



# ACCUEO

ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN  
COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY  
OMBUDSPERSONS

## **NOVEMBER 2018 BULLETIN: ACCUEO calls for Committee members!**

**ACCUEO Website** <http://accueo.ca/> Annette Fraser from University of Victoria has agreed to take over the monitoring of the ACCUEO website. Under the guidance of Lucie Allaire, Annette is making a seamless transition to this important role. Thanks to Lucie for completing this huge communication task, and recruiting Annette who has the necessary skills and expertise to enhance our website.

**ACCUEO Webinar** Lucie Allaire and Julie Boncompain's webinar in October on "Safe Space and Freedom of Space" drew strong participation from ACCUEO members across Canada. This co-moderated webinar was a great success and offers a model for mentorship, learning and presenting with our ombuds peers.

**FCO/ACCUEO Conference** The conference planning committee received many proposals from the Higher Education ombuds sector so there was no need to extend the deadline. Wait for updates on the Conference program. The conference will be held in Toronto at the downtown Sheraton Centre, from April 17 to 19, 2019.

**ACCUEO Executive Change** - Laura Reid (Simon Fraser University) has just confirmed that she will be joining the ACCUEO Executive as our Western Regional Representative.

**International Committee** Julie Boncompain has agreed to chair the ACCUEO International Committee. Members on the Committee include: Martine Conway (former Chair), Anita Pouliot, Carolyn Brendon, and Brent Epperson. The International Committee will now be handling inquiries from Higher Education ombudspersons from outside Canada. This year, we have received inquiries from ombudspersons in South America and South Africa.

**Awards Committee** We need to recruit a Chair and members to join this committee, and to undertake a review of the kinds of awards, criteria for selection, and selection process. The committee will be busy in the new year, as we have members deserving recognition and hope to honour them at our conference in April.

**Communications Committee** We are seeking a new Chair for the Communications Committee as Kevin Wiens and Marc Johnson have left their positions. Current members include Rob Thompson (Lakehead University), Laura Reid (Simon Fraser University) and Taylor Thomas (University of Alberta). We are hoping to send an outreach letter to HE institutions that do not have ombuds offices in Canada, and need a Chair to keep this important task on track.

**Members' Biography Resource** In January 2019, Natalie Sharpe will be sending a template to members who wish to provide their pictures and biographies in a members' resource on the ACCUO website. We have received a number of biographies for our November Bulletin. The biography resource will allow members to add more information about their background and expertise, and will be updated annually.

**ACCUO Mid-Eastern Regional Meeting** Thanks to Nora Farrell, Ayesha Adam, and Gemma Kerr at the Ryerson University Ombuds Office who hosted this meeting on November 8 and 9. Fifteen participants attended from Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick higher education institutions. There were several round table discussions and presentations, and resources on Academic Integrity. A shared concern was the need for ACCUO to develop resources to help members prepare for office evaluations.

Kim Morgan led a discussion on an IOA article by Wayne Blair, "Reimagining the Organizational Ombuds Role". article [https://www.ombudsassociation.org/IOA\\_Main/media/SiteFiles/jioa-ce/JIOA\\_2017\\_4\\_Reimagining-the-Organizational-Ombuds-Role.pdf](https://www.ombudsassociation.org/IOA_Main/media/SiteFiles/jioa-ce/JIOA_2017_4_Reimagining-the-Organizational-Ombuds-Role.pdf)

Jennifer Meister presented on Ombuds communication strategies based on her survey of what ombudspersons are currently doing to enhance knowledge and visibility of their offices, and showing how ombudspersons can make a difference in students' lives. Jennifer's session included a group exercise on messages, objectives, timelines, and tactics to reach various stakeholder groups. Jennifer shared a communications chart that members can adapt to their institutions. Strategies included the Ombuds annual report and special targeted reports; serving in an advisory capacity to key committees and initiatives, when appropriate; providing professional development training sessions for faculty and staff; presentations to student associations and student groups; writing articles in student and university papers; developing a strong referral system; discussing the ombuds role at student orientations; explaining the ombuds role to faculty, contract, and teaching assistants; exploring the potential of Facebook and other social media platforms; and developing a basic communication plan to improve the visibility of the service.

**Managing Office Evaluations** Following discussions at the AGM and the mid-year meeting in Toronto, Jennifer Meister offered to contact members to collect documentation on their Terms of Reference, and other relevant information on evaluation processes of their offices. This information will be used to develop a resource guide of best practices on our ACCUO website for members to prepare for evaluations of their offices.

## ACCUO MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

**Ombuds Changes at University of Calgary** **Kevin Wiens** accepted a secondment as Manager of Student Support at the University of Calgary in September. Kevin stepped down from his position as ACCUO Western Regional Representative, and as Chair of the ACCUO Communications Committee. **Jeff Stransky** has been appointed as the interim ombudsperson at University of Calgary.



**Marc Johnson**, Undergraduate Ombudsman, University of Alberta, for nearly 7 years, left his position to become a Student Judicial Officer at Norquest College in Edmonton. Marc completed the Ombuds Essentials certificate, achieved Charter Mediator Status, and is completing a Master's in Education at University of Alberta. He served as a member of the ACCUO Communications sub-committee and presented at FCO-ACCUO conferences in Halifax and Ottawa, as well as the joint ACCUO-ENOHE conference in Edinburgh.

**Rob Thompson**, Lakehead University Ombudsperson since 2017, studied at McMaster and completed a Master's degree in Conflict Resolution at University of Bradford, UK. With a background in international human rights, he worked with the human rights organization Peace Brigades International, for several years in Canada and Indonesia. Rob completed a civil mediation program and settled small claims court cases through Mediate BC. He also joined the BC Civil Mediators Roster. He worked in an ombuds role with the UN International Migration agency in Geneva, Switzerland, before his current position.



**Evelyne Poisson** (B. Sc. Soc., M.A. in Conflict studies) became Assistant Ombudsperson in August 2018 at the University of Ottawa. Before, she worked in community and cooperative settings across Canada and worldwide. Her past work experience includes workplace investigations for religious conflicts, workshops about conflicts resolution in community organizations and teaching in elementary schools.

**Chris Fukushima** has been NAIT's (Northern Alberta Institute of Technology) Ombudsperson since 2015. He started the role after 10 years in student housing at the University of Alberta. Chris is very interested in applying restorative principles and leadership practice in his ombuds work. In order to help address systemic fairness issues Chris works to connect student stories, thick data, he receives with bigger data and best practice in order to make recommendations in the institution.



**Heather Cole** (BA Hon, LLB and MPA, MEd, PhD) was appointed Interim University Ombudsperson for Queen's University. She transitioned from her role as Assistant Dean for JD students, where she introduced several initiatives including an expanded outreach program for Indigenous students, teaching supports for faculty, a renewed community outreach program, and an Orientation week for incoming students. She also conducted postdoctoral research on at-risk populations. Heather worked in high profile roles for over a decade in the legal, government, and educational sectors for federal as well as provincial governments.

**Honouring ACCUO Leaders** In our January 2019 Bulletin, we plan to honour our ACCUO members who have announced they will be leaving their ombuds role. We wish to highlight their contributions to ACCUO, the Higher Education ombuds profession in Canada and internationally, and to the ombuds profession in general.