

## International Ombudsman Association

### Code of Ethics

**Neutrality and Impartiality** - The Graduate Student Ombudsman as a designated neutral remains unaligned and impartial. The Ombudsman strives to promote procedural fairness in the content and administration of Rensselaer's practices, processes, and policies. The Ombudsman does not engage in any situation which could create a conflict of interest.

**Confidentiality** - The Graduate Student Ombudsman holds all communications with those seeking assistance in strict confidence, and does not disclose confidential communications unless given permission to do so, except as required by law, or where, in the judgment of the Ombudsman, there appears to be imminent danger to self or others.

**Independence** - The Graduate Student Ombudsman is independent in structure, function, and appearance to the highest degree possible within Rensselaer.

**Informality** - The Graduate Student Ombudsman, as an informal resource, does not participate in any formal adjudicative or administrative procedure related to concerns brought to his/her attention. As an informal resource, the Ombudsman does not accept notice (formal complaints) for Rensselaer.



## The Graduate Center

Housed within the Office of Graduate Education, the center was created as a service to graduate students, including co-terminal students, who would prefer to discuss an academic or personal issue on a confidential basis. This sort of consultation is characteristic of an ombuds office and is designed to confidentially, impartially, and informally assist students in resolving issues that may arise over an interpersonal dispute or other personal situation affecting their educational progress. The center also helps eligible students identify other campus offices and professionals who may be better equipped to assist them.

### Vision Statement

The Graduate Center at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute believes that each Rensselaer graduate student is capable of succeeding in graduate school and of making a positive contribution to his or her field of study and society as scholars and citizens. The center helps to ensure that all Rensselaer graduate students enjoy appropriate and timely intellectual and personal growth while in graduate school.

### Mission Statement

The Graduate Center provides a supporting structure alongside a student's curriculum that assists students in reaching their personal, social, and educational goals. The center is supported by well-informed, caring, and insightful professionals dedicated to assisting each student in developing their intellectual and personal abilities.

### Statement of Objectives

The Graduate Center assists students in understanding the academic policies and procedures that guide Rensselaer's graduate education and research enterprises. The center supports and promotes a campus environment that is encouraging of and conducive to each individual's personal, academic, social, and professional growth.

## Graduate Student Ombudsman

518-276-6567



Rensselaer

**1516 Peoples Avenue  
Troy, NY 12180**



The Graduate Student Ombudsman offers a confidential service for graduate students who wish to discuss a policy, procedure, or personal matter affecting their ability to achieve academic and personal success while a student at Rensselaer.

The Graduate Student Ombudsman facilitates fairness in process and treatment of graduate students through the following means:

- Provide a safe place to speak and be heard
- Provide information on Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute policies and procedures
- Help the visitor to evaluate the issue from several perspectives
- Discuss actions that may lead to resolution without the need for formal action
- Explain formal complaint procedures

***Issues that the Graduate Student Ombudsman may be able to help you with:***

- Policy and procedural concerns
- Academic disputes
- Academic freedom
- Academic integrity issues
- Interpersonal disagreements
- Harassment or discrimination
- Questions on authority
- Ethical conflicts
- Disciplinary matters
- Housing issues
- Disrespect, rudeness, incivility
- Health and safety concerns
- Threats or retaliation
- Misunderstandings

***The Graduate Student Ombudsman does not:***

- Maintain identifying records
- Represent individuals in formal procedures
- Conduct or participate in formal investigations or processes
- Provide psychological counseling
- Offer legal advice
- Testify or gather evidence for formal administrative processes
- Advocate for individuals or departments
- Establish, change, or set aside policies
- Serve as an office of record

**Contact Mr. Dennis Gornic  
Graduate Student Ombudsman, 276-6567  
dgornic@rpi.edu, or visit:**

**The Office of Graduate Education  
1516 Peoples Avenue  
Troy, NY 12180**

**<http://goo.gl/WNBW7B>**

May 2015  
Office of Graduate Education  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute