

CHRIS O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Welcome to another edition of Let's Talk Ed with Professor Chris. Students, listen very carefully. Where else do you think you can get help? You've talked to the counselors. You've talked to the faculty. Where else do you think could get help? Stay tuned.

Dr. Jerry [Nuesell], it's, it's a pleasure. First of all, I must say I've had a lot of people say, "Have you met this guy?" And I said, "No, I don't have any conflicts. Why, why would I, why would I mean this guy?" However, they say, "He is the ombuds." And it's even very difficult to say ombuds. So, let's start from there. What's the right pronunciation for ombuds?

JERRY NUESSELL: You nailed it.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: It's ombuds?

NUESSELL: Yeah.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: How do we go from ombudsman to ombuds? What's the right one? Is that an ombudswoman?

NUESSELL: Yeah, that's a great question. So, the roots, the term itself is Scandinavian in nature. So, it doesn't really translate to English with the same gender attachments. So, ombudsman is how it's in Scandinavia. But, here in the States, we could go with either one. Because it does have "man" attached to the end, there's been a movement away, and so, I think we're starting to shorten it to ombuds.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Perfect. So, I interviewed my students last week, and I said your first point of resource is your faculty, your counselors and your ombudsman. And everybody gave me that look. And I said, "Don't worry, I will be interviewing an ombudsman." So, while we're talking about the history, thanks for that little history lesson here, what do you have to do, what do you study in college to become ... ? No, let me take that back. How did you decide to become an ombudsman?

NUESSELL: It's great question also. So, to answer the couple of questions in there, most people get to ombuds work in different ways. There's no one course in my experience. I've known a lot of professionals who arrive through some kind of counseling route, and some arrive through working in resources. Some arrive through working in legal professions, and then some kind of come from even paths beyond that. Ultimately, ombuds, most, if not all, seek certifications through a professional organization, and that's really the educational path that that brings them into the field, that helps them familiarize themselves with the standards of practice and code of ethics. In this way, it's a structured field as opposed to one that is just kind of very informal and all over the place.

In terms of my introduction to ombuds work, it was really happenstance. It's very funny. Prior to being at Wake Tech, I was at a different institution, where I served as dean of students, and I had a certain number of departments under my watch. I had a colleague over at N.C. State who had similar departments under his watch, and we would get together for coffee every now and again. Really nice man, his name was Roger. And Roger and I were having coffee one particular day, and he said he had submitted his letter. He intended to retire from N.C. State, and his provost asked him if he would stay on

for a year and establish this ombuds office, and Roger said, "Sure, I guess I could help out, but what is it? I have no idea what it is." And so, as Roger started to learn about the field, and he and I continue having our occasional coffees together, I started learning about the field, and it was kind of by happenstance then. I hadn't really intended to be in the field, but the more I learned about it through him, I thought, "This is fascinating. This ties together a lot of different parts of my background, both as a counselor and as a higher ed administrator." And so, quite frankly, I decided just to, to pursue certification in the field, not knowing whether I would ever do anything with it. I just thought it was such an interesting thing.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: That's, that's, that's amazing. Now, now I feel like someday, if I wanna be an ombudsman, because I think the name is cool, right? I could be one, too. That's great. So, I'm still, I'm still thinking about the process and what, OK, so what does an ombudsman do?

NUESELL: Yes, an ombuds is a conflict resolution specialist, and, and that's kind of a very broad way of looking at it. Essentially, ombuds provide a safe space for a visitor to come and talk about any issue, any concern, any, anything that is creating a problem or difficulty. And so, you might say to yourself, as many do, "So, how is that different from a counselor?"

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: I was gonna get to that.

NUESELL: Yeah. You wanna take the question?

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Yeah.

NUESELL: Ombuds work with things that are going on in the world around an individual, and counselors, and in my background as a counselor, I feel comfortable saying this, typically work on, work on things that are inside, internal to a person, so things like anxiety and depression. So, those are things that counselors help with. Ombuds help with the, the, the challenges that are going on in the external world, so difficulties with a supervisor, an instructor, a colleague, so those kind of challenges.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: All right. So, let's focus on that right there. I like, so the focus is really on students. Student conflict is what I kind of want us to kind of get into, and, and I'll get, I'll get into the questions with the, the counselors. So, for students, I see a conflict, and I'm trying to think of whether I had any as a college student or maybe I was just so fearful to even go to anyone to complain about my professors. But what are some of the conflicts that students will have that you know they will come to you to talk about?

