

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE

News from the International Ombudsman Association

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Get the Word Out!

BY JANIS SCHONAUER, IOA PRESIDENT



JANIS SCHONAUER

As practitioners and supporters of the important work of Ombudsmen, we understand the high value that we bring to our respective organizations. I would like to share

with you the results of the 2007 National Business Ethics Survey (www.ethics.org). The fifth survey of U.S. business, government and nonprofit workplaces, conducted by The Ethics Resource Center, supports the important role of informal options for resolution — such as those provided by an ombudsman — within organiza-

tions. The survey reveals that since more formal ethics programs have been established more incidents of unethical behavior have been observed but there is a significant decrease in reporting of ethical breaches. This gap is exactly where

issues being resolved sooner and at a lower level, but it helps individuals learn to address subsequent issues. At a time when scrutiny is high, our unique function is invaluable. The task is for us to get the word out about how our role enhances ethical

One of the best opportunities that IOA provides for further discussion of our role is participation in the Annual Conference.

the ombudsman “lives.” The survey highlights that in “many... environments... employees struggle to find the ethical courage to do what is right.”

We, as an alternative confidential and informal option on our campuses and in our workplaces, are the place where that resolve can be developed. We provide a place to ask questions, understand processes, and anonymously raise issues. Our effective option building can and does strengthen the ethical courage of individuals to report ethical violations or potential violations. Our communication of trends and new issues to our organizations strengthens the ethical landscape of our institutions. This not only results in

behavior, strengthens fair process and increases just outcomes.

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INSIDE



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One of the best forums that IOA provides for further discussion of our role is the Annual Conference. I hope you will join us in April in Boston at our 3rd Annual Conference where there will be more than 40 pre-conference courses and conference sessions, not to mention the opportunity to learn from one another, to engage colleagues in discussions about vexing issues, and to build community.

Themes from conferences past continue to support our work for years to come. I was recently reflecting on a session from the inaugural IOA conference three years ago. Tony Williams spoke to us about professionalization and relayed a story of people crossing a wide river. Some forged right across, eager to get what lay on other side. Others wanted to cross at a different pace, in a series of steps. Fortunately, the first person placed stepping stones to ease the crossing. In much the same way the Certification Task Force has placed many stepping stones to allow us to approach Certification in an incremental way. They have, through regular and thorough communications about the opportunities, costs and formats for certification built that path for us to follow. The information prior to the survey, the survey itself, and the e-mails reporting on the survey results have strengthened our understanding of the opportunities and challenges presented by a certification program. They will be discussing the entire process at the Conference, as well.

Three years ago Tony closed with this thought "Respect where you've come from, [be] aware of where you're going, and most importantly ...Celebrate who you've become!" I hope to see you in Boston so we can celebrate our progress together. ●

Message from the Board

BY ELIZABETH WALSH PINO, MCKINSEY & COMPANY

In response to requests from many of our members, this is the first of what will be quarterly updates on the issues and initiatives that the Board is managing on behalf of IOA.

If you have any questions, suggestions, or would like to get involved in any IOA activities, please don't hesitate to contact any Board member* — this is your organization and your input is crucial to the Board's ability to serve IOA members and the profession in the best way possible.

In August of last year, the Board held a two-day retreat in Houston, in a space provided by Chevron Corporation. Using an intensive, internally-led process, the Board discussed and prioritized initiatives — deciding to focus on four key issues:

- **Accountability for Standards of Practice.** Continuing work that started at the August 2007 Board meeting, the Board will be considering a recommendation to create a task force to examine how best to promote member accountability for practicing to the Standards of Practice.
- **Credentialing.** The Board decided to fund the next step (a market survey) in the process of determining the feasibility of a certification program.
- **Promoting Ombudsman Programs.** The Board, working primarily through the Communications Committee, is focusing on enhancing the effectiveness of the information about starting an office that IOA can share with interested parties and the process by which that information is provided.
- **Best Practices.** The Board has charged task forces with reviewing the Standards of Practice for any revisions, addressing research topics, and Professional Development Committee (PDC) issues including succession planning for PDC leadership (currently **Francine Montemurro** and **Lee Twyman**), trainer selection and course delivery enhancements.

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*<http://www.ombudsassociation.org/bod.html>

(Board Highlights continued from page 2)

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

- Conducted a compensation survey which has been completed and results sent to those who participated (results are available at cost to those who didn't participate—please contact PMA – info@ombudsassociation.org – for details).
- **Wayne Blair** succeeded **Nick Diehl** on the Board. Nick had to step down because he accepted a position at NIH and there is already a Board member from NIH. The IOA By-Laws preclude two individuals from the same organization serving on the Board at the same time.
- The Communications Committee is in the process of working on a web site redesign which should result in a more informative and user-friendly tool.
- The nomination process for five open director and two associate representative seats began in December. Twenty-one individuals were nominated. Thirteen qualified (i.e., they had been members of IOA for at least two years and were in good standing. The final ballot of 13 resulted in the election of 5 directors and two associate representatives. The results were announced in early March. Officers will be elected by the Board immediately prior to the Annual Conference.
- Planning for the annual conference (Park Plaza Hotel, Boston, MA April 14-16, 2008—pre-conference courses 4/13) is well underway led by **John Carter** and **Vicky Brown**.
- The Board is continuing to review the draft Strategic Plan that was completed by a Task Force co-chaired by **Mike Turpenoff** and **Randy Williams**. Both Mike and Randy continue to provide the Board with advice and counsel related to the plan.
- The financial condition of IOA continues to be strong thanks to the thoughtful and expert leadership of **Gary Yamashita**. Members of the Finance Committee also serve as liaisons to other standing committees to provide advice regarding proposed new expenditures and sources of income. The 2008 budget was presented to the Board for approval at its February meeting and the annual financial report will be available to members at the business meeting at the Annual Conference. ●

