Wellbeing) states that: “[s]tudents under the age of 19 cannot consume alcohol in or on Ryerson University property.”¹⁸

Students found to violate a Community Standard are subject to sanctions or Incident Outcomes¹⁹, which can range from an apology up to, and including, eviction from residence. Appeals are submitted in writing within five business days of receiving “the Incident Outcomes letter.”²⁰

Should they wish to appeal an incident outcome, a student living in a Ryerson building uses a different appeal process than the one used by HOEM residents. For students living in a Ryerson building, an appeal can be filed on the following grounds:

- The evidence did not warrant the finding of responsibility;
- The procedures in this HRL Community Standards were not properly followed;
- New information was learned which could not have been presented earlier;
- The Incident Outcomes were felt to be inappropriate for the behaviour which occurred.²¹

A student at one of the Ryerson-owned residences can appeal a decision up to the level of the Senior Vice-Provost, Students and the decision of the Vice-Provost may be appealed to the Senate.²²

HOEM residents follow the same appeal process used for the fee agreements release request. The first level of appeal is to HOEM Operations Assistant, followed by the General Manager and, finally, Senior Management within HOEM²³. Appeals can be made on the following basis:

- Bias. The student has reason to believe that the reviewer(s) were not objective in their review;
- Unfair. The severity of the resulting sanction is believed to be greater than the initial actions(s);
- Incomplete. There is additional information or documentation that can be provided to support the appeal.²⁴

One key difference between the two appeal processes is the ability of students in Ryerson residences to escalate their issue to the Vice-Provost, Students and, ultimately, to the Senate. The HOEM process does not provide its students with a similar opportunity. In addition, the grounds on which an appeal can be filed under the HOEM and Ryerson models are not aligned. Ryerson allows students to file appeals on four grounds, which include appeals on procedural matters or concerns about the findings. HOEM allows an appeal to proceed on the grounds of bias, which is not a ground specified in the Ryerson model.

I understand that the reason for having different appeal procedures is related to the agreement between the University and CSCI. According to information we received from Housing and Residence Life, the contract allows HOEM to create its own appeal process.

The HOEM Residence Agreement (the Agreement), however, requires Ryerson University to assume responsibility for specific functions. The Agreement lists 33 items that fall under the University’s authority. Some of the items have been mentioned already, such as room assignment, payment of residence fees, late and NSF charges, and early withdrawal from residence.²⁵ Based on a plain reading of the Agreement, it appears that the University plays a significant role in the decision making affecting HOEM students without any real ability to resolve complaints that may impact them.

The distinction between HOEM and the University residences may not be apparent until a student finds themselves in a potentially difficult situation and needs to file an appeal.

Whether or not the decision to have two separate appeal processes for its students living in residence was intentional, it has created two classes of students. There is one group of students whose residence experience is overseen by the University in all aspects, and a second residence group who live in HOEM and who are subject to the same rules and policies except when it comes to the appeal processes. The current arrangement could lead to potentially different outcomes for students facing similar circumstances. This distinction should not exist. There should be one appeal process that applies to all students in residence at Ryerson, regardless of which building they live in.

RECOMMENDATION 1

That the University work together with CSCI/HOEM to amend the appeal process. The new appeal procedures should use the same criteria and escalation process for addressing fee withdrawal requests and violations of the Housing and Residence Life’s Community Standards. This appeal process would be available to all students, whether they live in a Ryerson-owned building or HOEM.

¹⁶ *Supra* note 12 at 14.

¹⁷ Ryerson University, Housing and Residence Life “Community Standards 2019-2020” online: Ryerson University <https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/housing/Current%20Students/Community%20Standards/19-20_HRL_Community_Standards.pdf> at 6-10.

¹⁸ *Ibid* at 6.

¹⁹ Incident Outcomes are the final decisions(s) and documentation related to a specific incident. The Incident Outcomes will also identify decisions made, collaboratively with the respondent or solely by the decision maker connected to the specific incident report. *Ibid* at 13.

²⁰ *Supra* note 17 at 17.

²¹ *Ibid* at 17.

²² *Ibid* at 17.

²³ *Supra* note 15.

²⁴ *Ibid*.

²⁵ *Supra* note 10 at 4.

Fee Appeals

The University requires that students are responsible for paying the fees for courses that they are enrolled in.²⁶ It is also expected that students will familiarize themselves with the relevant policies, procedures and deadlines that apply to payments and reimbursement requests. However, there are circumstances where a student because of illness or a serious family matter, may be required to withdraw from school or drop classes after the deadline to qualify for reimbursement has passed.

The Office of the Registrar is responsible for administering the University's Fee Appeal Process, which is the method used by the University when it is reviewing a student's request for a refund or a reversal of fees. According to the Policy, a reimbursement may be considered by the Registrar on the following grounds:

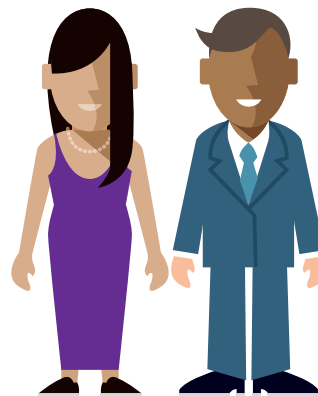
- a. Medical Grounds – normally would include the unanticipated onset of physical or psychological illness, condition or crises. Requires that documentation* from a physician or a psychologist be submitted to support the claims made in the appeal.
- b. Compassionate Grounds – may be related to unanticipated circumstances such as eviction, death of a family member, or other life crisis. Supporting documentation is also required.
- c. Procedural Grounds – Error made by a Ryerson staff member or department that resulted in fees being posted inappropriately. Supporting documentation is required where possible.²⁷

All appeals are reviewed by the Student Fee Appeal Committee²⁸, whose decisions are final.

