

Ombudsperson's Annual Report

for the period

July 1, 1999 – June 30, 2000

Submitted by:

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Ombudsperson from Feb. 1997 – August 2000

Presented to Academic Council

Ryerson University

Tuesday, December 4, 2001

REPORT OF THE OMBUDSPERSON

For the Period July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000

This third Annual Report covers the period from July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000 and is submitted in compliance with the Terms of Reference for the Ombudsperson (Appendix A) which require that the Ombudsperson produce "an Annual Report to the University community through the Ombudsperson Committee" (Appendix B).

The members of the Ombudsperson's Committee during this reporting period were: Dennis Loney (Chair), Executive Assistant, RyeSAC; Pat Corson, Faculty Member, Early Childhood Education; Cory Wright, President, RyeSAC; Odelia Bay, Vice President, Education, RyeSAC; Nazmin Zaver, President, CESAR; Keith Alnwick, Registrar; and Liz Devine, Manager, Student Services Skills Development. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Ombudsperson Committee for both their valuable input and the support they provide to the Office.

It is the job of an Ombudsperson to be available to people who feel aggrieved about some part of an administrative structure. Therefore, when an Ombudsperson writes a report, the report tends to present complaints and concerns presented to the Office. I have said on a number of occasions that the health of an organization, though, should not be measured by if problems exist but the manner of their resolution. As in previous years, this Report presents issues and challenges that the University can work on.

This report provides a statistical summary of the caseload for the year and presents specific case areas and issues from this year that warrant attention or comment.

WELCOME

I would like to begin this report by welcoming Nora Farrell as Ryerson's new University Ombudsperson. Nora brings a wealth of relevant experience to the University in her new role as your new University Ombudsperson. From 1993 to 1998, Nora was the Manager of Complaint Resolution with the Office of the Ombudsman for the Province of Ontario. In this capacity, Nora was involved in the investigation and resolution of a wide spectrum of challenging cases related to the administration of provincial services. Since leaving the Ontario Ombudsman's Office, Nora has provided her expertise as an Ombudsperson in the private sector. Her investigation, organizational development and alternative dispute resolution skills will all be positive additions to the University community. Welcome, Nora!

OFFICE OPERATIONS

The Office of the Ombudsperson at Ryerson officially opened on February 1st, 1997. The services of the Office are available to current or former students of the University community or applicants to the University. The location of the Office is on the second floor of Oakham House. The general goals of the Office are to advise and refer students to appropriate University resources for the resolution of their concerns; to investigate student complaints; and to bring findings and recommendations to the attention of the University.

As in previous years, the Office took part in orientation programmes, school club meetings, CESAR class rep meetings, CESAR coffee and muffin nights, RyeSAC Board meetings, and residence floor meetings. In conjunction with RyeSAC, the Registrar's Office and Student Services presented University 201 seminars to students who have been put on probation, suspension or withdrawn status. Attending these functions permitted me to advertise the Office but also gave me more opportunities to receive students' concerns.

OMBUDSPERSON OFFICE REVIEW

In the Fall of 1999, the Ryerson Ombudsperson Committee undertook the first public review of the Office of the Ombudsperson. The University community was invited to respond to the Review Committee in three ways. First, members of the University community could reply to a survey distributed from the Offices of RyeSAC, CESAR, Student Services and the Vice-President, Administration and Student Affairs. Second, written submissions could be submitted to the Ombudsperson Review Committee. Third, an opportunity was provided to all members of the University community to meet with the Ombudsperson Review Committee.

The Review was widely publicized. The Committee created posters and advertised in the University newspapers. The survey boxes were placed in prominent areas of the four Offices that distributed the surveys.

The Review concluded that the Office has been well received by the University community. Respondents reported not only being happy with the Office and the services offered but also identified the beneficial role the Office plays within the University community.

One recommendation for change was identified. A number of students replying to the survey indicated that they had been unaware of the existence of the Ombudsperson's Office. It was, therefore, felt that more outreach to faculty and students was necessary to heighten student awareness of the Office and the services provided. This year's usage has moved to 363 from 327 complaints.