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IOA Conference 2008

Making a Difference — The Ombudsman Impact

April 13-16, 2008, Boston, MA

BY VICKY BROWN AND JOHN S. CARTER, CO-CHAIRS

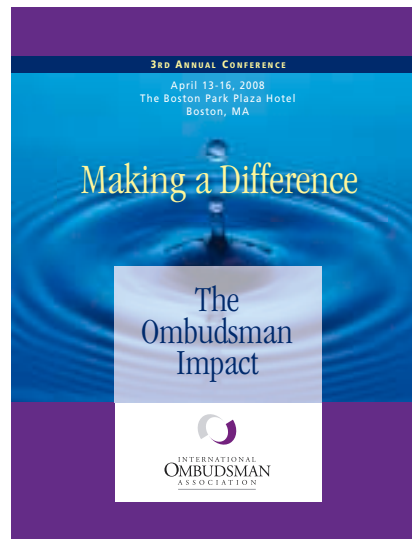
The **Boston Park Plaza Hotel in downtown Boston, Massachusetts** is the site for the 3rd Annual Conference of the International Ombudsman Association to be held **April 13-16, 2008**. This IOA Conference promises to deliver outstanding content and superb value through exciting educational sessions beneficial to all attendees.

Sunday, April 13 offers one *full-day* pre-conference course and four *half-day* courses.

- **Tricia Jones and Ross Brinkert** will lead “Conflict Coaching: Enhancing the Ombudsman Process with an Innovative Research- and Theory-Based Model” in the full-day offering.

Half-day courses include

- “IOA Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics: Understanding the Core Principles of an Organizational Ombuds Practice” taught by **David Talbot, Tim Griffin, and Dorothy Graham**;
- “Essential Questioning and Interviewing Skills for Ombudsmen” led by **Lee Twyman and David Carver**;
- “Challenges to Informality and Other Standards” facilitated by **Marsha Wagner, Wilbur Hicks, and Howard Gadlin**;
- “Current Legal Issues for Ombudsmen Programs” taught by **Chuck Howard, David Talbot, Susan Kee-Young Park, and Thomas Kosakowski**.



A festive **welcome reception** for all conference attendees will be held Sunday evening before conference attendees head out to explore the interesting and exciting nightlife of one of America’s great cities.

Janis Schonauer, President of IOA will provide the welcome for the first full day of the general conference, **Monday April 14**.

- The keynote address, “A Bridge Across the Racial Divide” will be delivered by **Dr. Richard E. Lapchick**;
- **Mary Rowe and outstanding panelists Mim Gaetano, Thomas Kosakowski, Justine Sentenne, Sarah Zeigler, and Thomas Zgambo** will share valuable insights into key trends for ombuds in the coming year as they share unique perspectives of “The Crystal Ball.”

After a **superb networking lunch** when attendees will have an opportunity to learn more about writing for the IOA Journal and the IOA Newsletter as well as developing research studies focusing on ombudsman practices, Monday afternoon concurrent sessions will provide more exciting educational opportunities.

Early Monday afternoon’s concurrent offerings include:

- **Ross Brinkert and Tricia Jones** with “Emotion as Insight: Understanding Emotion as a Key to Conflict Management”;
- An impressive panel of **Isabel Calderon, Tom Neal, Elizabeth Pino, and Gary Yamashita** presents “Ombudsing from a Distance”;
- **Mary Newhart** will facilitate “Research Findings: The Ombudsman Role in Higher Education”;
- “Evaluating Ombudsmen Offices” will be led by **Frank Fowlie and John Zinsser**;
- **Chuck Howard and Wendy Friede** will teach us about “Legal and Practical Considerations for the Contract Ombudsman”;
- “Conversations with the IOA Board” will take place with **directors and associate member representatives of IOA**.

The late Monday afternoon concurrent sessions will host:

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(Annual Conference continued from page 4)

- **Sector forum discussions** that will provide important opportunities for attendees to discuss critical issues with colleagues.

Monday evening, conference attendees can explore the interesting and exciting history and nightlife of one of America's great cities.

At breakfast on **Tuesday April 15**, attendees have another opportunity to continue discussions with Alan Lincoln and IOA Journal and Newsletter editors about writing for the IOA Journal and IOA Newsletter as well as developing research studies focusing on ombudsman practices.

- Tuesday's keynote address "Cultural Competence and Diversity in 21st Century Diplomacy" will be delivered by **Ambassador Harriet Elam-Thomas**.