In the absence of a formal appeal process, students who are dissatisfied with their Fee Appeal decision may contact the Ombudsperson's office to complain about the decision they received. We have seen a number of complaints over the last two years, which include the following concerns raised by students:

- The students believed that the Fee Appeal Committee did not fully consider the information they submitted.
- The student has new information that they wish the Fee Appeal Committee to consider, but are unsure about the process they must follow to submit this information.
- The on-line appeal form did not provide sufficient room to allow the student to fully summarize their concern.

Should a student raise a concern to our office about the Fee Appeal decision they received, we would suggest that they submit a reconsideration request to the Fee Appeal Committee. However, there is no reference to a reconsideration process on the Fee Appeal page of the Registrar's website, which sets out the guidelines and procedures associated with the Fee Appeal process.



²⁶ Office of the Registrar, "Fee Appeal Process", online: Ryerson University <<https://www.ryerson.ca/registrar/fees/fee-appeals/>>.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ The composition of the fee appeal committee is as follows: Assistant Registrar, Enrolment Services and Student Fees (Committee Chair), Manager, Systems and Processing, ESSF (Committee Secretary), Representative from Financial Services, Representative from The Chang School of Continuing Education, Representative from the Yeates School of Graduate Studies, and Representative from the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students.

The Fee Appeal Committee's willingness to reconsider its decisions is commendable, but access to this potential remedy should not be dependent on a chance encounter with our office or one of the student advocates.

If the Registrar's Office, through its Fee Appeal Committee, is willing to reconsider decisions for some students, it should make this opportunity available for all. However, it is equally important that the committee apply the same criteria to all the reconsideration requests it receives.

The Fee Appeal Committee could establish criteria under which it would allow a student to file a request for reconsideration and explain how the process would work. For example, a student could not simply disagree with the decision. However if a student's request meets any of the criteria, they would be able to file a reconsideration request and include any supporting documentation.

My review of Fee Appeal policies at several Canadian universities reveals that their fee appeal procedures are similar to the procedures followed at Ryerson. To be eligible for consideration, a request must be related to an unforeseen circumstance such as an illness or the death of an immediate family member.

While none of the policies we reviewed refer to a reconsideration process, several universities, including Wilfrid Laurier University²⁹, Queen's University³⁰, and the University of Manitoba³¹, allow students to appeal an unfavourable decision. At these institutions, students must first file a first-level fee appeal. If the student receives an unfavourable decision, it can be appealed to the institution's version of the Fee Appeal Committee. Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Manitoba specify under what conditions an appeal can proceed. At the University of Manitoba, students may appeal if they receive a negative decision and the amount exceeds \$500³². At Wilfrid Laurier University, an appeal is permitted if the student has new information that was not considered at the first-level of appeal, or if the student is alleging procedural error³³. Students at Queen's University must also satisfy conditions similar to those required by Wilfrid Laurier University to appeal a decision.³⁴

I am not suggesting that Ryerson University must create an appeal process for students who receive unfavourable decisions. Rather, the University should formalize its reconsideration practice so that it is incorporated into the decision-making process. Many of the students who submit fee appeals have already experienced very difficult situations. Their situations are then potentially compounded by an unfavorable fee appeal decision, which they cannot appeal. In some cases, a negative decision can place them in a precarious financial situation. My recommendations, will formalize a practice that already exists for some students and ensure that the same consideration is available for all.

RECOMMENDATION 2

I recommend that the University formalize the practice of reconsidering a student's unfavourable fee appeal decision so that this option is available for all students.

RECOMMENDATION 3

I recommend that the Office of the Registrar develop criteria under which a student would be permitted to request reconsideration of an unfavourable decision. The criteria and accompanying process is to be included in the Fee Appeal Process and publicized on the Office of the Registrar's website.

“I APPRECIATE
ALL THE
INFO AND
ASSISTANCE.”



²⁹ Wilfrid Laurier University, "Tuition and Fees: Outcome and Decision" online: Wilfrid Laurier University <<https://students.wlu.ca/registration-and-finances/tuition-and-fees/fee-appeals-and-policies/outcome-and-decision.html>>.

³⁰ Queen's University, "Fee Policies" online: Queen's University <www.queensu.ca/registrar/resources/policies/fees> at Section "Tuition and Fee Appeals".

³¹ University of Manitoba, "Fee Appeals" online: University of Manitoba <<https://umanitoba.ca/student/records/fees/830.html>>

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Supra* note 29.

³⁴ *Supra* note 30.

PROVOST & VICE-PRESIDENT ACADEMIC'S, AND VICE-PRESIDENT, ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE'S RESPONSE

Dear Mr. Addo,

Please find below an overview of the University's responses, as well as commitments, to the recommendations provided in the 2018-19 Ombudsperson Annual Report.

Residence Appeals

Ryerson provided the following response to the Ombudsperson's recommendation regarding residence appeals:

- 1) That the University work with Canadian Student Communities Inc. (CSCI), the owner of HOEM residence, to amend the appeal process. The new appeal procedures should use the same criteria and escalation process for addressing fee withdrawal requests and violations of the Housing and Residence Life's Community Standards. This appeal process would be available to all students, whether they live in a Ryerson-owned building or in HOEM.

Where possible, students residing within Ryerson-owned buildings and HOEM should have the same experiences as it relates to residence appeals.

We agree with the Ombudsperson's recommendation to amend the appeal process; however, HOEM will also need to be aligned since this is not fully within our power. We will take the recommendation back to HOEM for further discussion.

To this end, Student Housing & Community Care can undertake a review of existing agreements to determine if appeal processes between Ryerson-owned buildings and HOEM can be aligned.

Fee Appeals

Ryerson provided the following response to the Ombudsperson's recommendations regarding fee appeals:

- 1) That the University formalize the practice of reconsidering a student's unfavourable fee appeal decision so that this option is available for all students.

The Office of the Registrar will formalize the practice of reconsidering a student's unfavourable fee appeal decision in order to create a more flexible and transparent fee appeal review process.

The Office of the Registrar will research best practices at Ontario universities that have a second-level fee appeal process. Based on outcomes, the Office of the Registrar will formalize the process for students to apply for reconsideration of their fee appeal decisions.