I would like to personally thank all members of the University community who took part in this Review. Reviews are important milestones for any Office. All input, whether positive or negative in nature, plays an important role in the planning for the future. Thank you for assisting the Ombudsperson Committee and your Ombudsperson's Office in assessing the first three years of operation and planning for the future.

THE CASELOAD

The Office of the Ombudsperson handled 363 cases from July 1, 1999 to June 30,2000. The statistics enclosed in this Report (Appendix C) outline the constituency usage of the Office and provide a breakdown of the types of cases brought to the Office during 1999-2000. It is important to keep in mind when assessing the statistics that the numbers fail to truly indicate the nature and scope of the Office's activities and the time, effort and complexity required to conclude a case.

The statistics indicate that the Office continues to play an important information role for students. This is not surprising when you consider the high turnover of students and the complexity of the University environment. We intervene in many other cases. In some of these cases, situations have, for a number of reasons, gotten off track. This happens in cases of miscommunication and misinformation.

Compliments

Each year, I have highlighted in the Annual Report, a couple of actions taken by members of the University that I think illustrates a new way of doing things or is a positive addition to the University environment.

1) Calendar of Dates

In October 1999, the Registrar released the first edition of a new publication entitled the "Registrarial/Departmental Calendar of Dates". This document outlines all of the major registrarial activities that occur during the academic year, with contact names of who is responsible, broken down by month. This has proven to be an excellent reference tool.

2) Classroom Inclusiveness Training

In my first Annual Report to the University, I complimented the Group to Renew and Enhance Effective Teaching (GREET) organizers for the in-house training opportunities they provide to the University. In this Report, I would like to highlight one specific session that was organized and sponsored by GREET over this past year. The session was on creating a more inclusive classroom. One of the wonderful memories that I will take with me, as I leave the University, is the diversity of the university population and the richness that that brings to any environment. Benefits are experienced by students, teaching staff and the University as a whole if there is first, an appreciation and second, an understanding of our differences. For real learning to occur, it is essential that this appreciation and understanding be clearly evident in the classroom.

3) Credit and Collections

At the end of each and every year, there are a number of students who have not paid what the University says they are owed. In some of these cases, the amounts need to be clarified for students. In other cases, the amounts need to be amended. But when all is said and done, there remains a group of people that owe the University fees or fines. A subset of this group indicates that they are unable to pay. The University has procedures that it follows in cases such as this. This is not a pleasant situation that students find themselves in but I would like to take this opportunity to commend the staff of the Credit and Collections Office. As the Ombudsperson, I understand what it is like to work in an Office where no one ever comes to tell you what a wonderful time they are having at Ryerson. When people come to see both of our Offices, it is because they have a problem. I have worked with the Credit and Collections Office on a number of cases over this past three years and in all cases the goal has been to find a "win-win" outcome which is satisfactory to both the University and the student.

Concerns

It is our role to bring to the University's attention through this report, the nature and types of complaints that your Ombudsperson's Office receives. The following illustrates the wide spectrum of concerns brought to the Ombudsperson's Office over this past year, keeping in mind that it is impossible to reflect the full range of questions and concerns.

1) Fees Statements

Most students try hard to follow the requirements of the University. To do this, they depend on the information they receive from the University. For a number of students attending University, it is the first time that they have been responsible for paying their bills. One bill that all students are responsible for is their fees statement. Each year, the Ombudsperson's Office hears from students who find their fees statements confusing. Many times the statement is not clear to this Office either. We refer students back to the Fees Office or if they say that they have already been to the Fees Office then we will contact the Office to facilitate a clarification. Over this past year, this Office talked to the Manager of Fees about the possibility of making the fee statements more "user-friendly". The Manager indicated that the University is looking at new student information systems which, when implemented would hopefully provide for clearer statements.

2) Student Exchange Programmes

Each year a number of Ryerson University students take part in student exchange programmes. This group of students study in a number of places around the world for a defined period of time. This is a wonderful opportunity. For this opportunity to be successful though, the responsibilities of the student, Ryerson and the University that the student is visiting, need to be very clear. Ryerson provides programmes with information, direction and forms that can be used when

implementing student exchange programmes. We worked with a programme and a number of students who had returned from a student exchange programme. Communication in a number of areas had not been clear. In this particular case, the issues were resolved but the students' experience was dampened by the confusion and misunderstandings that evolved.