- A distinguished plenary panel including **Mark Manley, Janet Park Balanoff, and Lani DeBenedictis** will present "How Ombudsman Offices Get Started and Work Collaboratively with Other Organizational Entities";

Morning concurrent sessions include:

- "An Ombudsman as a Leader: Developing and Communicating our Vision of Leadership" facilitated by **Elaine Lutkitz**;

- "Ombudsman Accountability" will be conducted with a unique Samoan Circle format featuring **Howard Gadlin, Sean Banks, John Barkat, Judy Bruner, Susan Casino, Kevin Jessar, Francine Montemurro, Marsha Wagner, and Margo Wesley**;

- **Sharon Lanier, Laurie Patterson, & John Zinsser** will examine "The Ombudsman in Healthcare: Conflicts Among Healthcare Providers";

- **Don Noack & Mauricio Ramos** will lead "Helping People Manage Polarities";

- "The Impact of Administrative Support Personnel on the Ombudsman Program" will be taught by **Wayne Blair and Laurie Mesibov**;

- "Establishing Best Practices for Assessing and Responding to Imminent Risk" will be led by **Lee Twyman and Lisa Neale**.

Attendees will not want to miss the **IOA Annual Business Meeting and Luncheon**. Tuesday early afternoon concurrent sessions include:

- **Susan Casino** facilitating "Increase the Peace-A Training Tool for Your Organization";

- **Wayne Blair and Laurie Mesibov** will help ombuds with "The Impact of Ombudsing on the Ombudsman: The Ombudsman as Student";

- **Janet Morse** will facilitate "Uncivil Behavior: The Graduate Student Experience";

- "Medicine and Science: Conversations on Working with Post Docs, Fellows, Residents, and Trainees" will be examined by **David Carver, Rosa Garner, and Linda Wilcox**;

- **John Barkat, Karen Campbell, Steve Cordery, & Danielle Fischer-Lebailly** will lead a fascinating discussion of "The Global Ombudsman: Breaking Through the Cultural Divide";

- "Do As I Say, Not As I Do—How to Work Effectively with Human Resources" will be taught by **Shari Swoish & Pamela Martin**.

The late Tuesday afternoon plenary session will examine:

- "Certification Planning" by **Marsha Wagner, Carolyn Noorbakhsh, Jennifer Wolf, and Dick Soule**.

SEARCHING FOR ROVING REPORTERS

The Independent Voice

editorial team is asking IOA members who are going to the IOA Annual Conference in Boston in April to consider volunteering to write a brief summary (just a couple of paragraphs) of one of the concurrent sessions that they attend. If you would be willing to submit a summary for publication in our June edition of the newsletter, please email **Nick Diehl** in advance of the conference at **diehln@od.nih.gov**.



Tuesday night, conference attendees will be able to explore the interesting and exciting history and nightlife of one of America's great cities. Attendees will be treated to an outstanding offering of presentations for **Wednesday April 16**, our closing day.

- The keynote speaker **Dr. Paul Barreira** will present "The State of College Mental Health".

Six final concurrent sessions include:

- **Nick Diehl, Cynthia Joyce, & Sara Thacker** will facilitate "Mediation for the Ombudsman";

- **Joyce DeMoss** will examine "What Do My Visitors Think? Measuring and Using Client Feedback";

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Corporate Ombuds Discussion Group

BY ERIC BERGER, SENIOR CONSULTANT, DELOITTE CONSULTING

On January 16, 2008, the quarterly *Corporate Ombuds Discussion Group* conducted its inaugural teleconference, with fourteen participants dialing in from across the U.S. and Canada to join a lively one-hour discussion on ombuds effectiveness.

The conversation, moderated by **Elizabeth Lyle** of Merck & Co. Inc., touched on a wide range of topics related to defining and evaluating the effectiveness of corporate ombuds programs. Some of the issues addressed by participants included:

- How do ombuds define their audience?
- What tools do ombuds use to determine the effectiveness of their office?
- How do ombuds address perceptions that the office has only minimal impact?
- Do you use feedback surveys to demonstrate effectiveness, and if so, how?
- What is the scope of your role as an ombuds? What types of issues do you help users address?
- To what extent is information about the ombuds office used as a recruiting tool for the organization?

The discussion illuminated the broad array of approaches that corporate ombuds use to evaluate and communicate effectiveness, including organization-wide employee surveys, annual reports, internal marketing and communications (e.g., ombuds independence, confidentiality, hypothetical cases), surveys of ombuds office users, and partnerships with key stakeholders such as HR, compliance and unions. The participants also conveyed an interest in sharing tools for ombuds effectiveness, such as feedback surveys, communication plans, and marketing materials.

At the conclusion of the meeting, those in attendance expressed appreciation for the opportunity to exchange ideas with peers and a desire to participate in future discussions. As the *Corporate Ombuds Discussion Group's* next scheduled meeting falls during the IOA Conference in April, the meeting will be integrated into the Corporate Forum on Day One of the conference. The organizers are also exploring possibilities for an informal in-person meeting during the conference.

The *Corporate Ombuds Discussion Group* welcomes new members!

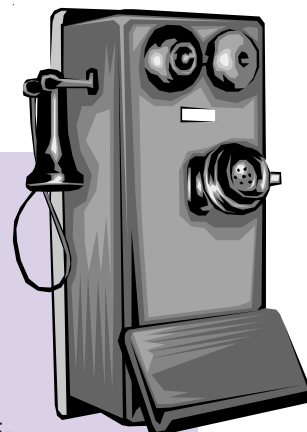
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In the same spirit of sharing and networking, **Gary Yamashita** and **Lisa Nevares** of Chevron have proposed a one-day in-person meeting to explore in greater depth some of the challenges and opportunities encountered by ombuds employed in the corporate sector. Chevron has generously offered to host such an event, the feasibility of which (*along with possible topics and dates*) will be discussed during the corporate breakout session at the IOA conference in April. If you would like to be placed on a mailing list to be kept up-to-date as this idea develops, please contact Gary Yamashita at GaryYamashita@chevron.com or Lisa Nevares at LisaN@chevron.com. ●



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- **Members of the IOA Legal & Legislative Affairs Committee** will facilitate "Legal Issues for Ombuds Programs-Questions & Answers";
- **Doris Campos-Infantino, Danielle Fischer-Lebailly, and Nora Galer** will share their perspectives on "Conflict Resolution Challenges for the Ombuds in Multicultural Contexts";

- **Beatriz Dale, Joseph Ganci, David Miller, & Tom Sebok** of the IOA Reporting Categories Task Force will present "Comparing Apples-to-Apples, Part II";

- **John Barkat** will examine "Getting to the Root of the Problem: Root Cause Analysis as a Tool for Organizational Change."

For more information on how you can be a part of the Third Annual

Conference of IOA, please phone **1-908-359-0246**, email **info@ombudsassociation.org**, or visit us on-line at **www.ombudsassociation.org**

If we can do anything to help you prepare to attend the 2008 IOA Conference, please don't hesitate to contact us. We sincerely hope to see everyone in Boston April 13-16, 2008. ●

IOA Board Approves Moving Forward with Certification Program

**SUBMITTED BY MARY CHAVEZ RUDOLPH AND CAROLYN NOORBAKHSH
ON BEHALF OF THE CERTIFICATION SUBCOMMITTEE**

The International Ombudsman Association is poised on the brink of the next step in pursuing a certification program for the organizational ombudsman profession. Next steps will be described herein, but first a review of where we've been, where we are currently, and then a look at what is ahead.

CERTIFICATION EXPLORATION: PAST AND PRESENT

For nearly five years, the Certification Subcommittee has explored the pursuit of a certification program for organizational ombudsmen and their institutions. The rationale for pursuing certification was viewed in part as, (but not limited to):

- Enhancing the credibility and professionalism of ombudsman practice
- Reinforcing key ethical values and principles
- Strengthening documentation that could be presented when an ombudsman is resisting a subpoena or otherwise asserting privilege
- Maximizing uniformity and high quality of practice
- Continuously evaluating practice standards, strengthening theoretical foundations
- Supporting employers and assisting them in maintaining high quality ombudsman offices

- Ensuring that the ombudsman profession defines our practice versus another entity imposing a definition upon us.

The Certification Subcommittee benchmarked other organizations' certification programs while developing a proposal for IOA. All the while we evaluated how IOA membership and other potential stakeholders perceived this endeavor. There was an open comment period in 2005, an IOA Conference plenary session in 2006, a listserv discussion and a survey in 2007 (see below for Market Survey results).

Members' concerns took many forms, including, but not limited to concerns about the costs both to members and to IOA; questions about why "grandfathering" would not be included; concerns about whether or not there is an adequate body of knowledge to develop tests for the organizational ombudsman profession; and simply a sense that certification is not necessary. Comments from members on the "pro" side of pursuing certification include, in part, the sense that certification and accreditation are important for the "durability and sustain-

ability" of our offices and our role, given "inevitable business and leadership changes" in organizations. It was also noted that certification and accreditation would be a way of addressing questions from legislators around professional accountability. These questions arose in Texas where there was a bill before the legislature to give the ombudsman profession a shield law. Moving forward across the country with efforts to enact shield laws may be more effective with professional certification and accreditation. The upside of pursuing certification seemed to predominate the thinking of those who participated in the Market Survey.

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CERTIFICATION MARKET SURVEY RESULTS

Schroeder Measurement Technologies, Inc (SMT) conducted a certification market survey for IOA in December 2007. The survey consisted of 30 questions, including comment fields. A total of 219 usable survey responses were collected and included in the following summary (*this represents a 23% response rate — which is considered by SMT to be a strong response rate for a survey*).

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS

- Fifty-nine percent of the responses were from IOA members; 20% were IOA Associate members; 16% were Affiliate members or retiree members; only 5% came from non-members.
- Eighty-three percent reported being a full- or part-time ombudsman.
- A wide range of experience levels was represented: 30% less than two years, 31% two to five years, 21% six to ten years, and 18% over ten years.
- Over 96% hold a bachelor's degree, 81% reported some graduate education.
- Nearly half of the respondents represented the education sector, 22% came from corporate settings, 14% from government, and 14% from a variety of other settings (this breakdown closely mirrors IOA's current membership by sector).
- In terms of experience and sector, the single largest group of respondents (16%) came from ombuds-

man with two to five years of experience practicing in an educational setting.

- Nearly 90% of the respondents are practicing in the United States.

CERTIFICATION AND ACCREDITATION

In general terms, the survey showed broad support for both certification and accreditation, although the support was not universal.

- Nearly two-thirds viewed being certified as important or very

- Only 53% said it was likely or very likely they would pursue accreditation, but this may be explained by the fact that less than half believed their organization would pay for accreditation.

While there were some differences in the support for certification and accreditation according to experience, education, practice sector, and IOA membership category, few of these differences were statistically significant.

- Support for certification is more pronounced among respondents

Volunteer participation from a wide range of IOA members in the job analysis survey and item development process...will be encouraged.

important, and a similar number indicated they would be likely or very likely to pursue certification.

- Forty-three percent of respondents felt both certification and accreditation were equally important.
- Thirty-three percent considered certification more important, while 20% considered accreditation more important.
- Only four percent considered neither important.

The data concerning accreditation showed some inconsistency.

- Seventy-three percent of respondents viewed it as important or very important to have their offices recognized as accredited organizational ombudsman offices.

with less experience, while support for accreditation was more consistent across levels of experience.

- Support for certification and accreditation was significantly higher in the corporate and education sectors than the government sector.
- Support for accreditation was significantly higher among IOA members than IOA associate or affiliate members.

The survey asked participants about exam languages. Given the over-

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whelming number of respondents based in the U.S., (90%), it is not surprising that a similar number of respondents indicated languages other than English were not important. There were not enough respondents from other countries to draw conclusions about the necessity of offering exams in other languages.

The Certification Subcommittee was also interested in the price point for the program, and the survey presented four price ranges: \$400-599, \$600-749, \$750-999, and over \$1000. Respondent likelihood of pursuing certification was very high (83%) for the lowest price range and fell off rapidly at higher ranges. Only 27% indicated they would be very likely or somewhat likely to pursue certification if the cost exceeded \$1,000.

To review the SMT Certification Market Survey Results you may access the report with the following link: <http://www.ombudsassociation.org/members/documents/cmsv25.pdf>

CERTIFICATION: NEXT STEPS

Based on the survey results, the Certification Subcommittee recommended moving forward in the exploration and pursuit of a certification program for the organizational ombudsman profession. To this end the Certification Subcommittee provided a financial plan for the Board to consider and approve in order for the next step of exploration to commence — a job analysis of the organizational ombudsman role. At the February 20, 2008, Board Meeting, the plan was approved.

Dick Soule, SMT Director of Business Development, will present at a plenary session on Tuesday, April 15th, from 3:30-5:00 p.m. at the IOA Annual Conference in Boston. At this session, Dick will analyze the market survey results and describe the process involved in developing a certification examination, including the next step of a job analysis. The session will also consist of an interactive discussion among the membership about the prospect of certification and questions and concerns will be addressed.

The job analysis process will be directed by **Bhaskar Dawadi**, an experienced psychometrician from SMT. He will research ways the organizational ombudsman job is described in various documents such as terms of reference and job descriptions, and will conduct a focus group session immediately following the Annual Conference in April with about a dozen organizational ombudsmen, representing various sectors, to help prepare a survey of the knowledge, skills and abilities required for the job. The job analysis survey results will provide the basis for the writing of the certification examination questions, or "items."

SMT has emphasized the importance of volunteer participation from a wide range of IOA members in the job analysis survey and item development process. This will be encouraged at the Annual Conference.

The Certification Subcommittee invites on-going discussion, questions, and expressions of support or concern. Please be sure to attend the plenary session at this year's conference or contact Subcommittee Chair, **Marsha Wagner**, wagner@columbia.edu, other members of the Subcommittee, or share comments on the listserv. ●



New IOA Newsletter Co-Editors

Over the next several issues there will be a transition as three new co-editors take the reins of the IOA newsletter, *The Independent Voice*. The new co-editors will be **Kathy Canul** from UCLA, **Troy Morgan** from GE Healthcare and **Nicholas Theotacatos** from the International Association for Migration. Although the current co-editors have all found this opportunity to be fulfilling, we wanted to give others the opportunity that we have been fortunate to have over the past few years. When we called for volunteers to serve in the co-editor role, we received interest from a number of applicants, all of whom were very qualified, and would like to thank everyone who took the time to apply. As Kathy, Troy and Nicholas take over the responsibility of co-editing *The Independent Voice*, we look forward to seeing them install their vision to the newsletter to continue to support the IOA mission. If anyone is interested in contributing to future issues of the newsletter you may contact Kathy at

kcanul@conet.ucla.edu, Troy at troy.morgan@ge.com and Nicholas at

ntheotacatos@iom.int. ●

— **Tom Barnette, Nick Diehl & Michael Eisner**

What Are You Going to Do?



BY NICK DIEHL, ASSOCIATE OMBUDSMAN, NIH AND TOM BARNETTE, REGIONAL OMBUDSPERSON, AMERICAN EXPRESS WITH COMMENTS FROM TROY MORGAN, OMBUDSMAN, GE HEALTHCARE AND MEMBER OF THE IOA STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL ETHICS, STANDARDS OF PRACTICE AND BEST PRACTICES

In December, we asked readers to consider and respond to a hypothetical scenario that involved being asked to confirm that others have contacted the office about a related concern. Following is a recap of that scenario and how our readers responded:

SCENARIO REVEALING OTHERS' CONCERNS?

During the past two months five out of seventeen employees in a department have come to your office to raise concerns about a supervisor who has been abusive and retaliatory. Some of these concerns stem from the fact that the boss recently fired an employee who had raised concerns about a project. The supervisor took the criticism as a challenge to authority and immediately took steps to get rid of the employee. None of the five employees who have come have wanted to take any proactive steps in addressing the concern — and asked you not to either. Today another employ-

ee has come and says, “Am I crazy or does this seem like a major problem? I know that others must feel the same way I do, so why isn’t anyone doing anything about it? Has anyone else complained to you about this man?”

As the ombudsman, how would you handle this question? Would you indicate to the visitor that others have come to the office?

Here is how our readers responded:

As the ombudsman, how would you handle this question? Would you indicate to the visitor that others have come to the office?

Yes: 20% (3) No: 80% (12)

Readers shared the following comments:

- I would affirm my practice that I will not deny or confirm that an individual has spoken with our office. However I might acknowledge that I have a general awareness of concerns from the dept and ask the inquirer to share his/her perspective with me.

