
Background

The Davis Technical College Ombuds role was first created in 2022 to provide an independent and confidential resource for the College community. The Ombuds Office is aligned with the principles and standards of practice of the International Ombuds Association (IOA) and serves as an independent, confidential, impartial, and informal resource for resolving concerns and addressing conflict.

The Ombuds Office is available to all members of the Davis Technical College community, including students, faculty, and staff.

The Ombuds Office is not a place of notice for the College. Communications with the Ombuds does not constitute formal notice to Davis Technical College, and the Ombuds has no authority to make binding decisions, create policies, or formally resolve disputes. The Office is designed to be a voluntary and supportive resource, complementing but not replacing existing formal channels.

Purpose

The mission of the Davis Technical College Ombuds Office is to provide a safe, confidential, informal, and impartial resource where members of the Davis Tech community—defined as students and employees (faculty and staff)—can seek guidance, explore concerns, and identify constructive options for addressing and resolving conflict. Individuals who engage with the Ombuds Office are referred to as *visitors*.

The Ombuds Office serves as:

- A conflict management resource that helps individuals address concerns informally and constructively.
- An early, informal option for raising issues before they escalate, complementing but not replacing formal organizational processes.
- Use of the Ombuds Office is completely voluntary, and all visitors are protected from retaliation when seeking support.
- A neutral and trusted partner that supports a respectful, inclusive, and fair college environment.
- A source of insight for leadership, by identifying and reporting systemic trends without breaching confidentiality.

Responsibilities

The Ombuds Office provides the following services to the College community:

- Confidential and impartial assistance in resolving concerns and disputes at no cost to visitors. This assistance may include listening to concerns, brainstorming and assessing options, providing coaching, helping gather information, making referrals to other appropriate services, and facilitating dialogue.

- Feedback to senior administration on observed trends and potential issues, based on non-identifying and aggregate data.
- Input to leadership regarding policies and practices to reduce confusion, address gaps or common misinterpretations, and promote equity, inclusion, and institutional fairness.
- Coordination with campus resources to ensure a connected matrix of support for students, faculty, and staff.
- Outreach and education for the College community about the role of the Ombuds Office, its services, and other conflict-resolution resources available.

Standards of Practice

The Ombuds Office follows the IOA Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics:

- **Confidentiality:** All contacts, conversations, and information exchanged with an Ombuds shall be treated as confidentially as possible and should not be disclosed without the consent of the parties involved and the Ombuds unless otherwise required by law or college policy. Such information is not legally privileged. Thus, confidentiality does not apply when disclosure is necessary to protect an individual or the College from harm, when child abuse or sexual harassment is indicated, or when otherwise required by law or college policy. Confidentiality also does not apply when failure to disclose certain information to proper authorities may put the Ombuds at risk of criminal prosecution. An Ombuds should try to avoid participation in any formal process inside or outside the College, unless compelled to do so by court order, other applicable law or college policy.
- **Informality:** The Ombuds is a resource for informal problem-solving and does not replace formal complaint processes.
- **Impartiality:** The Ombuds is neutral and does not advocate for individuals or the institution. The Office promotes fair treatment and equitable processes.
- **Independence:** The Ombuds operates independently of other College offices and reports to senior leadership only for administrative purposes.

For more information, see the International Ombuds Association's Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics.

Authority

The Davis Technical College Ombuds Office is established under the authority of the President's Council. This delegation provides the Ombuds with the organizational standing necessary to perform its functions independently and impartially.

- **Initiating informal inquiries:** The Ombuds may contact senior officials to help resolve concerns that affect the College community.
- **Access to information:** The Ombuds may request relevant information from college offices.
- **Ending involvement:** The Ombuds may withdraw from matters; visitors may end their engagement at any time.
- **Discussions with visitors:** The Ombuds may discuss options and suggest improvements but cannot impose remedies or enforce policies.

Limits of Authority

- No participation in formal processes: The Ombuds does not conduct investigations or adjudicate disputes.
- No formal records: No documents or case files are maintained.
- No advocacy role: The Ombuds does not represent or take sides for any party.
- No authority to adjudicate or sanction: Cannot issue findings, enforce outcomes, or bind the College.
- No responsibility for enforcement: The College is not responsible for enforcing agreements reached independently by individuals.
- No professional counseling: The Ombuds does not provide mental health, medical, or legal advice.

Reporting

The Ombuds Office will provide regular reporting that includes aggregate usage metrics, progress on initiatives, policy recommendations, and identification of emerging risks or compliance needs. All reporting will maintain confidentiality in accordance with IOA Standards of Practice and will focus on trends, systemic issues, and opportunities for improvement, not individual cases.

Approval and Effective Date

This Charter remains in effect unless otherwise revoked by the College President, and notice of such revocation shall be provided to the acting Ombuds.