3) Calendar Changes

Each year we hear from a number of students who are confused about what they are reading in the University's Calendars. For those of us who have used University Calendars for many years, we are, in most cases, able to quickly alleviate the confusion. In other cases, though, the students' confusion identifies errors in the Calendars. One situation this past year helped us to identify a section of the Calendar that had not reflected information correctly for three years. Most areas of the University provide information for the Calendars. Each year we are asked to verify that the information contained in the Calendars continues to be accurate. The information in the Calendars is only as accurate as we all make it. Based on the important role that the University's Calendars plays, it is crucial that careful scrutiny be annually provided as requested. Errors in the text of any University Calendar reflects badly on the whole University.

4) Rudeness

A number of students come to the Office each year complaining of incivility and inappropriate behaviour on the part of faculty members, lab instructors and administrative staff. The students report incidences of inappropriate comments, belittling, name-calling and yelling, sometimes in front of a classroom of students. The 2000/2001 Ryerson Student Guide states, "students are the primary professional concern of faculty members, who make every attempt to create a learning environment that stimulates intellectual curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, while preserving the self respect of class members". This Office makes sure that students understand their rights and the resources available to them. We encourage students to talk to their programmes about these incidences. Some students report to us that when they raise these situations with their programmes, they are told that is just the way that person is. Other students report that they are advised that the individual is senior and influential in the department and that the student would be wise not to pursue the complaint. These responses are unacceptable. Investigating and attempting to resolve these complaints is very difficult. However, departmental administrators have a responsibility, though, to deal with individuals who are acting inappropriately.

While the Ryerson University Ombudsperson's Office only receives complaints from students, we are aware that sometimes it is staff members, both academic and administrative, who are treated uncivilly by students or other staff. All members of the University community are entitled to be treated with civility and respect, regardless of their role or status.

5) Access to Final Exams

At the end of each term, students receive their grades. Some students, for a number of reasons, wish to access their final exams upon receiving their grades. In the Academic Appeals Policy, under Grade Appeals, it states that, "during the informal discussion of a grade, the student is entitled to have supervised access to all of his/her graded work, including any final examination answer papers". Each term, we hear from students who have been told that they do not have the right to access to their final exams. Students are provided with a defined period of time within which to submit an appeal. Therefore, it is crucial for students to have access to these exams in a timely manner. It is important that all teaching staff and programme administrators know that it is a student's right to have access to their final exams and that that right needs to be applied in a timely manner.

6) Investigating Complaints

The Terms of Reference of the Office of the Ombudsperson makes very clear that the Ombudsperson is "not to initiate an investigation until all existing avenues for seeking redress have been exhausted." Each year the Office refers students to others at the University empowered to look into problems. We encourage students to let us know how things go. We also follow up on as many cases as time allows. A number of students, each year, complain to us that the issues they raised with the University were not adequately addressed. Based on listening to the students in these cases and following up with the departments, this Office has developed a concern about the quality and thoroughness of investigations carried out by University staff members who are in positions to receive and resolve complaints. Too frequently, the investigations are incomplete or cursory and biased in favour of the party with the senior standing academically or administratively. Tough questions are quite often not posed, nor are difficult options pursued. We would recommend that the University consider developing a training module that could be available for those who accept the responsibility of doing investigations on behalf of the University.

7) Unreasonable Delays

The Office continues to hear from students who need administrative decisions made and who are informed that the individuals who make those decisions are away from the University. Students are told that they should wait until the individuals return. We also hear from students who do not receive replies to submitted academic appeals. We heard from students in one programme, this past year, that were not receiving academic appeal decisions from their programme within the ten working days allotted by the Policy. We discovered when we called the programme, that the programme had decided not to follow the Policy, but to have one meeting following the deadline for submission of appeals so that they could consider all submitted appeals at one time. In all of these cases, we work with the students and the University to get things back on track. Unreasonable delays damage the credibility of the University. Programmes and administrative offices should make sure that positions are covered when people are away; that sufficient procedures are in place so that situations do not fall between the cracks; and that policies of the University are followed.