NUESELL: Yeah. And, and I'll tell you, I think you hit the nail right on the head with the word "fear" because a lot of times, when people are in conflict or having a problem or an issue that crops up, there's some uncertainty that exists there. And a student might feel, "I'm not exactly sure what to do with this. I'm not exactly sure I'm allowed to do something with this. Am I gonna get in trouble if I bring this to someone? Who's the someone I even bring it to?" And so, that's why the Ombuds Office exists.

Students might come and talk to me about, well, the, the, at the broader sense, they can come and talk to me literally about any topic. But typically, I find students come and talk about things like grade

disputes. They talk about maybe what they perceive as disrespectful communication. They are unsure of their rights. They're not sure about college policies. They're not sure what they can do about the issue, and offices such as mine exist so that students have a place to come where they can talk openly and honestly and untangle complicated situations. They're not gonna get in trouble. This is all confidential; it's off the record. And so, students can kind of sort those things out rather than sit paralyzed and fearful and uncertain.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: So, I feel like you almost anticipate the question I'm gonna ask you because you are answering them as you're going through. So, that's good. So, on the same topic of conflicts, I'm trying to, one of the things that I, even in the office, I was like, "What does this office look like?" You know, "How does he get students to come to him?" So, let's start with how do students know who you are? I saw your little promo where you did, you walked on the street and asked students about the ombudsman, and nobody seemed to know. So, from what you got from that, how do you get students to know what you do so they can come to you?

NUESELL: So, I work very closely with colleagues over in New Student Orientation, I think at a starting point, allowing students to understand and get some information on the office at the outset. As you said, this office with a funny name that doesn't offer any clues on, on what the office does, it's really important to get in front of students as early in their academic career as possible. I also know, though, that, you know, in orientation, students get a lot of information, and it could be sometimes a little bit overload, and you get a card or some info piece, and you put it away, and then it gets lost in the shuffle.

So, with that in mind, I also work very closely with colleagues in Student Activities. So, when they have fairs, events, anything that they have going on campus, I've, I've made it known that I would love to be part of that. They've been very gracious about keeping me in the loop and always inviting me. And in a similar way, I have, in the past, reached out to the advisors for every club and organization on campus to let them know of the existence of the office and say, "I am available and happy to visit with your club, your organization." And so many of them have taken me up on it. So, meeting with the Social Sciences Club, Graphic Design Club, anyone who would like to have a visitor, I'm available.

And then, you know, beyond that, it's, it's a matter of being out and about on campus, and this is where, during pandemic times, of course, it becomes even more challenging because we don't have that facetime with each other. That walk-the-campus video that you referenced, I would get out and just walk around and just connect with people. So, I look for opportunities to get out in front of the, the students as much as possible.

Faculty members are also aware that I'm happy to visit classes, which I've done a lot with the ACA classes and some of the psychology classes. So, your reaching out to me and inviting me to participate in this podcast was absolutely spectacular, so very grateful. Thank you.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Sounds great. OK. So, I'm gonna get into trust, but before I get into that, I'm, I'm always kind of envisioning how, when a student, right, has something, maybe they know where your offices are, is there any hesitation of them coming? And what is, just kind of walk me through how a student who has an issue comes and knocks on your door. I think they do call you first, right?

NUESELL: They can.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: They can just drop in? OK. And then, is there hesitation as to coming into your office? Do you see that? And that's why I said, let's start with that first. How are students comfortable? Do you think students are OK just coming in here and talk to you?

NUESELL: It's so much of a leap of faith, right? When you go to seek help from somebody, it takes a lot of courage to even make that step to begin with, and the ombuds profession, in particular, is a leap of faith on so many levels. It's a high trust position. It almost sounds too good to be true. "So, wait, I can go, and I can have a conversation about anything? As long as it doesn't involve harm to self or others, I can have a conversation that's entirely off the record and confidential? Are you sure about this? And this person's a neutral party who's not gonna take sides? So, he's not for one person or another? That sounds a little bit too good to be true." And so, I think there's some very natural and understandable hesitation that comes with that to say, "I'm not exactly sure."

And trust is one of those things that just earned over time. To the extent that I can help that process, it's to be very open and to provide a safe, quiet space for people to come and to allow people to proceed at their own pace. So, when individuals come and visit with me, wherever they're at, that's completely fine. You know, I make it known what the parameters of the office are to help them better understand what this is all about. And then it's giving people the latitude just to kind of go at a pace that feels right to them. There's not going to be any pushing or pulling, and over time, I found that, you know, over the course of, some people might visit for 10 minutes or 30 minutes or an hour or a couple of hours, it's that process of just going slow at a person's own pace that that seems to build that initial trust. And it's not atypical in my experience to have folks drop in, that kind of dip-a-toe-in-the-water, like, "I just want to make sure the roof doesn't cave in on me after I have this conversation. OK, it's all right." And then maybe they come back from another conversation, and you build on that.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Honestly, Jerry, I will come to you. Right? And that's kind of the point I'm trying to make here. In my experience, we talk about trust. I've had students where it takes them two days, I've had students a month, I've have students a whole semester for them to kind of build the trust to find out I really kind of wanna help them. And by the way, you know, that's kind of the foundation for this whole podcast. I said that the theme for the podcast really is helping students experience college and not survive college. Right, and that's kind of the goal. So, I definitely want, if nothing comes out of this interview, for students to know, I mean, you're a pretty cool guy, man.

NUESELL: I appreciate that.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Let me just say that I, I will, I will feel OK coming to talk to you, and I want our students to know that as well. OK, now one other challenge that I see that students may face, for example, if a student in class feels like they're being discriminated against, right? And this, let's just say the student happens to be a Black student with a Caucasian professor. Now, if they have that issue, coming to you might be a challenge.

NUESELL: Absolutely.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Right? So, it's a matter of, "Do I even go? Is this guy gonna side with this person?" I know from what you just told me that you, you're really gonna look at a situation to do, so you're not taking one side or other respective of race. Have you encountered that situation? Have you ...?

NUESELL: It's in the forefront of my mind for some time.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: OK.

NUESELL: I'm sure nobody has verbalized it to me, but I think that's a very real and very legitimate point to raise. And, you know, most ombuds offices, I couldn't tell you an exact number, I could look this up, for sure, most ombuds offices or offices of one. Some institutions have more than one. I know colleagues at UNC, for example, have a three-person office, and so, you have the opportunity to have representation, right, and across different groups. And it's certainly not lost on me that, as a white male, there might be some hesitation based on race, based on gender, of people coming forward.

You know, if somebody were to verbalize that to me, I'd certainly be happy to dialogue about that and go to a place that feels right to a person, or, if at all possible, the opportunity exists to engage with a colleague of mine, maybe another institution, who might be able to offer some assistance. And so, I haven't had that happen yet, but it's a dialogue that I've had with colleagues at other institutions to say, "Are you available if something like this ever comes up?" and in reverse, also make myself available.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Yeah, that's perfect. So, that's good, again, good to hear, good to know. At the end of the day, I just really want people to feel comfortable. What's, your expertise, by the way, is great because you have the counselor background, and so, maybe, actually, this is a very good time to ask the question.

NUESELL: Yes.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: What is the difference between a counselor and an ombudsman?

NUESELL: So, the counselor really works on the, in my experience, so, you know, let me backtrack for a moment. The first 17 years of my career I spent as a mental health professional, and so I'm very familiar with that counselor role. I'm very comfortable with it, but I respect that that's not my role here at Wake Tech. We have wonderful skilled professionals here at Wake Tech to serve in that capacity. In, in my perspective of this, I see counselors as working on things internal to a person. So, there are things kind of going on inside, and the two that most often come to mind are things like anxiety and depression, where a counselor would be able to bring those things out and process those things, work and develop skills up around those, those particular issues.

Ombuds work involves conflict and issues in the world around the person. So, it might be a conflict with another student. You know, group work, in particular, right, is, is a fertile ground for conflict to emerge for students. Conflict with instructors, conflict, maybe, with the staff or a service here at the institution

or with the institution itself. Right? As we're navigating this world of the pandemic and we have different regulations in place, sometimes it's with the institution itself that students are feeling a certain sense of disagreement or conflict.

