

**Report of the University Ombudsperson
For the period July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003**

Summary

The University of Toronto established its Ombudsperson's Office in 1975, and has demonstrated a longstanding, ongoing commitment to this Office's role in promoting openness and accountability in dealing with issues, and in taking a collective responsibility for their resolution. In the mid-nineties, during a time of severe budgetary cutbacks at all University divisions, the Office was reduced to a part-time service. Then, as an outcome of the 2001 operational review of the Office by the Governing Council's "Committee on the Office of the Ombudsperson" ("the Committee"), the position of Ombudsperson was restored to full-time. This, according to the Committee, was based on the importance of a number of factors, including: "accessibility to the ombudsperson, encompassing availability (time in the office), awareness of the office (across the three campuses), and responsiveness (after the initial contact is made); the complexity of some cases; and the significant enrollment increases expected."

As the result of my increase to a full-time appointment from part-time as of July 2001, combined with resources allocated to us for outreach purposes, we were able to make a number of improvements in terms of the Office's service to the community. These were designed to increase awareness of the existence, role and function of the Office across the three campuses, while at the same time maximizing our focus on the more complex cases brought to our attention by University members. I describe these initiatives throughout this year's Annual Report, including the following: our increased scheduling at the Mississauga and Scarborough campuses; our office website and print information resources; our improved data collection and database management, and our accountability, service delivery and service evaluation measurements. Another very important initiative over the past two years relates to our development of a large, broad-based consultation network of university members designed to provide collective expertise, on a timely basis, for early resolution of issues, and for follow-up on important issues raised in previous Annual Reports.

My Annual Report this year includes two new recommendations for consideration by the Administration, together with a request for an update to last year's Administration's Response to one of my recommendations. I also refer to a considerable number of initiatives undertaken by the Administration over the past five years that have served to address and/or alleviate issues raised in my previous Annual Reports. I have included, as well, a significant amount of comparative statistical information, both on a year-to-year basis, and also as a sort of five-year 'retrospective' over the course of my appointment as University Ombudsperson. This is intended to provide helpful contextual information and meaningful statistical data for the purposes of the Governing Council's mid-term operational review of the Office scheduled for later this year.

Mary Ward
September, 2003