8) Lack of Information in Reasons for Decision

At the end of each term, a number of students submit academic appeals. Some of the decisions received by students provide very little information as to the reasons for the decision. For students receiving negative decisions regarding their appeals, this can be frustrating. They have no idea what evidence or reasons in their original appeal were deemed inadequate. Having the reason for why a decision was made can make a difference between whether a student takes an appeal on to the next level or not. It can also make a difference if the reason for a negative decision is that the evidence was insufficient and the student can supply evidence that would be defined as sufficient.

9) Group Work

Last year's Annual Report identified a weakness in the Code of Academic Conduct. The Code did not specifically deal with how to process suspicions of academic misconduct when the work has been done, not by an individual student, but by a group of students or groups of students. We reported that these situations can become very complicated, especially when academic misconduct is clearly evident but it is not so readily apparent as to who in the group is responsible for the misconduct. The Ombudsperson's Office continued, over this past year, to receive cases of this type. Academic Council, at its January 2001 meeting, approved an amendment to the Ryerson Student Code of Academic Conduct, which comes into effect on September 2001, and that includes a separate section on group academic misconduct. Hopefully, this new addition to the Code will benefit both students and programme staff.

10) Confidentiality

The University has the responsibility to keep student academic record information confidential. It came to our attention, over this past year, that a faculty member was taking attendance by circulating a sign-in sheet that included both the student name and student number. When grades were posted, the faculty member used student numbers, assuming that he was maintaining the confidentiality of student grades. This, of course, was not the case. A number of students admitted to following the grades given to other students in the class. They acquired the student number from the sign-in sheet. The responsibility regarding the confidentiality of student academic record information rests with every member of faculty or administrative staff who have access to the information.

11) Attending Classes Pending Appeal of Academic Standing

At the end of each term, a number of students are informed that they have been suspended or withdrawn from the University. Students, who find themselves in this situation, have an option to submit an appeal. The University Calendar specifies that even though a student has been suspended or withdrawn from the University, they have the right to register and attend classes

while awaiting the decision of their appeal. If their appeal is successful, they remain in the class. If their appeal is not successful, they are removed from the class list and asked to leave. Each term, we talk to suspended and withdrawn students who tell us, they have been told that they cannot attend classes and will not be given course schedules while awaiting appeal decisions. It is important for all faculty members and programme administrative staff to know that while students are awaiting appeal decisions, they have the right to attend class and should be treated like any other student in the class.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

A number of years ago, six Ombudsman Associations in North America decided to meet on an irregular basis to discuss common issues. This group became the Ombudsman Leadership Forum. For the last few years, I represented the Association of Canadian College and University Ombudsperson at this Forum. Two years ago, I was asked to co-coordinate the second Ombudsman Leadership Forum Conference entitled "Our Common Work: Trends and Tools for the Millenium." This conference was held in San Francisco in June 2000. The conference became international with over 400 ombudspersons attending from over fifteen countries.

CONCLUSIONS

The Office of the Ombudsperson could not function without the participation and support of the University community. I wish to thank members of the University community for your support, understanding and assistance in resolving many of the cases that have come to the Office. I would like to thank all of the individuals who brought their concerns to the attention of the Ombudsperson's Office. I would also like to thank all of you who recommended that students come to see us.

To each member of the Ombudsperson Committee, I would like to, once again, relay my thanks, for your commitment to the goals of the Office and for your support. I would like to close with a special thank you to Diane Dyson, who worked with me in the Ombudsperson's Office and then was Acting Ombudsperson for a number of months while the Ombudsperson Committee searched for a new Ombudsperson. It was such a pleasure working with you, Diane. Thank you.