- 2) That the Office of the Registrar develop criteria under which a student would be permitted to request reconsideration of an unfavourable decision. The criteria and accompanying process is to be included in the Fee Appeal Process and publicized on the Office of the Registrar's website.

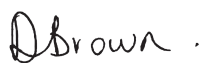
The Fee Appeal Committee will develop criteria and an accompanying process which will allow students to file a second-level appeal about an unfavourable decision.

The Office of the Registrar's website, including the Fee Appeal Process page and the Fee Appeal Application, will be updated to clearly articulate the criteria and process for students to apply for a second-level fee appeal.

Sincerely,



Michael Benarroch
Provost and Vice-President,
Academic



Deborah Brown
Vice-President,
Administration and Operations

PROGRESS MADE ON OMBUDPERSON'S 2017-2018 RECOMMENDATIONS

Dear Mr. Addo,

Please find below an overview of the University's responses, commitments and progress updates to the recommendations provided in "Listening & Learning", the 2017-18 Ombudsperson report.

The current updates related to progress on each of these recommendations, as outlined in this year's report, give a sense of the University's commitment to address some of these issues as we continue to adapt and strengthen the supports offered for student success and community integrity. We also highlight Ryerson's commitment to civility and psychological safety among staff and faculty members, as cultivating positive student experiences – a priority within the 2020-25 Academic Plan – is dependent upon effective collaboration and conflict resolution amongst these groups.

We value the role that you have already begun to play in maintaining a respectful dialogue between students, administrators and faculty, and appreciate both your leadership and your ongoing commitment to fairness.

ACRONYM OVERVIEW

FOR YOUR REFERENCE, PLEASE FIND BELOW AN OVERVIEW OF THE ACRONYMS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT:

AAS	Academic Accommodation Support
AGPC	Academic Governance and Policy Committee
APRC	Academic Policy Review Committee
FCAD	Faculty of Communication and Design
HR	Human Resources
OEE	Organization and Employee Effectiveness
PRC	Policy Review Committee
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
YSGS	Yeates School of Graduate Studies

Creating Accessible Learning Environments

Ryerson provided the following five suggestions to address the recommendation of creating accessible learning environments, which have been progressing as follows:

- 1) That the Academic Policy Review Committee (APRC) undertake an expeditious review of Senate Policy 159 Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities to enhance the effectiveness of the accommodation process as formally outlined in this Policy.

The membership of the Policy Review Committee (PRC) for Senate Policy 159: Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities was approved by the Academic Governance and Policy Committee (AGPC) of Senate on November 19, 2019. It will be co-chaired by the Vice-Provost, Students and the Vice-Provost, Academic. The Policy 159 PRC met in December 2019 to develop its consultation strategy and timeline before the mid-year break.

The APRC committed to begin the review of Policy 159 in May 2019, once its review of the Academic Consideration and Appeals Policies 134 and 152 was complete. The APRC review of Appeals Policies 134 and 152 is nearing completion. The Undergraduate and Graduate Appeals Policies will be proposed as a single policy, and the Academic Consideration Request component of the current Policies 134 and 152 is under development as a separate policy. The first round of consultations for draft policy input (i.e. town halls, survey, stakeholder meetings) has been completed. Final review and consultation of the two draft policies will occur in winter 2020. The target is to bring a new Appeals Policy and a new Academic Consideration Request Policy to the May 2020 Senate meeting.

- 2) That the APRC focus on the 'Resolution of Disagreements' portion of Policy 159 so as to promote more non-adversarial and timely accommodations.

As part of the review, the APRC committed to taking a close look at the decision-making process around the resolutions of disagreements. It also committed to the employment of a panel of subject-matter experts to act as the final arbiters of disagreements related to the implementation of this Policy.

As recommended by the Ombudsperson, the PRC for Senate Policy 159 will focus on the 'Resolution of Disagreements' portion of this Policy so as to promote more non-adversarial and timely accommodations. It will be included as part of the PRC's mandate to take a close look at the decision-making process around the resolutions of disagreements.

- 3) That the consultative process undertaken by the APRC before reviewing this Policy be wide-reaching.

The APRC committed to a review that features a consultative process involving various stakeholders, not least students with disabilities who are most directly impacted by the Policy.

As recommended by the Ombudsperson, the PRC for Senate Policy 159 will undertake an extensive consultation process as part of the PRC's mandate. This process will be presented for endorsement by the AGPC. It will include specific consultations with subject matter experts as well as broad consultation with the Ryerson community.

At present, the PRC is developing its plan and identifying stakeholders.

- 4) That sufficient resources be supplied to Academic Accommodation Support (AAS) so that the office fully meets the individualized needs of students who utilize its services.

In this endeavour, the University committed to reconsidering the pilot project mentioned in the Ombudsperson's commentary, whereby an Academic Accommodation Facilitator would be placed in the Dean's office area of one Faculty.

The University is moving forward, as recommended by the Ombudsperson, to pilot an Academic Accommodation Facilitator position within the Faculty of Communication and Design (FCAD) Student Success Centre in January 2020.



5) That the University's current efforts to expand the use of universal design for learning principles continue.

The University acknowledged the importance of implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as one important way to provide an accessible learning environment for all students, no matter what their needs or abilities.