- I would encourage the employees to raise their issues to HR, or would offer to the employees to keep their identity anonymous, but alert HR as to the nature and scope of the concerns so that they could utilize some of their tools to get some of the same information (i.e., 360 Peer Review).

- None of the employees who have come allowed confidentiality to be waived so the answer to the new visitor would be that I cannot reveal that information.

- I heard it through the grapevine!
- You do not have permission from the previous visitors to disclose this.

- Not yet — I would first ask the latest visitor if he/she would allow me to share with any other employees who come forward that there are others. I would then ask each of the other employees whether they would feel more comfortable bringing up the concerns if there were a group of them. Many times people are more willing to take action if they can be one of a group, rather than be named.

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(What Would You Do continued from page 10)

We requested some additional comments about this scenario from the IOA Standing Committee on Professional Ethics, Standards of Practice and Best Practices. **Troy Morgan** in consultation with committee members, shared these thoughts:

Pursuant to the **IOA Code of Ethics** and **IOA Standards of Practice** an Ombudsman should not disclose that a concern has been raised, nor the nature of those concerns, without the express consent of the individuals who have raised them. The ombudsman should strive to protect the identity of the “group” and the “individuals” who have reported the concerns within the group. Additionally, the Ombudsman should not offer an opinion to the employee regarding the statement “*does this seem like a problem*” or they may jeopardize their neutrality. However, this could be an ideal opportunity to collaborate with management (human resources) on an *early warning* trend that could mitigate further unprofessional behavior, if it can be done in a way that does not breach confidentiality of the individual or the group, or if there is a way to get permission of the group members to pass on some concerns anonymously.

Recommendation: The Ombudsman should work with the employee and **provide resources** such as HR and other avenues to address the employee’s concerns without divulging to the employee that others have raised similar concerns regarding the manager in question (**IOA SOP 3.8**). The Ombudsman could additionally reach out to the

other employees who raised similar issues to see if they would be willing to come forward at this time or to work with them on alternative ways to raise the issue to management that will avoid formal or informal retaliation. Additionally, the Ombudsman could **provide early warning trending and feedback** to management/HR or **recommend training** for this division in such a way that it does not breach confidentiality (**IOA SOP 3.4**). Furthermore, the ombudsman should consider working with HR to **ensure that the appropriate procedures were followed with the recently terminated employee** from this division. If management uncovers a non-compliance regarding fair employment practices in this instance, this may open the door to management’s intervention without disclosing the individuals who have raised the concerns.

IOA CODE OF ETHICS

Neutrality and Impartiality

An Ombudsman, as a designated neutral, remains unaligned and impartial. The ombudsman does not engage in any situation that might create **a conflict of interest**.

Confidentiality

The Ombudsman holds all communications with those seeking assistance in **the strictest of confidence**, and does not disclose confidential communications unless given permission to do so. The only exception to this is when there appears to be an imminent risk of serious harm.

IOA STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

Neutrality and Impartiality

2.1 An Ombudsman is neutral, **impartial** and unaligned.

Confidentiality

3.1 The Ombudsman holds “all” communications with those seeking assistance in the strictest of confidence and takes all reasonable steps to safe guard confidentiality ...nor does the ombudsman reveal information provided in confidence *that may lead to the identification of any individual contacting the Ombudsman’s office* without that individual’s express permission.

IOA BEST PRACTICES

Best Practices SOP 3.4

3.4 If the Ombudsman pursues an issue systemically (e.g., provides feedback on trends, issues, policies and practices) the Ombudsman does so in a way that safeguards the identity of individuals.

Best Practices SOP 3.8

3.8 Best practice is for the organization to receive allegations of wrongdoing directly from a complainant or witness, and not indirectly through the ombudsman. If the visitor is reluctant to make a formal report to the organization, the ombudsman can work with the visitor to address the reasons the visitor is reluctant to make a formal report to the organization, the Ombudsman can work with the visitor to address the reasons the visitor resists reporting, or to work with the organization to make formal reporting channels more accessible.

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(What Would You Do continued from page 11)

OUR NEW SCENARIO FOR THIS EDITION

Following is another hypothetical scenario that an Ombudsman might face. In this case we invite you to weigh-in with what you would do by sending us your comments. Please keep your comments brief so we can publish as many as possible.



GOING OVER TO THE FORMAL SIDE

You are the head of an ombudsman office in an organization of 20,000 employees and you have one associate ombudsman, George. George has been working in your office for the past two years and has earned a reputation for being personable, fair, trustworthy and intelligent. All of these talents have served your office and the organization well. So well, in fact, that the head of Employee Relations has taken note and has approached George about taking a fairly high-level position in that department. You know that George has ambitions to grow professionally and that he would do well in the role, but you are also concerned about how employees might react knowing that George has a lot of information about issues that have been raised to the ombudsman. You would like to keep George in the office, but you won't be able to match the salary ER would be offering him. What, if anything, would you do to help facilitate an effective transition for George, the organization and your Office?

INSTRUCTIONS

We have intentionally omitted any multiple choice options for this scenario and encourage you to submit brief comments about what you would do. To post your response, click on the Zoomerang Weblink below or copy and paste this link into your web browser. You can also visit the Member's Only section of the IOA website www.ombudsassociation.org for the survey link.

