

Read about the Ombudsman's oversight of universities, the new policing law, career opportunities, and more in the Ombudsman's March newsletter.

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ACCOUNTABILITY ON CAMPUS

In this month's [University Affairs](#) magazine, read about how Ontario Ombudsman Paul Dubé works with universities to resolve issues and build positive relationships to promote accountability and transparency.

"I think that going forward, the strength of [our] relationships [in the university community] will allow us to add value and be an agent of positive change ... in the same way that we are in the broader public sector," said Ombudsman Dubé, pictured here at the Ontario University Registrars' Association annual conference in February.



The Ombudsman's Office has received more than 500 complaints since its oversight of universities came into effect in January 2016. Most complaints have been resolved quickly and efficiently, through referral to existing university complaint mechanisms or early resolution.

"Local problems are best served locally," the Ombudsman said, noting that a university ombudsperson's familiarity with the institution may lead to a quicker and more efficient resolution. "We'll explain to the complainant, 'Go through that process and if you remain dissatisfied at the end of that process, then we're here.'"

[Read the full article here](#)

For more about our process for resolving university issues, [watch General Counsel Wendy Ray and Laura Pettigrew's recent presentation](#) at the Ontario University Registrars' Association conference in Toronto.

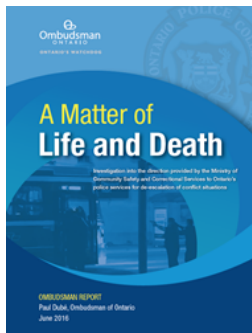


NEW POLICING LAW PASSED, DE-ESCALATION TRAINING ADDED

Ombudsman Paul Dubé's recent recommendations to improve police training and oversight were reflected in amendments to the province's new policing law, which was passed and received royal assent on March 8.

In his [submission to the committee reviewing Bill 175, the *Safer Ontario Act*](#), the Ombudsman warned that gaps in the bill could undermine strong civilian oversight of police. Most notably, the final version of the bill requires that police officers' training include "techniques to de-escalate conflict situations." This reflects a key recommendation in Mr. Dubé's 2016 report, "[A Matter of Life and Death](#)."

When the new law is proclaimed in force (a date for which has not yet been set), the Ombudsman will also be able to take complaints about all three provincial police oversight bodies. The law was also amended to ensure, as Mr. Dubé recommended, that the new Inspector General cannot be a former police officer, and that inspectors for the organization who are former police officers cannot investigate matters related to their former police services.



INVESTIGATION UPDATES

Our investigation continues into how the Ministry of Transportation communicates licence suspensions and reinstatements to drivers who were suspended for unpaid fines; watch this space for updates on when the report will be released later this year.

Fact-gathering in our investigation of a December incident at a Niagara regional council meeting (at which a journalist and a citizen blogger were asked to leave and their property seized) has wrapped up and the Ombudsman's report is being drafted. As in all our formal investigations, the council will be given a chance to review and respond to the Ombudsman's findings and recommendations before they are finalized and published.

HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE



This month, Ombudsman staff gave presentations to groups around the province about the types of issues we resolve and what they can expect when dealing with our Office. In mid-March, legal staff met with clerks in both Sudbury and Lion's Head to answer their questions about our work with municipalities. Later in the month, one of our Early Resolutions Managers provided information to Settlement Officers at Toronto's COSTI Immigrant Services about how our office might be able to help people new to the province.

What else have we been doing lately? [Read the latest Message from the Ombudsman here.](#)

You may have also seen our legal team at university career fairs across Ontario, talking to law students about working with our Office. If you're smart, resourceful, and interested in making a real difference in the lives of people

in Ontario, you should work here, too - [click here to learn about our current job openings.](#)



Interested in having our staff attend your public outreach event?
Contact us!

GOING THE DISTANCE

The owner of a home for adults with mental health issues contacted the Ombudsman, frustrated that he couldn't get ODSP or Developmental Services Ontario to provide funding to take one of his residents to her cancer treatments. The resident wasn't capable of travelling to the treatments by herself, and it meant the owner had to pay staff to cover for him at the home while he drove her to and from medical appointments. [Read about how we helped.](#)

File a complaint or contact us here

The Ombudsman is an independent officer of the Ontario legislature who conducts oversight of provincial government agencies and municipalities, universities and school boards. Ombudsman Paul Dubé began his five-year term on April 1, 2016.

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