The University's current efforts to expand the use of UDL principles has continued as follows:

- *In 2018-19 the UDL committee revised its vision and mandate:*
 - *Vision: Foster an inclusive and accessible learning experience for all students.*
 - *Mandate: Facilitate the integration of UDL into the design, development and implementation of teaching at Ryerson to ensure that all students are provided with an inclusive and accessible learning experience.*
- *The following UDL resources were created or updated in 2018-19:*
 - *Accessible Course Outline, an interactive template providing faculty with tips for creating a course outline according to principles of UDL*
 - *UDL Libguide*
 - *UDL D2L Course Shell Template (in development by the Digital Media Projects)*
 - *UDL Handout for Faculty (revision of existing handout, in development)*
- *Educational opportunities and presentations provided for:*
 - *Faculty in sessions as part of the 2018 and 2019 Learning & Teaching Conferences For Teaching Assistants/Graduate Assistants a UDL Workshop, January 2019*
 - *Librarians UDL Workshop, March 2019*
 - *Access Ryerson Steering Committee, November 2018*
 - *Library Conference "Creating an accessible campus. The Library and Universal Design for Learning," May 2019*
- *UDL-focused events:*
 - *"Diverse Students = Diverse Approaches, a conversation about Neurodiversity," November 2019 (hosted by FCAD)*
 - *UDL event for inter-university discussion and resource building, spring 2020 (hosted by Heather Willis and the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion)*

These initiatives serve to expose greater numbers of faculty to UDL, and to equip them with tools and resources to guide implementation. Use of UDL as the foundation for course design enhances inclusivity and accessibility of learning environments, and in some circumstances, can reduce the need for students to request academic consideration for missed obligations.

Academic Considerations and Appeals

Ryerson provided the following three suggestions to address the recommendation concerning academic considerations and appeals, which have been progressing as follows:

1) That the Academic Policy Review Committee, in its ongoing review of the Academic Consideration and Appeals Policies 134 and 152, adjust the Policies' language to help promote a more collegial resolution of disputes.

The University agreed that the language of both Policies 134 and 152 should be amended to encourage collegiality when disputes in the implementation of the Policies arise. The University committed to taking steps to make sure that this principle receives greater focus in the annual training seminars.

The Yeates School of Graduate Studies (YSGS) noted that, under APRC, there is a Policy 134/152 sub-committee currently co-chaired by Donna Bell and Richard Meldrum that has been working over the past year to merge Policies 134 and 152 to promote a more collegial resolution of grade and standing appeals. There has been a great deal of focus on improving the understandability of language in the policy, as well as the clarity of process to promote access and equity. The sub-committee intends to have a new policy draft to Senate in May 2020.

2) That the APRC incorporate administrative protections in the updated Policies to strengthen the right of students to choose to have a temporary probationary or provisional contract put in place while their standing appeal is processed.

The University committed to addressing this through a memo to all decision-makers reinforcing the specific administrative means whereby students can choose to temporarily continue their studies.

The University also committed to seriously considering the Ombudperson's suggestion that the "default position" in academic standing appeals involve the decision maker inquiring if the student wishes to be put on a provisional probationary contract and temporarily enroll in classes.

The current pilot for online appeals submissions is looking at building a question into the appeal submission whereby students are asked in standing appeals if they wish to enroll in courses. This would automatically trigger to the Registrar's Office to open up the student's record to allow for enrollment, and will be implemented in preparation for the appeals being submitted for the winter 2020 courses.

- 3) That ways be found to enhance the flexibility with respect to appeal submission deadlines when extenuating circumstances mean that students are unable to meet them.

The University acknowledged that extenuating circumstances should, on occasion, be taken into account when appeal submission deadlines cannot be met. At the same time, the University believes that the current language in the policies is sufficient to allow for this possibility.

A General Philosophy

Ryerson University recognizes student success is a complex issue, and is implementing strategies to enhance the experiences that facilitate success. Raised at the academic plan town halls, The Student Experience is a priority within the 2020-25 Academic Plan that is recognized consistently across the university.

One example highlighting Ryerson's commitment to civility and psychological safety within departments is noted below, as improved student experience and success is related directly to the ability of university staff and faculty to collaborate effectively and to resolve conflicts respectfully. Other examples are forthcoming.

Ryerson provided the following suggestion to address the recommendation under the University's general philosophy, which has been progressing as follows:

- 1) That all staff and faculty be encouraged to see their role as collegial – not only with one another, but with students as well – and they take up their responsibility for advocating for each student's success in all of their academic and administrative interactions.

Two of the areas of focus in the 2018 employee engagement survey were civility and psychological safety. Results indicated that incivility is of some concern, particularly within some work units. One initiative is the allocation of additional resources to enable Human Resources to partner with Departments to improve the work climate, and to build knowledge and capacity in areas such as collaboration and conflict resolution.

This initiative is led by the two Directors of Human Resources (HR) Consulting, in collaboration with the Director of Organizational & Employee Effectiveness. HR has seconded a faculty member, Kelly McShane, with expertise in organizational psychology, change management, workplace restoration and employee wellbeing to work on this initiative with HR.

Phase 1 of the initiative involves working with specific departments/faculties to improve the work climate using strategies customized to each group. The team is currently working with 10 departments across the University.

In the first year, in addition to unit-specific interventions, the team has:

- *delivered a workshop to the Chairs, Deans and Directors group on Civility in Academia;*
- *organized a presentation and several workshops by a leading expert, Dr. Loreleigh Keashly from Wayne State University, on "Navigating Civility and Respect in the Context of the Academy"; the sessions were co-sponsored by the Ryerson Faculty Association, the Office of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic, and the Office of the Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion;*
- *completed a more detailed analysis of some of the root causes of conflict and incivility; and*
- *piloted several workshops on collegial governance.*

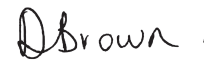
Phase 2 of the initiative is focused on systemic change, including revising related policies, and building capacity amongst leaders and colleagues to foster a respectful and collaborative workplace culture. These components are all currently underway and a second Organization and Employee Effectiveness (OEE) Consultant will be in place shortly to assist with this initiative.

Please note that this is a multi-year project, as culture change takes time and sustained effort.

