



University Ombuds Office Annual Report October 1, 2011 – August 10, 2012

Attached are data of the activity of the University Ombuds Office during the 4th year of service, including number of visitors, employee and student classification of visitors, and gender. Issues or concerns raised by visitors are tabulated according the International Ombudsman Association uniform reporting categories (a copy of the IOA categories are appended to this report).

A note about visitors recorded in this report

When reviewing the data, it is important to interpret the information in the context of how the ombudsperson comes in contact with visitors and how issues are tabulated. Visitors voluntarily contact the office; no one is compelled to interact with the ombudsperson. In many instances involving the consent of the visitor, the ombudsperson may contact several additional people in working towards resolving a concern. In such cases, only the initial visitor and the concerns raised are recorded and represented in this report.

Importantly, the visitor data presented here should only be interpreted as *the number (or percentage) of employees experiencing a workplace concern that have chosen to seek a neutral and confidential setting to explore options towards resolving an issue*. There are myriad ways in which students and employees address concerns informally across campus without ever involving the Ombuds Office. Thus, the data presented here **does not** indicate the number or percentage of all employees experiencing conflict nor should this report be interpreted as a representation of the manner in which all employees or students ultimately address a concern.

A note about concerns recorded in this report

The Ombudsperson serves as a neutral party and does not perform investigations nor attempt to verify the accuracy of any statements by visitors or determine the facts of what is being described. The issues raised are recorded based on what visitors report. While the total numbers of concerns have been reported in aggregate, some data are left incomplete when these issues are broken down according to visitor classification in order to protect the confidentiality of visitors. For example, if a particular issue category was only raised once or twice in a issue category, that line has been left blank in the report.

Summary of data

Approximate employee usage rates of Ombuds offices at colleges and universities range from 1% to 5% of the constituency population. The employee usage rate in the current year of the Auburn University Ombuds Office was 2.47%.

Issues or concerns raised by visitors to the Ombuds Office

Issues raised by a visitor may range across several issue categories. Often, a visitor will have one or few main concern(s) but several other issues will be revealed during the course of an interaction. The Ombudsperson makes no attempt to assess what a visitor's *major concern* or *most important concern* may be when recording issues. Despite this limitation, the data is helpful in discerning the types and frequency of issues on the minds of people choosing to explore an informal resolution or other approaches to workplace problems.

The 129 visitors raised a total 656 issues (5.1 issues per visitor). The largest IOA category of concern raised by visitors was in the area of *Evaluative Relationships* (53%), issues arising amidst supervisor-supervisee relationships (including student-instructor relationships). This observation is a consistent finding in the reports of most Ombuds reports that I have reviewed.

Pre-dispute versus Post-dispute

The Ombuds Office is designed as an informal mechanism, when appropriate, to address workplace concerns. Thus, an assessment of whether the visitor's concern was prior to a formal action (pre-dispute) or after a formal action (post-dispute) was recorded. Of all visitors, 87.2% were addressing a pre-dispute issue and 12.8% made contact with the Ombuds Office following engagement in a formal dispute resolution process or after attempting to address their concern with a campus regulatory or compliance office.

Estimated Ombuds Office Service Population

These estimated numbers and percentages of the university employee population served by the Ombuds Office are derived from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment and tabulated solely for the purpose of interpreting the visitor data for the University Ombuds Office.

Table 1a. Total Estimated Employees (excluding students, TES): ~ 4610

Classification	number	% total	% male	% female
Faculty *	~1177	~26%	~66%	~34%
Non-faculty	~3433	~74%	~ 44%	~ 56%
A&P	~1995	~43%	~ 50%	~ 50%
Staff	~1438	~31%	~ 36%	~ 64%

* tenure track and non tenure track

Table 1b. Total Estimated Students: ~ 25,469

Classification	number	% total	% male	% female
Undergraduate	~20446	~80%	~51%	~49%
Graduate	~5023	~20%	~ 49%	~ 51%
Masters	~2291	~46%	-	-
Other grad	~2732	~54%	-	-

Table 2. Ombuds Office Employee & Student Visitor Classification
Total visitors = 129

Classification	Number	% visitors	% total population	% male	% female
Faculty *	42	32.6%	3.6 %	64%	36%
Non-faculty	72	55.8%	2.1%	14.3%	85.7%
A&P	42	32.6%	2.1%	19.0%	81.0%
Staff	23	17.8%	1.6%	0.0%	100%
Other	7	5.4%	-	-	-
Student	15	11.6%	0.06%	60.0%	40.0%
Undergrad	9	7.0%	0.04%	77.8%	22.2%
Grad/Profess	6	4.7%	0.12%	66.7%	33.3%
Total visitors		129	100%		

* 76% (32/42) of faculty visitors were tenured

Table 3. Ombudsperson Actions in Response to 129 visitors (multiple actions may be taken with any given visitor).

