

Confidentiality and record-keeping

Confidentiality is very important and is perhaps the most important tenet of the work I do, certainly from the employee's perspective but also from the university's perspective as well. This is the Ombuds office. Contacting the Ombuds office occurs in a safe environment where confidentiality is protected to the extent allowed by law. Limits to that confidentiality would include only if there is risk of serious harm to a person or property or if I'm as an Ombuds person is granted an individual's consent to approach another person or approach another office and that would only be done by permission from someone. So the confidentiality is very important. To maintain that confidentiality, although I do keep notes and records as I'm working with an individual, at regular intervals or at the conclusion of the work that I might do with a visitor to the office, those records are destroyed. My office or I do not keep records for the university in any sense other than working records at the time that I'm working with the individual. And because of that, this office is not designed to be an agent of notice for the university. So individuals who bring information to this office who are interested in notifying the university of violations of policy; for example, because of the nature of the confidentiality that I work under, this office is not designed to receive that information. We certainly can talk about it, but if the intent of the visitor is to notify the university of wrongdoing, let's say, then we will work together on how to get that information to the appropriate offices.