



FETCH ME THAT FLOWER;  
THE HERB I SHOWED THEE ONCE.  
THE JUICE OF IT,  
ON SLEEPING EYE-LIDS LAID,  
WILL MAKE MAN OR WOMAN  
MADLY DOTE  
UPON THE NEXT LIVE CREATURE  
THAT IT SEES.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



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# COLLEGE & CAREERS

BY MARY ANNE GUITAR

## Ombudsman... New Man on Campus

An estimated thirty colleges and universities now have or are considering using an ombudsman on campus. The idea of establishing



a special representative whose job is the redressing of grievances was originally introduced over a century ago in Sweden, where the ombudsman listened to citizens' complaints against the civil service. A campus ombudsman cannot really settle problems, but he can defuse them by acting as arbitrator between students and faculty or administration. The role of approachable listener is particularly important in universities which have grown so large that students often feel they are not rightly heard.

The ombudsman is, in general, charged with taking complaints and trying to resolve them. If small misunderstandings can be cleared up at the outset, there will be less provocation for student demonstrations, or so the reasoning goes. The ombudsman is supposed to put out the brush fires before they blaze out of control.

In recent months such diverse institutions as the University of Chicago, the University of Kentucky, City College of New York, Eastern Montana College, San Jose State College in California have appointed ombudsmen to improve communication among students, faculty and administration.

Some ombudsmen are appointed by the president, others elected by faculty or students. John Moscow, while still a senior majoring in political science, was appointed last October by Edward H. Levi, then provost of the University of Chicago and now its president. Moscow reports to a presidential assistant, though he stresses his freedom from any presidential direction. He acknowledges that there are those who believe he is an agent of the administration. He has had to overcome that kind of criticism by practicing the neutrality characteristic of the good ombudsman. He is paid a salary but won't say how much, only that his office has a "substantial" budget.

Since his appointment he has dealt with twenty-five different cases, brought to him by some seventy students and faculty. They range, he says, "from gripes about the quality of teaching to requests for a change in advisers, from discontent with student wages to dissatisfaction with the number of pianos available for practicing."

A secretary takes calls for Moscow when he is out of the ombudsman's office, an unprepossessing corner of a campus social center. He also has two unpaid assistants who act as his eyes and ears on campus. He asks complainants to state their cases in writing and turns in a quarterly report on his activities. "I view the job as dealing with questions of fact," he says. "When there are different possibilities of interpretation, you get a foul-up. If everybody can agree on what's involved, then it can be resolved."

For example: "One student came to me much aggrieved because he was earning less than he thought he should in his job as a laboratory technician. He was a student in the humanities who washed out glassware in the labs. Wages for lab technicians are normally scaled according to their experience in the lab, but since he wasn't interested in science that seemed a silly criterion. We worked out a plan under which the biology division agreed to raise its wages for inexperienced help."

Ombudsmen generally have the power to investigate and recommend but no authority to make or reverse (continued on page 24)

