

## **Ombudsperson**

The Ombudsperson is a person who handles complaints, serves as a mediator, and a spokesperson for the rights of a particular individual or group. The Ombudsperson in the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (SHRS) will be a neutral contact person (Non-faculty) for students with whom they can engage in informal discussions to express concerns about conflicts and other issues that may arise during the course of their education that they believe are difficult to address with their academic department.

**The Ombudsperson for SHRS is Jessica Maguire, Executive Director of Student Affairs.** If you would like to meet with her, please email her at [maguire@pitt.edu](mailto:maguire@pitt.edu) to make an appointment.

Her role as the Ombudsperson are listed below. The Ombudsperson is not involved in formal grievance procedures but will serve to provide guidance to the student in managing conflicts/problems and provide information about institutional policies and university grievance procedures that may be related to the student's conflicts/grievances. The Ombudsperson may direct students to other campus resources as appropriate.

### **The Roles of the SHRS Ombudsperson:**

- Listen to student concerns.
- Explain campus policies.
- Explain the grade appeal process.
- Act as a neutral resource between student and faculty member.
- Facilitate communication between and among individuals.
- Counsel faculty to minimize potential conflict.
- Coach students on how to talk to faculty and staff.
- Refer individuals to others as appropriate.
- Act as an informal resource to students, faculty, and staff.
- Keep information confidential except as required by law.

### **The SHRS Ombudsperson does not:**

- Change grades.
- Change policies.
- Take sides, but rather tries to facilitate a mutual understanding between differing points of view.
- Identify individuals without permission, except as required by law.
- Take part in formal grievance processes.