Sincerely,



Michael Benarroch
Provost and Vice-President,
Academic



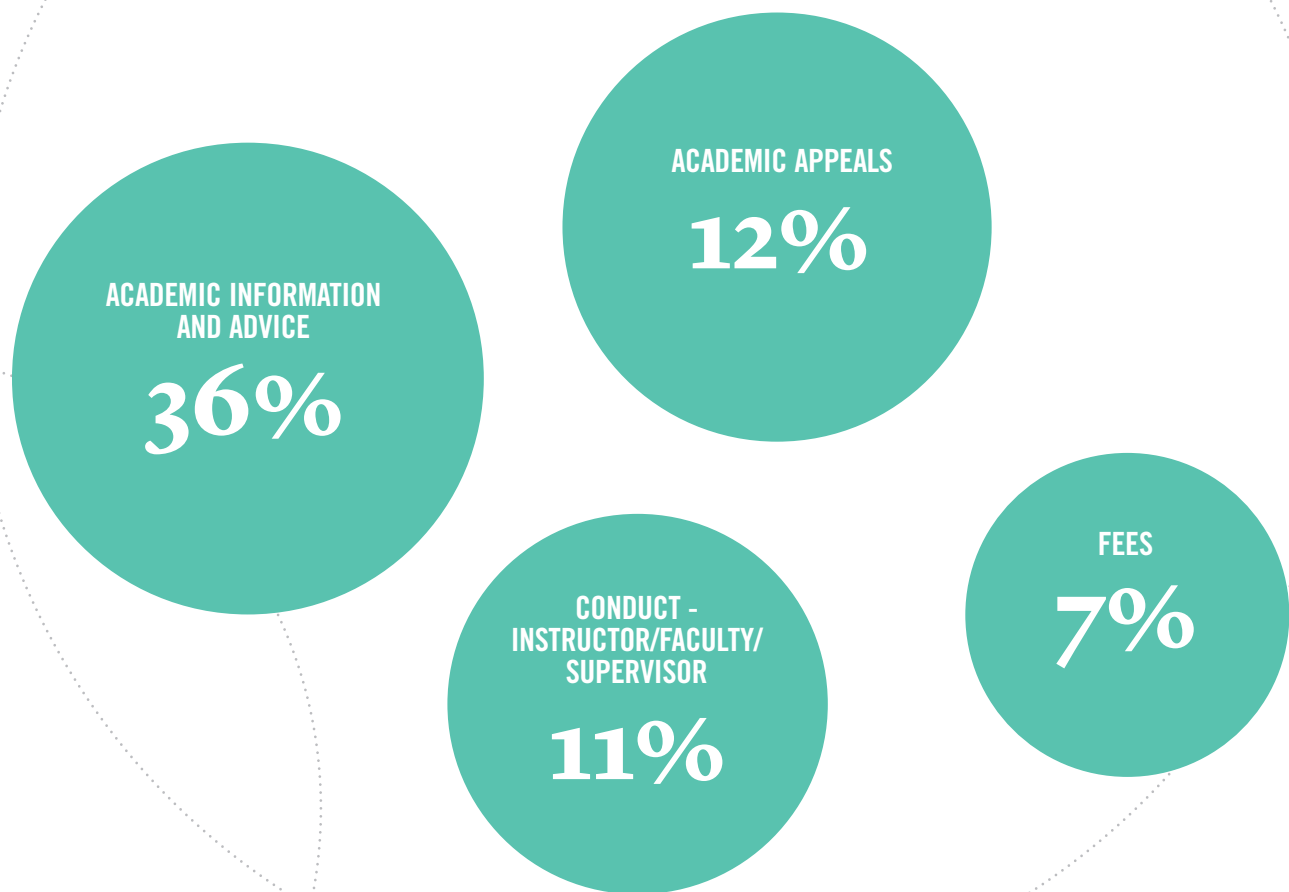
Deborah Brown
Vice-President,
Administration and Operations

2018/2019 AT A GLANCE

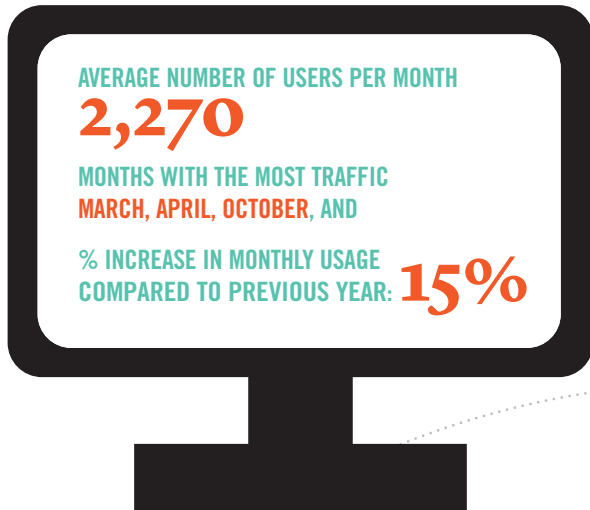
INVESTIGATIONS COMPLETED:



TOP 4 CONCERNS WE HEARD ABOUT:



WEBSITE VISITS:



HOW PEOPLE CONTACTED US:



47%

TELEPHONE



27%

EMAIL



20%

DROP-IN



6%

APPOINTMENT

STORY IN NUMBERS

The office handled 502 complaints in 2018/19. The most common complaint types are summarized below.

ACADEMIC ADVICE

Academic Advice issues are represented by concerns from students seeking clarification or information about academic matters relating to the program they are taking. In most cases, we were able to direct the student to the relevant policy, contact person, or offer advice regarding next steps. At times, the office intervened in a matter by contacting the department or program to clarify information or, when appropriate, to conduct shuttle diplomacy as a means to resolve the outstanding issue or issues.

Academic advice was the most common type of concern our office received, and it has remained so for the past three years. The complaints in this category have increased by 15 per cent compared to last year.

The issues students raise most frequently are about retroactive withdrawals and concerns relating to being Required to Withdraw (RTW) or assigned an academic standing of Permanent Program Withdrawal (PPW). It is worth noting that approximately 25 per cent of students who raised PPW concerns disclosed that mental health issues may have contributed to their academic problems. These students contacted our office seeking advice about options that would allow them to appeal their standing.

ACADEMIC APPEALS (GRADE AND STANDING)

This category includes concerns raised with respect to grade and academic standing appeal matters. Concerns regarding missed deadlines and procedural errors were the appeal issues most frequently cited by students. Students cited health issues as the most common reason for missing an appeal deadline.

In a small percentage of cases (18 per cent), where we confirmed that a clerical mistake was responsible for a procedural error, we were able to obtain a positive outcome for the student, which allowed them to enroll in classes or receive approval for a retroactive drop.

CONDUCT

Allegations of inappropriate/unprofessional conduct by instructors, faculty, staff, and students remain a common concern raised by students. This year, however, the number of allegations has decreased by 25 per cent and is fairly consistent with the complaint trend we have seen in three of the past four years.

STUDENT FEES

The number of concerns related to student fees went from 19 in 2017/2018 to 39 this past year. We had a small number of cases where the student had been enrolled in courses based on their course intentions. However, because of personal circumstances or illness, they did not drop their courses before the reimbursement eligibility period. As a result, they were still responsible for payment.

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the relevant policies and deadlines regarding payment and course withdrawal. In situations where there were extenuating circumstances that may have prevented the student from complying with the procedure or deadlines, we advised them to submit a Fee Appeal request.

Students also contacted our office about concerns related to the transfer of their account to an external collection agency for non-payment of overdue accounts.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

The number of academic misconduct concerns received this year has decreased by 43 per cent (44 to 25 complaints) compared to last year. The majority of students contacted our office seeking information and advice about the Academic Misconduct process. In most cases, we were able to provide them with the information they sought or provide them with an appropriate referral.

ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATION

In Accessibility and Accommodation, we experienced a decrease of 27 per cent (26 to 19) from last year.

The decrease in complaints is welcome news. The issues raised by students concern implementing accommodation plans, support from Academic Accommodation Services staff, and access to supports. Students expressed frustration about having to “fight” to ensure that their accommodation needs are met.

TYPES OF CONCERNS 2018/2019

	18/19	17/18	16/17	15/16	14/15	13/14	12/13	11/12	10/11	09/10
TOTAL	502	533	541	521	520	483	593	617	571	579
ACADEMIC ADVICE ³⁵	180	156	197	181	151	133	192	177	138	104
ACADEMIC APPEALS ³⁶	61	71	62	85	83	95	102	103	107	169
ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT	25	44	40	36	55	41	49	61	70	65
ACCESSIBILITY	19	26	21	23	21	18	27	25	33	10
ADVANCEMENT & DEVELOPMENT	1	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
ADMISSIONS (UNDERGRADUATE)	11	18	20	11	15	20	20	11	17	10
ADMISSIONS (GRADUATE)	5	4	2	4	1	3	4	5	4	5
ANCILLARY SERVICES	0	2	0	2	0	1	1	2	1	1
CAMPUS PLANNING & FACILITIES	2	5	2	3	0	2	0	3	0	1
CONDUCT – INSTRUCTOR/FACULTY/SUPERVISOR	55	63	59	54	61	51	62	53	57	78
CONDUCT – STAFF	16	27	21	12	8	8	8	8	13	14
CONDUCT – STUDENT	5	11	9	6	3	4	4	8	9	4
CONFIDENTIALITY	0	3	0	0	1	3	0	0	4	5
CURRICULUM ADVISING ³⁷	7	0	8	9	7	4	11	3	7	7
ENROLLMENT SERVICES	11	29	19	19	23	17	29	45	24	37
FEES	34	19	19	21	8	27	14	21	7	7
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE	18	20	23	21	24	16	18	20	16	9
INFORMATION REQUESTS – NO COMPLAINT	2	5	2	0	0	3	1	5	2	7
LIBRARY	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	4	2	2
OUTSIDE JURISDICTION	16	13	15	16	14	9	13	13	13	8
PRACTICUM/PLACEMENT (ADMINISTRATION & AVAILABILITY)	12	4	7	4	22	5	9	11	4	2
REINSTATEMENT/READMISSION	0	0	3	1	5	6	11	14	27	17
RESIDENCE	4	0	0	3	1	0	2	1	3	7
SAFETY & SECURITY	4	1	4	2	2	3	2	5	2	1
SPORTS & RECREATION	1	1	1	2	0	0	2	0	1	0
STUDENT SERVICES ³⁸	5	4	1	2	6	6	6	8	4	1
STUDENT UNIONS/ASSOCIATIONS	8	5	3	3	8	7	5	8	3	5

³⁵This category includes concerns regarding not being able to easily access academic advice from a knowledgeable person.

³⁶Includes Grades and Academic Standing.

³⁷Includes Transfer credits and Challenge credits

³⁸Includes application of Student Code of Non-Academic Misconduct

Please note that over the past ten years some categories of concerns have been removed as the very low numbers of complaints received did not justify their continued inclusion.

STATUS OF INDIVIDUALS BRINGING FORWARD CONCERNS & COMPLAINTS

	18/19	17/18	16/17	15/16	14/15	13/14	12/13	11/12	10/11	09/10
CONSTITUENCY										
ALUMNAE	9	9	19	15	7	6	11	10	8	11
APPLICANT	16	14	13	13	10	23	18	13	17	13
CONTINUING EDUCATION/PART-TIME DEGREE	45	61	55	45	62	79	81	87	76	106
FULL-TIME DEGREE	306	325	308	348	322	283	401	416	406	368
GRADUATE STUDENTS	67	54	75	32	58	58	40	49	27	41
MISCELLANEOUS (PARENTS, STAFF, ETC.)	59	70	71	68	61	34	42	42	37	40
TOTAL	502	533	541	521	520	483	593	617	571	579

SUMMARY OF SERVICE PROVIDED

Information:

Providing information on policies and procedures.

Advice:

Providing information and discussing possible options with students.

Intervention:

Taking action to assist in some way to resolve the concern, (e.g. clarifying information, facilitating, mediating, and conducting investigations).

	18/19	17/18	16/17	15/16	14/15	13/14	12/13	11/12	10/11	09/10
ACTION TAKEN										
ADVICE & REFERRAL	429	461	469	424	397	382	484	511	482	493
INFORMATION	2	0	0	2	5	10	1	3	1	2
INTERVENTION – CLARIFYING	27	33	28	38	37	33	48	37	39	42
INTERVENTION – MEDIATION	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	3	1	0
INTERVENTION – SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY	35	29	36	37	63	44	43	49	31	25
INVESTIGATION	8	10	8	19	18	13	16	14	17	17
TOTAL	502	533	541	521	520	483	593	617	571	579

WEBSITE STATISTICS FOR 2018/2019

The website of the Office of the Ombudsperson provides information and links to frequently consulted policies, procedures, deadlines and referral points at Ryerson.

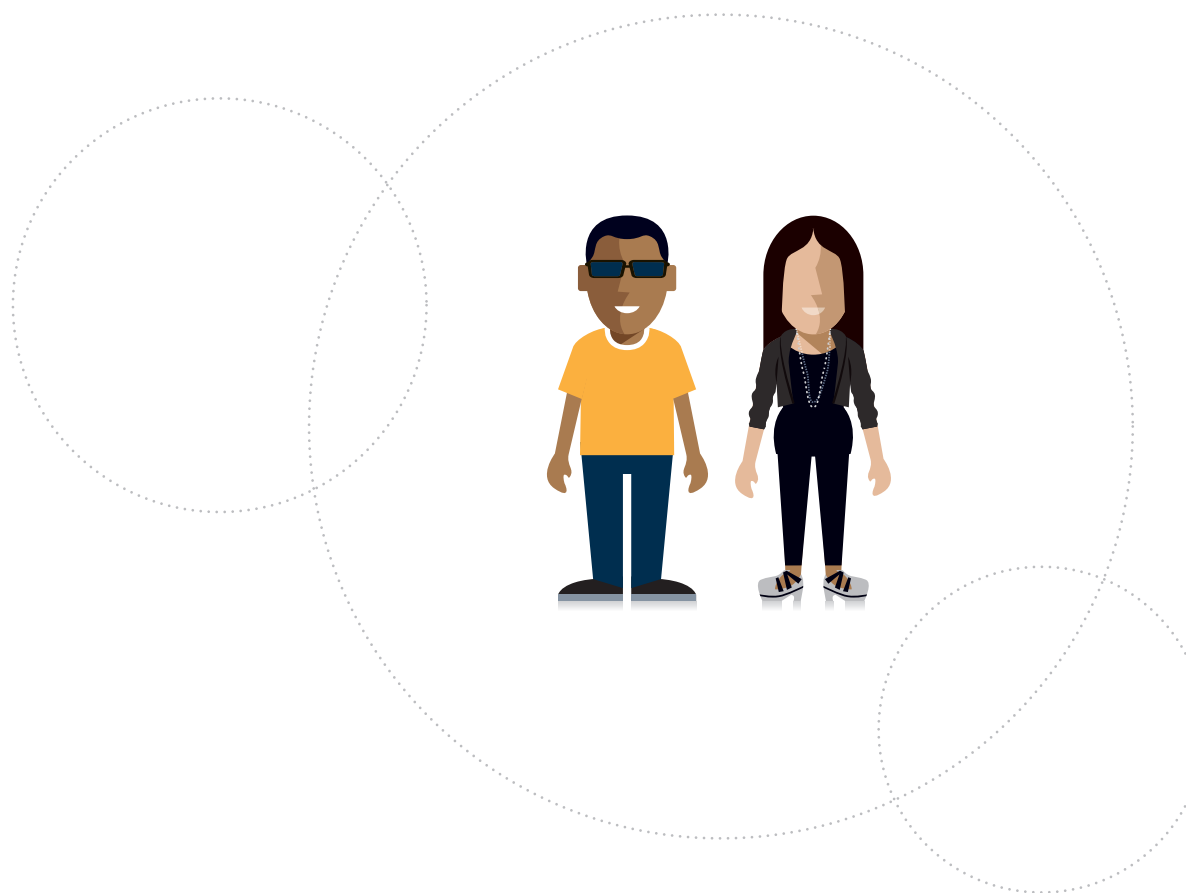
We experienced a 15 per cent increase in the number of users accessing our website this year. The number of users grew from 23,618 last year, to 27,245 in 2018/2019.

The most frequently viewed pages provided information about how to drop courses and programs, and what to do in the event of a missed exam or missed classes.

More than half of the individuals who visited our website were repeat users.

Year	Total Users	Average number of visitors/month	Months with most traffic (top 3 in descending order)	% increase monthly from previous year
2018/2019	27,245	2,270	March, April, October	15%
2017/2018	23,618	1,968	March, October, November	17%
2016/2017	20,247	1,687	March, November, October	31%

We also provide a link to an anonymous online questionnaire where individuals who have interacted with the Office can provide feedback on their experience.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1:

ABOUT THE OFFICE

The Office of the Ombudsperson at Ryerson University was established in 1997 via leadership from a community-wide taskforce.

STAFFED BY:

Kwame Addo

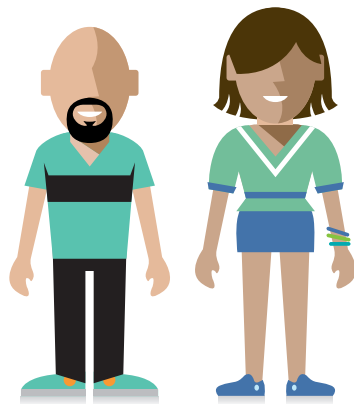
[Ombudsperson]

Ayesha Adam

[Assistant Ombudsperson]

Gemma Kerr

[Assistant Ombudsperson]



APPENDIX 2:

THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON

The role and functions of the Ombudsperson at Ryerson University as defined by the Terms of Reference are:

- a) To advise and/or refer members of the University student community as needed about all situations and University procedures concerning which grievances may arise; specifically, to advise students of their rights and responsibilities and of the proper procedures to follow in order to pursue whatever business or complaint they may have. Where such information exists in University offices or publications, the Ombudsperson shall direct enquirers to these sources and emphasize their responsibility for initiating the appropriate actions and for returning to the Ombudsperson if not satisfied with the results;
- b) To investigate, in an impartial fashion, student complaints that may arise against the University or against anyone in the University exercising authority. Complaints may be made by any member holding status as a student of the University community, by former members of the student body or by student applicants to the University (dependent on the discretion of the Office of the Ombudsperson), whether accepted or not at the time of the complaint. Investigations may also begin on the independent initiative of the Ombudsperson in respect of anyone of the above entitled to make a complaint....
- c) To bring findings and recommendations to the attention of those in authority by the most expeditious means possible.

