



THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT  
**GUND INSTITUTE  
FOR ENVIRONMENT**

**Gund Ombudsperson Introduction**

January 24, 2019

Dear Gund Community,

I welcome the opportunity to serve the Gund community in the role of ombudsperson. Establishment of this role is an important step for the forward-thinking Gund Institute.

*The Gund Institute Ombudsperson is an impartial third party designated to assist students, faculty, and staff in resolving diversity and inclusion challenges or disputes they encounter while participating in the Institute. The Ombudsperson may utilize a number of informal means in this role, including consulting, mediation, and engaging with appropriate supports or resources. The Ombudsperson will also advise the Gund Institute leadership team in developing or improving policies/practices to enhance the experience of Institute participants and affiliates. The Ombudsperson is appointed by the Gund Institute Director to one-year renewable terms, starting at the beginning of each academic year.*

For those of you whom I do not know personally, I am a professor in the Economics Department, and have been a Gund Fellow now for about 4 years. My research is in the areas of gender and race, focused on the causes and consequences of inequality--and policy solutions to those problems. I served as Associate Dean of CAS for a period of time, during which I spearheaded diversity hiring efforts in the college, and was part of discussions of numerous cases around diversity and inclusion issues in the college.

I have learned that it is often hard to figure out whom to talk to when concerns arise--in part, because organizations have power dynamics that can be hard to navigate, and in part, because we sometimes doubt that our own concerns are valid. I have also found that when there is a designated person to hear concerns and provide ideas and support for resolution, it improves the socio-emotional health of an organization and the people in it.

To all of the Gund community--staff, students, and faculty--please feel free to contact me at any time about concerns you might have or to pass on concerns raised to you. Email is a great way to reach me, and I also value in person contact. My office is in 340 Old Mill, if you would like to stop by.

I look forward to working with all of you.

**Stephanie Seguino**

Professor, Department of Economics

University of Vermont