Action	Number of visitors	Percentage of visitors
Individual consultation / problem solving	93	72.1%
Referral to policy or campus agency/office	45	34.9%
Unit consultation or mediation	19	14.7%
Notify campus office on behalf of visitor	0	0.0%
Inquiry to campus office on behalf of visitor	10	7.8%
Look into situation	1	0.8%
Provide upward feedback to administrators / leaders	5	3.8%

Individual consultation / problem solving: Listening, providing and receiving information, reframing issues, discussing options for addressing a visitor's concern rather than choosing for a visitor how to respond. Many visitors to an ombuds office are seeking an impartial listener to assist them in verbally expressing a concern. No further action may be desired or needed.

Referral to policy or campus agency/office: Ombuds officers are in a position to respond to confidential inquiries for referral to appropriate offices or services that are available on campus. The ombudsperson must be well versed in university grievance procedures and have a working

knowledge of the appropriate offices responsible for regulatory and compliance functions of the university. This information resource function compliments the ombudsperson's practice of remaining up to date and knowledgeable of current university policies.

Unit consultation / mediation: A visitor may seek the ombudsperson's assistance in finding an intermediary in speaking with another party privately in resolving a conflict – sometimes shuttling between disputants and other times through a facilitated discussion similar to mediation. The intermediary may be the ombudsperson or another appropriate person. The ombudsperson may serve as a facilitator with groups when requested re appropriate or refer multiparty conflicts to facilitation services elsewhere on or off campus. The ombudsperson only serves in this role with the permission of the involved parties.

Notify campus office on behalf of visitor: Under rare circumstances, the ombudsperson may formally notify a campus office of information on behalf of a visitor in order to surface allegations while protecting the observer's identity or safety.

Inquiry to campus office on behalf of visitor: A visitor may wish to confidentially seek clarification regarding the meaning of a specific university policy or procedure.

Look into situation: The ombudsperson does not perform formal fact finding investigations. On rare occasions, the informal practice of looking into or following up on an issue at the request of a visitor wishing to remain anonymous may be undertaken with the understanding that the information may be used in advancing an informal resolution. When looking into a situation uncovers that a more formal investigation is warranted, the ombudsperson will turn the issue over to the appropriate office of responsibility.

Provide upward feedback to administrators / leaders: Throughout the year, the ombudsperson may report observations that series of related concerns are tied to systemic conditions, ambiguities, or absence of policy. These are contacts are made while preserving visitor confidentiality.

Table 4. Total Issues Raised by Visitors – IOA Categories
 N= 656 issues raised by 129 visitors (mean = 5.1 issues per visitor)

IOA Issues Category	% of total concerns
Compensation & Benefits: Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about the equity, appropriateness and competitiveness of employee compensation, benefits and other benefit programs.	1.2%
Evaluative Relationships: Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries arising between people in evaluative relationships (i.e. supervisor-employee, faculty-student.)	53.0%
Peer & Colleague Relationships: Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries involving peers or colleagues who do not have a supervisory–employee or student–professor relationship (e.g., two staff members within the same department or conflict involving members of a student organization.)	11.2%
Career Profession and Development: Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about administrative processes and decisions regarding entering and leaving a job, what it entails, (i.e., recruitment, nature and place of assignment, job security, and separation.)	6.3%
Legal, Regulatory, Financial, and Compliance: Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries that may create a legal risk (financial, sanction etc.) for the organization or its members if not addressed, including issues related to waste, fraud or abuse.	6.5%
Safety, Health, and Physical Environment: Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about Safety, Health and Infrastructure-related issues.	1.4%
Services/Administration Issues: Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about services or administrative offices including from external parties.	6.8%
Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related: Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries that relate to the whole or some part of an organization.	11.3%
Values, Ethics, and Standards: Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about the fairness of organizational values, ethics, and/or standards, the application of related policies and/or procedures, or the need for creation or revision of policies, and/or standards.	2.3%
Total (N=656)	100%

