A recent article by Randy Williams, former Global Ombuds for American Express, and Sara Thacker, Staff Ombuds for UC Berkeley, **Organizational Ombuds: Filling the Gap in Effective Dispute Resolution Systems**, explained how the organizational ombuds fits within an institution by filling the gap between formal and informal. Here's Figure A - Comparison Chart in summary form developed by the authors.

Roles & Responsibilities	Formal Channels	Ombuds
Designated as a neutral	NO	YES
Configured as independent out of ordinary management structures	NO	YES
Operates as informal entity reporting to top of organization	NO	YES
Makes management decisions; sets and enforces policies, practice, and rules	YES	NO
Provides a channel to place the organization on notice of claims against it	YES	NO
Maintains business records for the organization	YES	NO
Provides internal and external compliance reports for the organization	YES	NO
Accepts anonymous calls; provides anonymity	LIMITED	YES
Acts as a proactive change catalyst to help prevent problems	YES	YES
Provides data from a neutral viewpoint to top management	LIMITED	YES
Provides a channel to seek confidential guidance based on terms and conditions of the ombuds program and, where appropriate, on assertion of privilege	NO	YES
Provides off-the-record coaching for options to resolve problems and guidance to get information to the most appropriate channel in a timely manner	NO	YES
Allows users to maintain control and determine resolution options (except for situations with an imminent risk of serious harm or information of abuse and neglect)	NO	YES
Provides guidance and options for all types of work related issues	NO	YES