It has been both an honour and a privilege for me to have been Ryerson's first University Ombudsperson. In my view, the work of the Office has made the University a better place. I hope that the trust and confidence, which the Office has engendered over the last four years, will continue for many years to come

Liz Hoffman
Former University Ombudsperson
March 2, 2001

Appendix A
TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON,
RYERSON POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY

1. The Office of the Ombudsperson shall be independent of all existing university and student administrative structures and have the following functions:
 - 1) To advise and/or refer members of the University student community as needed about all situations and University procedures concerning which grievances may arise; specifically, to advise students of their rights and responsibilities and of the proper procedures to follow in order to pursue whatever business or complaint they may have. Where such information exists in University offices or publications, the Ombudsperson shall direct enquirers to these sources and emphasize their responsibility for initiating the appropriate actions and for returning to the Ombudsperson if not satisfied with the results;
 - 2) To investigate, in an impartial fashion, student complaints that may arise against the University or against anyone in the University exercising authority. Complaints may be made by any member holding status as a student of the University community, by former members of the student body or by student applications to the University (dependent on the discretion of the Office of the Ombudsperson), whether accepted or not at the time of the complaint. Investigations may also begin on the independent initiative of the Ombudsperson in respect of anyone of the above entitled to make a complaint;
 - 3) To bring findings and recommendations to the attention of those in authority by the most expeditious means possible.

2. It shall be the special concern of the Ombudsperson that:
 - 1) Decisions affecting members of the University student community are made with reasonable promptness;
 - 2) Procedures and policies used to reach decisions affecting students are adequate and consistently applied and that criteria and rules on which the decisions in question are based are appropriate;
 - 3) Any gaps and inadequacies in existing University procedures that might jeopardize the principle of natural justice or human rights and civil liberties of members within the University student community be brought to the attention of those in authority. It would not be the function of the Ombudsperson to devise the new rules and procedures, but to make recommendations and follow these up to the extent necessary for their formulation and/or improvements.

Authority to Act

The Ombudsperson shall, from time to time, require information from the University or from anyone in the University exercising authority, therefore:

In order to fulfil the function of the office, the Ombudsperson shall have access to all official university files, records and information as required in accordance with the University's policy on Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy. Requests for information from

the Ombudsperson must be given priority by every employee of the University.

Responsibilities of the Ombudsperson

The Ombudsperson *shall*:

- 1) Accept and act upon reasonable requests for information, advice and counsel regarding matters falling within the mandate of the office;
- 2) With reasonable promptness, investigate all complaints directed to the Ombudsperson's Office regarding matters falling within the mandate of the office;
- c) Forward recommendations regarding policy and procedure to the appropriate officials within the University in an expeditious manner;
- d) produce a statistical report each semester, as well as an annual report to the University community through the Ombudsperson Review Committee, and other such special reports as may be required from time to time by the Ombudsperson Review Committee;
- e) Shall respect the need for confidentiality as much as possible; operate under standards of confidentiality;
- f) Communicate clearly to a complainant the extent to which the Ombudsperson can respect a complainant's request for confidentiality.

Although authorized to function in the widest possible context and within a minimum of constraints, the Ombudsperson *shall not*:

- g) Act as the advocate of any party during the investigation of a complaint;
- h) Initiate an investigation until all existing avenues for seeking redress have been exhausted;
- i) Exercise such authority beyond the legal authority of the University, although recommendations may be made concerning the authority of the University or of its constituent parts;
- j) Make University policy or replace established legislative or judicial procedures, although any or all of these may be investigated or questioned and such recommendations made as appropriate for their improvement and efficient functioning;
- k) Release any information regarding personal and personnel records, except for situations as required by law.

Responsibilities of the University

The University shall:

- 1) Ensure the Office of the Ombudsperson is enabled to carry out its mandate and responsibilities

without hindrance from any officer or authority of the University community;

- 2) Respond, through the Vice-President, Administration, to the annual report of the Ombudsperson and to any other such special report as may be required from time to time by the Ombudsperson Review Committee.

