

**Year 2 Public Description of Work for  
Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education**

**International Ombudsman Association**

**Ombuds Effectiveness Project**

**Relevant Rubric Area(s):** Response: Improved Communication and Transparency.

**Description of Work:**

As confidential, informal, impartial and independent resources, ombuds are often called upon to help with sexual harassment concerns within their organizations. Ombuds, however, are ensnared in a paradox. They need to raise awareness and accurate understanding of their work, demonstrate their value to their organizations and society, and share best practices within the profession. Yet, if ombuds talk openly about what they do, they risk violating their own ethical principles and standards of practice, undermining effectiveness. To address this paradox, in June 2020 the International Ombudsman Association established an Ombuds Effectiveness Task Force to research and gather information on how ombuds share meaningful insight with their organizations. Specifically, this project will examine reporting documents, brochures, surveys, and data generated by ombuds. The goal is to equip ombuds offices with guidance, research tools, and training to measure and present about the effectiveness of their programs relevant to stakeholders' goals, in alignment with their organization's mission and values.

**Goals of the Project:**

- **Goal #1** to gather resources such as articles, webinars, whitepapers, reports, case-law, and any other type of resource that may help identify how ombuds can share meaningful insights with their organizations.
- **Goal #2** is focused on gathering effectiveness tools. Common examples of tools include annual reports, marketing brochures, surveys, intake forms, reporting templates, and risk and stakeholder engagement frameworks.
- **Goal #3** is to create a training and a comprehensive toolkit that will equip ombuds to confidently talk about and measure their organizational effectiveness

Since 2020 considerable progress has been made in relation to goals #1 and #2. In May 2021, the Task Force identified the need for an accessible, relational database to index materials and resources as essential before moving forward with goal #3. As of late 2021, the Task Force is focused on finding and purchasing the appropriate software that will facilitate the final phase of the project.

**Website for further information (if applicable):** <https://www.ombudsassociation.org/ioa-ombuds-effectiveness-project>

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