And so, my office exists as a place where people can come and have a sounding board, a safe place to untangle and decide what options they might have to deal with an issue. What can, what might they do and know that they're the ones who are always gonna maintain control of the situation. They're in the driver's seat at all times.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: I love this setup. I love your office. If I had anything, I would run in here to say I need help. How do you make people feel at home? I know you offered us coffee when we came in. What else, do you know what students really like? Do you have, you have that available for students when they come in? I mean, I don't want students coming here thinking you're gonna give them breakfast and lunch. But just tell us how you make people feel at home.

NUESELL: Yeah, you know, that's such an interesting question. I think that, in my mind, just the sharing of something is a good place to establish a connection. And you mentioned coffee and water and just sitting down for a cup of tea with somebody, as simple as it sounds, that could be something just very powerful and grounding about that in and of itself. So, that, that's just an entry into a space, and I remember when I went to visit an ombuds office, as I was exploring this space, and, and there's a person I consider mentor who was at UNC. He offered me that coffee when I walked in, and I thought, "Wow, I just, I feel at home already." And so, in a very basic sort of way, there's that, there's that guest, you know, welcome that that I can provide.

And then I think the best thing that we can do to make a person feel at home is to give them the gift of your full attention. And I really do mean it as a gift because, I think, in the world, it's very easy to get pulled into the past and the future. You're thinking about all the different things, and there's something really powerful about just sitting down with somebody and saying, "This truly is your time. This is your time, and I'm present for it." And that's how we start to establish that connection.

And so, in terms of the, the concrete things, it might be a beverage. In terms of what else I can provide, it's really just being totally present with the person and being of service to them as best I can.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Can I come in and take a nap in here if I wanted to?

NUESELL: You wouldn't be the first ask.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Really? That's great. That's great. So, we're gonna take a deeper dive here into stress, depression and suicide. And so, you know, before coming in here, I was trying to kind of differentiate it, too. I was, like, well, if you're stressing and you're depressed, suicide, you go to the counselors. If you're having conflicts, you know, you go, you come to the ombudsman. But from what you've told me, you actually can, you deal with that as well?

NUESELL: Yeah, right.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: You, you could help students [with] stress, depression. Suddenly enough, you know, again, a couple of weeks ago, we had an incident in Chapel Hill and the students, and I know you are one-person person here. What is your traffic? I just want students to know, are you, you feel like you're too busy? Do you have a schedule for people? Can people just walk in anytime, and you go, "I'm actually busy right now, but please come. I'm still gonna see you." What's, what's your traffic like?

NUESELL: Yeah, the traffic stays pretty steady. But I'm never too busy, if that makes sense. I want people to know that I am accessible. I'm available; I want to be of service. That's why I'm in this area. And, you know, while there's no online sign-up, and that has to do with the, the confidentiality aspects of it, I'm very easy to reach by phone or by email. With it being a lot of remote work going on, I'm not seeing a lot of people who drift by like they might have in the past. When we were all on campus, it was very common for somebody to kind of stop by and knock on the door and come in. Because I serve all the students across all of our campuses, I say it's a good idea to call or email in advance so you know I'm going to be in a certain place at a certain time, because somebody might come by South, and I happen to be at Scott Northern that day or someplace else. I have offices on a couple of different campuses, but they're always welcome to.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Perfect. So, the other question that I've had, and again, I love my background as an instructor. I've, I've built trust over, over the years, and it's not an easy thing, right? Students really wanna know that you care before they can even trust you. That's kind of what I've told students. "Know your faculty do care. Your counselors care." Fine. When I was, not gonna say the name, but when I was back in my big university, traffic was a challenge. A lot of my students, I had students that I didn't teach, but they had friends would tell them, "Go talk to Professor Chris. You know he, he, he, he's that kind of guy who will help you out." And so, my traffic became more and more, and I couldn't really kind of see to everyone. So, in that effort to try to get them some extra help, I would say to them, "You know, this campus has a lot of counselors. They are here. They're here. Go see them." And they will say, "No." I said, "Why?" And it's, "Well, because I don't trust them." And I actually had a student who said, "Well, Professor Chris, I'll be honest with you. When I went to see a counselor, I didn't make that connection. And to make matters worse, she was taking down notes." So, I found that to be very, very, I don't wanna say disturbing to students, but it really kind of breaks the bond of, you know, one, you're trying to get into your business, and two, now here you are taking notes. "And when I talked to the counselor the last time, she made it very clear that, you know, it's not a matter of taking notes to share with anyone as part of the confidentiality process." So I wanna hear from you. You know, that is, again, that is a big thing for students. What is that note-taking process, if any? How does that happen?

