Question 3: Infrastructure – How might units designate and train someone at the unit level to provide support to faculty, staff and students? Are there ways to expand upon the existing central Ombudsperson model and resources?

What is the problem/situation?
- Small units not having the resources to support this designation.
- Big units might need more than one designation.
- Lack of knowledge and understanding of all of the resources available.
- There is not a hub and spoke ombudsperson model at VCU. We have many different resources for both students and employees at the university and they all do different things. How do we direct students and employees to the (correct) resources they need to report and seek redress? How do we best serve the university community with the resources we have and any additional resources we need?

What does the literature/research have to say about it?
VCU currently provides the following resources to students reporting bias:
- The Bias Response Team will provide support and will coordinate resources.
  - [https://students.vcu.edu/resources/bias-response-team/](https://students.vcu.edu/resources/bias-response-team/)
- Student Counseling Services
  - Confidential Crisis Counseling
  - Regular business hours + 24/7 On Call Therapist
- Resources on Division of Student Affairs website (note: no timeline for following up on a report)
  - [https://students.vcu.edu/resources/safety/are-you-a-student/when-to-refer/](https://students.vcu.edu/resources/safety/are-you-a-student/when-to-refer/)
  - [https://students.vcu.edu/find-resources/dean-of-students/resources/](https://students.vcu.edu/find-resources/dean-of-students/resources/)
- Student Assistance and Support Team (contact Dean of Students Office at (804) 828-8940 or vcudean@vcu.edu)
  - Confidential and need-to-know information sharing
- VCU’s ombudsperson provides confidential guidance and mediation services to students
- Wellness Resource Center (confidential advocates)
  - [MyOptions@vcu.edu](mailto:MyOptions@vcu.edu)

VCU currently provides the following resources to employees reporting bias:
- VCU Human Resources Office of Employee Relations will provide advice and guidance to employees reporting bias, will investigate claims of bias in the workplace and will provide recommendations to managers of employees exhibiting bias in the workplace.
  - [https://hr.vcu.edu/current-employees/employee-relations/](https://hr.vcu.edu/current-employees/employee-relations/)
- VCU’s office of Equity and Access Services provides intake and guidance to employees reporting discrimination concerns in the workplace:
  - [https://equity.vcu.edu/](https://equity.vcu.edu/)
- VCU’s Office of Integrity and Compliance receives and records employee complaints of bias and assigns complaints to VCU HR, VCU Health Sciences HR or Equity and Access Services to investigate:
  - [https://acs.vcu.edu/integrity-and-compliance-office/](https://acs.vcu.edu/integrity-and-compliance-office/)
- VCU’s ombudsperson provides confidential guidance and mediation to employees reporting bias in the workplace.
What does the work group recommend?

- Consider placing the above resources and links on the same webpage and immediately after the instructions for submission of a report (or having an automated email sent with a list of resources).
- The Bias Response Team is responsible for providing support and resources for those involved, but there is no timeline given on when these resources will be provided. Develop a timeline for providing a personalized list of resources.
- Consider equipping one or two people in each unit with a list of ALL the resources available and individuals trained to understand the processes of reporting & follow up.
- Provide education and training for all of the individuals serving as resources.
- Assign and train a student, faculty, and advisor (i.e. student advisors and the local HR Professional) in each school and division.
- Involve Ombudsperson in training the designated support persons at the unit level (to act as small-scale ombudsperson within the unit).
- Incorporate trainers into this process to foster awareness, prevention, intervention, and knowledge about all of the resources available to students, faculty and staff.
- Consider including students and employees on the Bias Response Team/Committees, etc. to ensure engagement and that the student and employee perspective is heard with respect to process and response.