Let us hear from you. ●

ZOOMERANG WEB LINK:

<http://www.zoomerang.com/survey.zgi?p=WEB227KB8FYQ7N>

ELECTION OF NEW IOA BOARD MEMBERS

Congratulations to the following individuals who have been elected to serve a three year term as board directors:

Tom Kosakowski, Janet Morse, Pierre Niedlispacher, Jennifer Wolf, and Gary Yamashita.

In addition, congratulations to **Roxanne Schreiber** who will serve a two year term as associate member representative on the Board of Directors. The Board regrets that **Katherine Ziff's** appointment as Interim Assistant to the Provost for Institutional Equity at Ohio University meant that she had to step down from her seat as Associate Representative on the Board. ●

IOA COURSE OFFERINGS

2008 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

"Making a Difference — The Ombudsman Impact"

Sunday - Wednesday
April 13 - 16, 2008
The Boston Park Plaza Hotel,
Boston, MA, USA

INTERNATIONAL 2008

Monday - Thursday
June 16-19, 2008
Paris, France

SUMMER 2008

Monday - Friday
July 14 - 18, 2008
Washington, DC, USA

FALL 2008

Monday - Friday
October 27 - 31, 2008
Vancouver, BC, Canada

For details on all IOA Course Offerings, log on to www.ombudsassociation.org/

The “New” Ombudsman 101 Debuts in Las Vegas

BY WILBUR HICKS, OMBUDSPERSON,
INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

Like a star rolling out her new show in Las Vegas, the International Ombudsman Association debuted its “new” Ombudsman 101 (O 101) in Las Vegas on March 4 at the Imperial Palace Hotel. It was deserving that the “new” O 101 receive the star treatment because it is the brightest jewel in the crown of the IOA professional development program.

Wendy Friede, former Professional Development Chair, led the Re-Design Team in the most recent and

high, so it was very difficult to make a business case that the course should undergo a radical revision. Nevertheless, the team was convinced that we could make substantial improvements to elevate even further the quality and utility of the 101 program.” The Team began its work with the assumption that there was not much new information about the role of the organizational Ombudsman. “A goal of the re-design,” according to senior 101

In addition to fresh perspectives included in the “new” O 101, the Team wanted to enhance the interactive elements of the course.

radical revision of O 101 since it was launched in 1991. Also on the Re-Design Team were **Carolyn Noorbakhsh**, National Renewal Energy Laboratory; **Kevin Jessar**, The National Institutes of Health; **David Talbot**, Coca-Cola Enterprises; **Linda Wilcox**, Harvard Medical School; and **Wilbur Hicks**, The International Monetary Fund.

According to Wendy Friede, O 101 was already a very successful program over many years. “It was the group’s sense that the evaluations from participants were consistently

instructor, Linda Wilcox, “was to provide additional perspectives on ways to think about issues, to most effectively use the tools the Ombudsman draws upon when working with individuals, and meet the challenges of getting information through the system to influence the organization.”

In addition to fresh perspectives included in the “new” O 101, the Team wanted to enhance the interactive elements of the course. The redesign group felt that enhancing these elements in 101 would provide greater utility of the curricu-



lum to new or potential practitioners as well as to give others who are interested in the Ombudsman role a better sense of what the Ombudsman does and how he/she works. “Part of this effort, then, included enhancing the exercises in the training to help participants improve their understanding of and confidence in using the tools and skills important to the work of an Ombudsman,” stated David Talbot. More multi-media will be used in the course, as well. The team has made a concerted effort to include more film, video, and music, having discovered that participants like both the learning and entertainment value of a multi-media approach.

Carolyn Noorbakhsh believes two exciting innovations to be the new units entitled, “*Working with the Visitor*” and “*Working with the Organization*.” These new sections combine material from the former 101, and with discussion and interactive exercises, walk participants through “a day in the life of an ombudsman.” Starting with a new section entitled, “*Opening Statement*” and moving through “*Adding Value and Effectiveness*,” participants will

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(Ombudsman 101 continued from page 13)

gain an understanding of the ombudsman processes.

The dazzling changes and enhanced interactive nature of the revised 101 program have “augmented,” in the words of Kevin Jessar, “the strongest substantive components of the original program. The core Ombudsman principles of Independence, Neutrality, Confidentiality, and Informality, remain vital threads that run through the course and tie it all together.”

Wilbur Hicks, O 101 coordinator since 1998, and a member of the Re-

Design team, observes that the “new” O 101 is both daring and innovative. “I have always felt that O 101 could not rest on its laurels, as great a program as it is and has always been. Constant change has always been my approach to O 101. This Re-Design team has been remarkable. It was like rolling out a “new” Coke, with apologies to my friends at Coca-Cola. What courage, what risk-taking it took to enter into a re-design when there was no pressure from the leadership or the customers. The Team simply felt that we owed it to the profession to move in new

directions. I am grateful that my colleagues cared so much about this outstanding offering and worked so diligently to improve this already notably successful course.”

The “new” O 101 will follow its Las Vegas debut with appearances in Washington, D.C., July 14 – 16, and in Vancouver, Canada, October 27 – 29. The Re-design Team is confident that O 101 will continue to be, as it has been since its inception in 1991, the most well-attended, financially remunerative, and enduring course in the IOA professional development program. ●

The IOA Membership Committee Announces: The IOA Mentorship Program

BY MARVIN NEAL, MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR

MISSION STATEMENT:

The International Ombudsman Association makes the transition to ombudsing a positive and rewarding experience by connecting a novice Ombudsman with an experienced Ombudsman. This personal relationship provides the new Ombudsman an opportunity to have an Ombudsman friend, to get advice, and to discuss the profession.