NUESELL: You said so many things in there. If I may, just to kind of reflect on them a little bit, I think you're absolutely right in the sense that having that connection, having that sense of trust, is essential. All work flows from that. Without that, the work kind of breaks down, right? And I think there's that saying, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." And I believe that's very true. You need to be able to sit down and sense that person is truly there with you and has your best interests in mind and is there to be of service.

That word of mouth that you mentioned is incredibly powerful. It's a quirky and challenging thing in the ombuds field because somebody might come by and, with, of course no ill intentions, say, "Hey, I spoke with my friend, and she said I should come by and have a conversation with you." And they'll tell me the person's name, and I don't confirm or deny that I even had a conversation with the other person. I just say, "Thanks for the kind words. What brings you into today." Right? So, it's always the confidentiality is maintained, but word of mouth is powerful.

Understanding the parameters of the office is important, right? And as I mentioned, at the start of every session that I have with somebody, I allow time to provide an overview, to allow them to ask questions, to extend that invitation to say, "What, what did you have in mind when you came in here, and let's, let's talk that through. And does that align with what you had in mind?" One of the things I talk about is the fact that it's informal, it's off the record. And then that raises the question, "What does that mean exactly?" Well, what it means is that I don't take notes. I don't keep any documents that have personally identifiable information. So, there's nothing that says that Chris came to visit with me on such and such day. There's no file, there's no folder. I track aggregate data, and aggregate data, as you know, is just kind of like a tally count of how many people come to visit with me.

The professional organization to which I belong, which is the International Ombuds Association, provides ombuds with this tracking document of categories, subcategories, of themes, so that, as I'm reflecting on things more broadly across the institution, I could say, "Interesting. I'm hearing a lot of things from students" – or from staff and faculty, for that matter – "that fall into this kind of category." I have opportunities then to maybe merge some themes, not connecting it to an individual but to now say, "This is something that's kind of broadly existing as I, as I keep hearing it." So, I track aggregate data, but there's nothing at all that has a person's name and information attached to it. Again, it sounds too good to be true.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: But it is true.

NUESELL: It's true.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: No, that's good. So, I'm, I love this, by the way. We could go on and on and on. I think, with touching on all the, the basics and most of the questions, when I interview the students, I tell them, "This is your one opportunity to let me know, you know, what help you need, because I'll go and talk to whoever it is. If it's the president of the college, I'll go talk. If it's the dean, right. So, this is, this is the first step. That's a good process.

There's one question that I have started asking people when I interview them because I talked to one of my mentees who's actually in New York right now but is planning on going back to Florida to college. And I said, "Daniel, tell me, you know, you know what I'm doing now. Honestly, I will deal with any topic. What is it that you think you need from me to make your college, again, your college experience an experience and not surviving." And he said, "Well, Mr. Chris" – he calls me Mr. Chris – "some of my friends took out loans to go to school, and their very first year" – we're talking \$25,000 loans – "their very first year decided they were not motivated enough to be in college and then checked out and joined the military." Right? And I was, like, "Wow!" So, his thing was how to motivate students. So, there's a

question that I've been asking everyone that I interview now is what is your suggestion? What's your advice? Or what do you think will be, how, how do we motivate students these days?

NUESELL: Yeah. Yeah, and that is so real. There's a lot of good research that exists that says part of what keeps a student persisting in an institution is the sense that they have at least one individual at the institution who they feel deeply cares about them. Right? So, it comes back to connection again, feeling like you're part of the community, feeling like, as things get challenging, as they will, you have somebody who's in your corner, who can be there as support through the difficult times. There's also a lot of good research that suggests having a clear goal in mind when things get topsy-turvy and they're not going exactly the way as expected. You say, like, "But still I've got my direction. I know that's where I need to go." But then what happens, to your point, when people say, "I'm just not exactly sure what my direction is," and that's where I think you could almost circle back to point number one: Having somebody who could serve as an ear, as a support where you can process those thoughts and process those challenges and talk through the different options.