It shall be the special concern of the Ombudsperson that:

- a) Decisions affecting members of the University student community are made with reasonable promptness;
- b) Procedures and policies used to reach decisions affecting students are adequate and consistently applied and that criteria and rules on which the decisions in question are based are appropriate;
- c) Any gaps and inadequacies in existing University policies and procedures that might jeopardize the principles of fairness and natural justice of members within the University student community be brought to the attention of those in authority. It is not the function of the Ombudsperson to devise the new rules and procedures, but to make recommendations and follow these up to the extent necessary for their formulation and/or improvements; and
- d) The complaints received by the Ombudsperson are analyzed on an annual and multi-year basis to determine trends and identify potential for systemic or system-wide problems.³⁹

³⁹ Office of the Ombudsperson at Ryerson University, "Terms of Reference for the Office of the Ombudsperson" (October 2009), online: The Office of the Ombudsperson at Ryerson University <<http://www.ryerson.ca/ombuds>>.

APPENDIX 3:

INFORMATION ILLUSTRATING THE SIZE OF THE RYERSON UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY⁴⁰

STUDENT ENROLMENT, FFTE⁴¹ 2014-2019

Year	Undergraduate Students	Graduate Students
2018/2019	34,270	2,274
2017/2018	32,302	2,208
2016/2017	31,575	2,120
2015/2016	30,531	2,048
2014/2015	28,963	1,961

CONTINUING EDUCATION STUDENT ENROLMENT 2011-2018

Year	Continuing Education Students, FFTE	Continuing Education Course Registrations ⁴²
2018/2019	2,670	69,112
2017/2018	2,859	67,619
2016/2017	2,792	66,461
2015/2016	2,710	66,000
2014/2015	2,673	67,735

TEACHING AND STAFF COMPLEMENT 2010-2017

Year	Tenure/ Tenure Track Faculty ⁴³	CUPE 1 Part-time and Sessional Instructors ⁴⁴	CUPE 2 Continuing Education Instructors ⁴⁵	Staff (FFTE) ⁴⁶
2018/2019	917	334	477	2,389
2017/2018	903	311	482	2,400
2016/2017	877	300	477	2,278
2015/2016	866	261	524	2,063
2014/2015	856	261	483	1,950

⁴⁰ University Planning Office, 'Student Enrolment Overview 2018-19', online: Ryerson University <<http://www.ryerson.ca/upo>>.

⁴¹ FFTE stands for Fiscal Full-Time Equivalent. A student's FFTE is the proportion of a full load course load that they are taking, E.g. If a program normally includes 20 hours of instruction, a student enrolled in 15 hours of courses would generate 0.75 FFTE (15/20). Online: Ryerson University <<http://www.ryerson.ca/upo/FAQ>>.

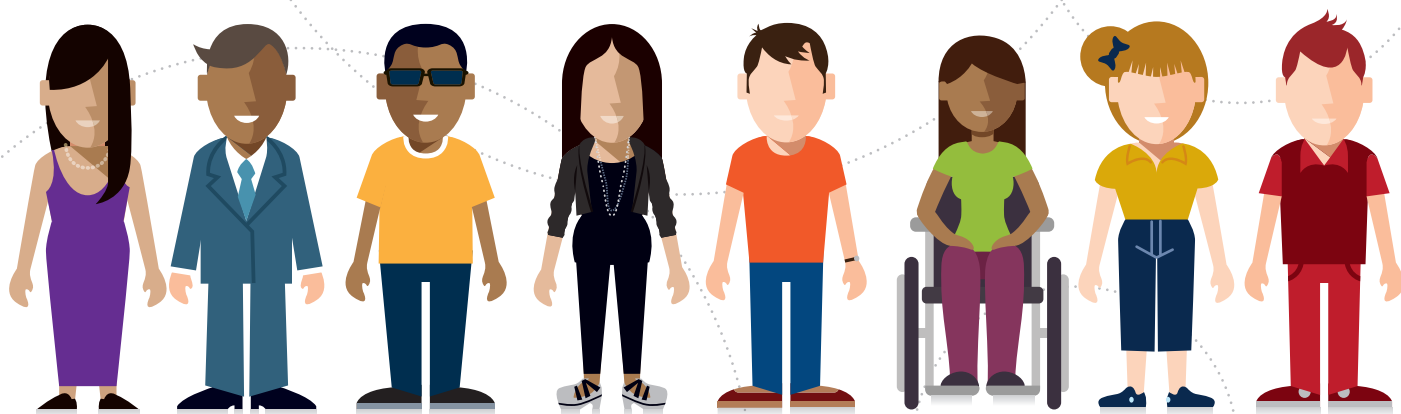
⁴² Senior Research Analyst, Ryerson University Planning Office (2018-2019).

⁴³ Includes Limited Term Faculty (LTFs). Senior Research Analyst, Ryerson University Planning Office (2018-2019) <<http://www.ryerson.ca/upo/statistics/faculty-2010-2020>>.

⁴⁴ Senior Research Analyst, Ryerson University Planning Office.

⁴⁵ Coordinator-Teaching Support Services, Continuing Education-The Chang School. These numbers represent the average number of Instructors engaged to teach courses in the Chang School over the Fall, Winter and Spring semesters for 2014-15 to 2018-19.

⁴⁶ *Supra* note 44.



**Office of the Ombudsperson
at Ryerson University**

Phone: (416) 979-5000, ext. 1-557450

Email: ombuds@ryerson.ca

Webpage: www.ryerson.ca/ombuds