At the 2008 IOA Conference in Boston, we will begin asking our membership for volunteers

to be a mentor. IOA hopes to make new Ombudsman practitioner’s transition to the profession easier, and their first year as an Ombudsman a positive one. Please help to welcome your new colleague to the profession and to the Ombudsman community.

DUTIES OF A MENTOR

1. Contact your Mentee to introduce yourself and explain the role of the Mentoring Program.
2. Make plans to have consistent communication with your Mentee.
3. Set expectations with your Mentee regarding your availability and time commitment.
4. Know where to send your Mentee for resources.

5. Encourage participation in the International Ombudsman Association (IOA).
6. Be aware of and share information about the IOA.
7. Have a clear understanding of IOA Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics and best practices.
8. Make arrangements to meet the Mentee during IOA’s Annual Conference.
9. Be available for your Mentee!

Further details and information about the Mentorship program will be available at the 2008 Conference and please feel free to contact me at **mneal@cokecce.com** if you have any questions. ●



Welcome New Members

The International Ombudsman Association welcomes its newest members:

MEMBER

Kirsi Aulin

Associate Ombuds
University of California, Santa
Barbara
Santa Barbara, CA

George Canfield

Certified Ombudsman
State of New York
Painted Post, NY

Lois Cox

University Ombudsperson
(& Clinical Professor of Law)
University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA

Candy Emerson

Ombuds
Dell, Inc.
Austin, TX

Eddie Gedalof

UNHCR Mediator
UNHCR
Geneve 2, Switzerland

Deanne George

Ombudsman/ Public Relations
Pure Water Dynamics, Inc.
Denver, CO

Tatia Granger

Ombudsman
Williamsburg, VA

Thomas Griffin

UCLA
Santa Monica, CA

Winthrop Hector

HOVENSA LLC
Christiansted, VI
U.S.V.I.

Debra Heller

Ombudsman
New Jersey Medical School
Newark, NJ

Alan Koenig

Calgary Police Service
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Vilma D. Lopez-Munoz

Student Ombudsperson
University of Puerto Rico
Mayaguez, Puerto Rico

John Mather

Ombuds
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Blue Mounds, WI

Timiza Mullins

Juvenile Court of Clayton County
Jonesboro, GA

Eskandar Rastegar

Consultant Ombudsperson
United Nations
New York, NY

David Richardson

Kasier Permanente
Palmdale, CA

Andrea Schmitz

Deputy Ombudsman
Con Edison
New York, NY

Suzu Rosen Singleton

Gallaudet University
Washington, DC

Nolan Thompson

Ombudsman
University of Southern Maine
Portland, ME

Gennette Tripari

Latin American & Caribbean Ombuds
Eaton Corporation
Ponce, Puerto Rico

Stogran Pat

Ottawa, ON, Canada

ASSOCIATE MEMBER

Debbie Bass, Coordinator,
Displaced Homemaker Program
North Florida Community College
Madison, FL

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(New Members continued from page 15)

Elizabeth Karabatsos

Karabatsos and Associates
Phoenix, AZ

Murray Knoll

Fair Practices Officer
Saskatchewan Worker's Comp. Bd.
Regina, SK, Canada

AFFILIATE MEMBER

Erica Bullock-Jones

Fontana, CA

Amanda Clark

Ombudsperson Assistant
American Express
London, United Kingdom

George Coles

Applied Physics Lab
Baltimore, MD

Katherine Dowd

Newton, MA

Anthony Gibbon

Gibbon Associates LLC
East Quogue, NY

Vincent Habiyambere

Medical Officer
WHO
Thomex (Geneva), Switzerland

John Halstead

Consultant, Mediator
Quantum Leap Systems, Inc.

Glenda Hydlar

Baruch College
Assistant to the Ombuds
New York, NY

Kate Iverson Kirby

Coord., Office of the Ombudsman
Savannah College of Art and Design
Savannah, GA

Adam Kleinberger

Cambridge, MA

Monica L. Koski

KNoTs NonTraditional Services that
Empower Relationships
Baltimore, MD

Paul Manowitz

Professor of Psychiatry
UMDNJ - Robert Wood Johnson
Medical School
Piscataway, NJ

Filomena Multari

Assistant to Corporate Ombudsman
Lenovo, Mahopac, NY

Sudha Nair

Chief, Staff Counseling Unit
United Nations Mission in Burundi
Bujumbura, Africa

Chantal Perreault

Paquette Gadler
Longueuil, Canada

William Putnam

Student
Agoura Hills, CA

Jim Redfield, Pastor

Seventh Day Adventist Church
Penn Valley, CA

Michael Saunders

Resident-Clinet Advocate
Toronto Homes for the Aged
Toronto, ON, Canada

Rajendra Singh

Director, Administration & Legal
Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan
Mumbai, India

Laura Singleton

Ombuds Assistant
Coca-Cola Enterprises
Atlanta, GA

Sheila Sproule

Management Analyst
NY Unified Court System
Jersey City, NJ

Carsten Tams

Bertelsmann
New York, NY

Corrine Tan

Ombudsperson Assistant
American Express
Singapore

Beth Taylor

Pocono Medical Center
Stroudsburg, PA

Bradley Weiss

Special Assistant: Mediation
Library of Congress
Washington, DC

Lisa Witzler

Cambridge, MA