When we get under stress, a lot of times, we get tunnel vision. We can't see any path forward, or we only see one path forward, and having that person who you trust, who you can dialogue with, who says, "Let me help you by listening to you, by asking you some questions, by giving you space to breathe a little bit." And if we have that kind of trust and that rapport, we can together broaden the field of vision, we can explore options both to address challenges or to see other opportunities. And so, we're taking that narrow perspective, and we're just adding options. And they're options because the person always has the respect of knowing what's right for him or her, right? And so, it's providing that space and then also linking with resources, right? Sometimes, again, we get so stuck and seeing no path forward. To your point, when you start to dialogue with students in your past, you say, "Hey, we have all these wonderful people who can help you. Have you considered this? Have you thought about this? Have you met with this person?" And suddenly the field of vision becomes broader, and then you have opportunity.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: So, I just thought about one thing that, it's not my preference, but I'm gonna tell you. I always, if students have anything they want to discuss with me, I'm a face-to-face person because what we're doing right now is what I do with my students. I can read a lot through their eyes. I love where we're going with online learning, but that was one of the areas where I felt like I'm losing the connection with my students. I can't see them. Because usually, in the classroom, students hesitate to ask questions, but you can read it their eyes. And I'll go, "OK, I know you have a question. What is it?" Right? I feel like I lose that during, and the reason I bring this up is, if a student is not comfortable coming in here, can they just call you on the phone?

NUESELL: Oh, goodness, yes. Yes. And that's kind of part of, of this office even pre-pandemic because, as I serve all members of the campus community, including our staff and faculty members, you know, there are different locations. And so, phone work was really already a very popular option. And video work has been introduced during the pandemic. Those are all completely fine.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: OK. So, you talk, you talk about video work. We're talking Teams?

NUESELL: Yes.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Because students do Teams. OK, so on Teams, do you, do you say, "Do you mind turning on your camera?" Or do you provide that option? Or do people, like, "No, I don't want you to see me." How, how does that process work?

NUESELL: I'm happy. Whatever works best for a person is completely fine by me. It's their time, it's their space. It is not about me. It's about what I can do to be of service, and if the person's more comfortable with the camera off, then the camera stays off. Interestingly, as you were saying, as you were asking as the question, I thought, I don't think I've had a visitor – student, faculty or staff – who has not had their camera on. But if somebody ever wanted to have that as an option, that's completely acceptable. Yeah.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Dr. Jerry, this is amazing. You know, before I do my closing remarks, so students know that you, you're a really cool person, a cool guy, and I'm gonna start coming, coming in here to get coffee maybe. But any closing remarks you have?

NUESELL: I just really appreciate the chance. Yeah, you know, you, you hit the nail so on the head at the start in even introducing this as an option for me to talk about the Ombuds Office because it's mysterious. Most people don't understand what it is, and to, to have the chance to talk about it and demystify it is really much appreciated.

Just, I would like students to know that, if they're wrestling with something, you don't have to deal with it alone. They have counselors to, to help them. They have the ombuds, where if you're unsure where to go, come in. At the very least, we could sit down and have a conversation and a cup of coffee or a cup of tea together. But we don't want students to have to wrestle with things on their own and feel like they're in by themselves. They have faculty supports just all over the place.

I am truly as I, as I described, you can come and have a confidential conversation. It's off the record. I'm a neutral party, so I'm not gonna push or pull. I'm here to help listen and then help develop options. And if a student decides, well, whatever a student decides, it's completely OK on my end of things. I just want to help be part of that process with them.

O'RIORDAN-ADJAH: Thank you. Well, there you have it. My first question was who else can help you? You heard it: the ombudsman. I'm very honored to have one here with us. I'm gonna keep coming into his office. Yes, great pleasure. So, please, yes, talk to your faculty, talk to your counselors, and, yes, there is an ombudsman.