Operation of the Office

- 1) Files
 - (i) The Ombudsperson shall maintain suitable records of complaints, findings and recommendations and these shall be accessible only to the Ombudsperson and members of the staff of the Office of the Ombudsperson;
 - (ii) Each file and records will be maintained for a period of four years and one day from the date on which the Ombudsperson deems the case to be completed. At the end of the period of four years and one day, the files or records may be destroyed; however, no destruction of the file or record will take place while any proceedings are pending in the University, the Courts or any outside tribunal and until after all rights of appeal are exhausted or times of appeal have expired;
- 2) While exceptions may be made by the Ombudsperson with respect to matters of major importance, the office will normally function in terms of first come, first served;
- 3) The Ombudsperson shall have unrestricted access to all University authorities. Dated: 1998

Appendix B

OMBUDSPERSON COMMITTEE **Ryerson Polytechnic University**

Terms of Reference

Mandate and objectives for the Ombudsperson's Committee are as follows:

1. To ensure the incumbency of the Office of the Ombudsperson by conducting the selection of the Ombudsperson and the Ombudsperson's performance evaluation.
2. To provide advice and guidance to the Ombudsperson as required and/or upon request.
3. To approve forward planning for the Office.
4. To approve the annual budget of the Office and monitor expenditures.
5. To ensure responsibility for broad dissemination of Ombudsperson's report.

Membership

The Committee is comprised of seven (7) representative as follows:

1. Two (2) representative appointed by the RYESAC executive
2. Two (2) representatives appointed by the CESAR executive
3. Three (3) representatives appointed by the Vice-President, Administration.
4. Ombudsperson is non-voting member of ex-officio.

Operation

The Committee will choose a chair at its first meeting of the academic year.

Regularly scheduled meetings may be held monthly and meetings may be scheduled at the call of the Chair. Meetings should be called at least twice a semester and once during the summer.

Persons may be invited to observe and/or participate in meetings; in-camera sessions may also be called.

The Committee will endeavour to operate by consensus, but any member present may require a vote on any matter under consideration.

The Committee periodically reviews its own terms of reference and those of the Ombudsperson. This will be done after the first year of operation.

The Committee respects the confidentiality of the Ombudsperson's casework and is not in receipt of confidential information from Office records that identifies individuals or groups of individuals.

Administrative Structure

The Office of the Ombudsperson will be managed by an Ombudsperson's Committee comprised of representatives from RYESAC, CESAR, and Ryerson. One Ryerson representative will be appointed as Vice-President, Administration's delegate and will be responsible for line reporting.

The Ombudsperson's annual report will be delivered to the President (RYESAC), President (CESAR), Vice-President, Administration (Ryerson), President (Ryerson), and Academic Council, to then be widely disseminated within the Ryerson community.

Appendix C

Table 1 - Breakdown of Caseload by Constituency

	July 1/98 - June 30/99	July 1, 1999 - June 30, 2000
Full-time Degree	241	264
Part-time Degree	18	17
Continuing Education	44	52
Special Students*	5	4
Miscellaneous**	19	26
TOTAL	327	363

* Students on Letter of Permission

** Alumni and Admissions

Table 2 - Breakdown of Caseload by Action Taken

	July 1/98 - June 30/99	July 1, 1999 - June 30, 2000
Information*	18	15
Advice**	213	227
Intervention***	121	121
TOTAL	327	363

* Providing information on policies and procedures

** Providing information and discussing possible options with the student

*** The Office taking action, with the student's permission, to assist in some way in the resolution of the student's concern.

Table 3 - Case Types

July 1, 1999 - June 30, 2000

Case Type	Information	Advice	Intervention
Admissions	4	11	12
Advanced Standing		2	
Athletics		4	3
Challenge Credits	1	3	
Academic Appeals		67	29
Non-Academic Complaints		19	11
Course Requirements		8	7
Late Withdrawals		3	
Prerequisites			2
Re-Admission		15	11
Student Conduct		19	11
Residence	1	12	5
Library		13	
Financial Aid		17	7
Fees	9	15	8
Transfer Credit		5	2
Accessibility		6	1
Term Work		8	12
Total	15	227	121

Table 4 - Case Types

July 1, 1998 - June 30, 1999

<u>Case Type</u>	<i>Information</i>	<i>Advice</i>	<i>Intervention</i>
Admissions	3	7	6
Advanced Standing		5	1
Athletics			
Challenge Credits		2	1
Academic Appeals		57	20
Non-Academic Complaints		17	6
Course Requirements			
Late Withdrawals		4	
Prerequisites		3	
Re-Admission		25	9
Student Conduct		23	8
Residence	2	13	9
Library	2	6	2
Financial Aid		17	4
Fees	11	15	12
Transfer Credit		8	5
Accessibility		5	4
Term Work		6	9
<i>Total</i>	18	213	96

