



# OFS: A Different Kind of Intervention

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2011-2012 Management  
Forum Conference

February 15, 2012

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# A couple of questions:

Did you know that there is an Ombudsperson (Ombudsman in French) for students at McGill?

Do you have some idea about what he does?

# Mandate of the OPS

i) provide an independent, impartial and confidential process through which a student may seek the just, fair and equitable resolution of any university-related concern where normal non-adversarial administrative channels for addressing such matters are inappropriate in the circumstances or prove ineffective;

## Mandate (cont.)

ii) where appropriate, review University policies, guidelines and procedures affecting students and make recommendations for change normally to the relevant University administrative officer;

## Mandate (cont.)

iii) where appropriate, promote discussion of University-wide student related concerns.

*Chapter 16 – Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities*

# Individuals and Groups Served

Type of requests for assistance	2010-11
Students (Applying, Current/Returning, Former students)	246
Groups	4
Faculty & Staff	5
Community Requests	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>261</b>

# Student requests for assistance by educational level

<b>Education Level</b>	<b>2010-11 (% , number of students)</b>
Undergraduate	47.6 (117)
Graduate	48.8 (120)
Fellow / Resident	1.6 (4)
Postdoc	0.4 (1)
UNKNOWN	1.6 (4)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 (246)</b>

# Nature of Student Concerns

<b>Academic</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>2010-11</b>
	Admission	9
	Advising	0
	Courses/Program	32
	Examinations	16
	Inter/intra-faculty transfer	2
	Marks/Grades	39
	Practicum/Field Work/Stage	7
	Probation/Exclusion	12
	Other	14
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>131</b>

# Nature of Student Concerns (cont.)

<b>Inter-personal</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>2010-11</b>
	Administrator/academic	3
	Administrator /non-academic	1
	Course Instructor/TA's	6
	Invigilators	0
	Other Student(s)	1
	Research/Thesis Supervisor	34
	Other	3
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>48</b>

## Nature of Student Concerns (cont.)

<b>Finances</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>2010-11</b>
	Loan/Bursary	4
	Quebec Residency fee status	4
	Scholarship	1
	Student Fees	18
	Other	2
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>29</b>

# Nature of Student Concerns (cont.)

	Issue	2010-11
<b>Student Services</b>		5
<b>University Units</b>		9
<b>Student-run Org.</b>		0
<b>Residence Life</b>		2
<b>Student Discipline</b>	Academic offense	4
	Non-Academic offense	0
	Subtotal	4

# Nature of Student Concerns (cont.)

	Issue	2010-11
Procedural Issues		1
Intellectual Property		3
Harassment		3
Safety/Security		1
Other		10
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>246</b>

# Resolution Categories

<b>Resolution Category</b>	<b>Number of Students 2010-11</b>
Information/ advice	148
Intervention/ mediation	98



# Recommendations 2012

The recommendations in my last annual report aimed at improving graduate student supervision. In addition I made the recommendation to have a mental health awareness week for the McGill community.



# Another question

How many of you deal with students on a regular basis?



How would you deal with a situation like this?



# What would you do?

Thomas missed a deadline to drop a course and ended up paying for it, and (worse) will likely get an F grade. In speaking with the student you become aware that he had experienced (or is still experiencing) a difficult situation – the loss or serious illness of a parent or loved one, a family crisis, an abusive relationship etc.

## What would you do?(cont.)

As a consequence Thomas experienced a lack of appetite, insomnia, loss of concentration, and depression. The last thing on his mind was the drop deadline for courses. He has a note from McGill's Mental Health Clinic saying that he is being followed by the clinic for anxiety and depression, but the note is dated after the late-withdrawal deadline.

## What would you do? (cont.)

The same situation may apply when a student misses an exam because of a mental health issue and he is given a failing grade. Again his medical note is dated after the exam had taken place.

Important to know: Up to this point the student has had an excellent academic record.



## A Parting Thought:

*Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not.*

Dr. Seuss



Thank you!  
Merci