THE UNIVERSITY'S RESPONSE TO THE OMBUDSPERSON'S THIRD ANNUAL REPORT, 1999/00

It is important to recognize the valuable role of the Ombudsperson at Ryerson in assisting students who experience problems within the University. We appreciate the helpful and collegial way that problem solving is approached because it begins with the assumption that everyone is doing their best and that together problems can be resolved and misunderstandings can be clarified.

Eleven areas of concern were identified in the 1999/00 Report. Each has been examined, in turn, and a response has been provided below. Many of these concerns are very general and by their very nature require an ongoing attention and commitment.

1. **Fee statements:** We agree that the fee statements may be challenging for some students, particularly those who have a series of adds and drops or who are out of sync with their program. A more "user friendly" form is one of the objectives for a new student information system. In the meantime staff in the Fees Office are more than willing to clarify the statements.
2. **Student exchange programs:** A great deal of progress has been made in the past two years in providing support and guidance to programs involved in student exchanges. The Office of International Affairs has played a leading role in providing such support. As a result, exchanges are now established and managed in a much more systematic way than was the case even a year or so ago. However, the importance of information and ongoing communication with students and exchange partners cannot be overstated, as we will continue to reinforce this point.
3. **Calendar changes:** All those involved in production of Ryerson calendars share the objective of clear and error-free calendar information. The calendar is a complex document with contributions from units across the University. Policy and curricular information is rigorously vetted for errors. Although errors do sometimes occur, they are rare in this type of information. Other calendar information describes units or activities of the University. This material originates from departments across campus and is authorized by these departments. We will consult with departmental colleagues to review steps to further improve the accuracy of this information.
4. **Rudeness:** Incivility is a growing social problem in every venue. It is clearly unacceptable between or among students, staff and/or faculty. Each member of the University community is entitled to be treated with respect regardless of role or status. And each of us has a responsibility to report and/or intervene in such incidents if we witness them or happen to be the recipient of such behaviour. Later this fall, Human Resources will be establishing a committee to begin discussions on this issue with the objective of developing guidelines that clearly articulate our values as a University community.
5. **Access to final exams:** Ryerson policy clearly provides students with the right to review their final examination papers. It is also clear that such access must occur prior to established deadlines for appeal. The Registrar will work with the deans, chairs and academic directors to remind all faculty of this expectation.

6. **Investigating complaints:** The University's primary focus is on doing the right things and ensuring that the right things are done well. When complaints are received there may be an informal or formal review, or an informal or formal investigation depending upon the specifics of the situation. For those employees who are required to undertake formal investigations as part of their positions, formal training and/or experience is mandatory. Such positions would include among others, certain security staff, the Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Officer, certain staff in Human Resources, etc. The resolution of complaints does not necessarily require formal training in conducting investigations.
7. **Unreasonable delays:** Policies and protocols are in place to ensure that essential activities, including appeal review, are carried out even in the absence of key personnel. All deans, chairs, academic directors and program assistants will be reminded of their responsibilities in this regard.
8. **Lack of information in reasons for decision:** The former Secretary of Academic Council initiated a response to this issue particularly in respect to third level appeals. The effort will be continued through the new Secretary of Academic Council.
9. **Group work:** The amended Student Code of Academic Conduct is expected to obviate this concern and will be monitored to ensure that it is effective in doing so.
10. **Confidentiality:** Policies are in place to address this concern, and deans, chairs, academic directors and faculty will be reminded once again of these policies. An illustrative list of appropriate and inappropriate practices will be developed for the information of faculty and administrators.
11. **Attending classes pending appeal of academic standing:** Once again, policies are in place to address this concern, but a concerted effort will be made to ensure that everyone involved in the registration process understands and respects the policies.

Dr. Linda Grayson
Vice President, Administration and Student Affairs