Table 5. Selected Issues Raised by Number of Visitors (% of total visitors: n= 129) and subcategorized as percentage of faculty, non-faculty, and student visitors raising concern (see appendix for descriptions of IOA subcategories)

Selected Concerns Raised by Visitors	Total (n=129)	Faculty (n=42)	Non- faculty (n=72)	Students (n=15)
1. Compensation & Benefits				
1a rate of pay, job classification	2.3%			
1c benefits	3.1%			
2. Evaluative Relationships (supervisory)				
2a priorities, values, beliefs	21.7%	23.8%	23.6%	
2b disrespect, rude, crude, disregard of people	29.5%	11.9%	41.7%	20.0%
2c trust/integrity suspicions	17.8%	19.0%	20.8%	
2d reputation, rumors, gossip	20.9%	19.0%	23.6%	
2e communication, poor quality or quantity	30.2%	21.4%	36.1%	26.7%
2f bullying, abusive, coercive behavior	5.4%		6.9%	
2g insensitivity to diversity	5.4%		6.9%	
2h punitive behaviors, retaliation	6.2%			
2j fairness of assignments, schedules	10.1%		13.8%	
2k manner of feedback given or received	15.5%	16.7%	18.1%	
2l supervisor consultation	5.4%	9.5%		
2m performance appraisal	13.2%	11.9%	13.9%	
2n unit/departmental climate, norms	19.4%	14.3%	23.6%	
2o supervisor failure to address work issues	32.6%	26.2%	25.0%	20.0%
2q manner of disciplinary actions	12.4%		18.1%	
2r inequity of treatment, favoritism	18.6%	16.7%	22.2%	
3. Peer and Colleague Relationships				
3a priorities, values, beliefs	9.3%		12.5%	
3b disrespect, rude, crude, disregard of people	12.4%	9.5%	16.7%	
3c trust/integrity suspicions	9.3%	9.5%	9.7%	
3d reputation, rumors, gossip	7.0%	7.1%	8.3%	
3e communication, poor quality or quantity	7.8%	7.1%	9.7%	
3f bullying, abusive, coercive behavior	3.1%			
3g insensitivity to diversity	4.7%		6.9%	
3h punitive behaviors, retaliation	3.9%			
4. Career Progression and Development				
4a job application selection recruitment	5.4%	7.1%	5.6%	
4d tenure/position security/ambiguity	3.1%			
4e ability to achieve promotion, tenure	10.9%	7.1%	11.1%	20.0%
4f rotation/duration of assignment	3.1%			
4k career development opportunities, support	4.7%			

5. Legal, Regulatory, Compliance				
5b	business, financial practices	6.2%		9.7%
5c	harassment	3.1%		5.5%
5d	discrimination, different treatment	6.2%		8.3%
5e	disability/accommodation	5.4%		
5h	privacy security of information	7.8%		6.9%
6. Safety, Health, Physical Environment				
7. Services & Administrative Actions (including external)				
7a	quality of service, accuracy, thoroughness	3.1%		
7b	responsiveness, timeliness	4.7%		
7c	decisions, application of rules (non-disciplinary)	15.5%	16.7%	11.1%
7d	behavior of service provider(s)	8.5%	7.1%	33.3%
8. Organizational, Strategic, Mission Issues				
8a	technical management of mission	5.4%		5.6%
8b	leadership, management decisions	10.1%	7.1%	11.1%
8c	use/abuse or positional power/authority	8.5%	9.5%	9.7%
8d	communication re strategy, mission	3.9%		
8e	restructuring and relocation	3.1%		
8f	climate, morale, capacity to function	7.0%		9.7%
8h	priority setting and funding	4.7%	9.5%	
8j	inter-organizational work territory	10.9%	11.9%	11.1%
9. Values, Ethics & Standards				
9a	applicability or lack of conduct codes	7.0%	9.5%	6.9%
9b	values, culture of the organization	3.9%		

Commentary

The work of the Ombuds Office in assisting visitors is grounded in the guiding principles of *Confidentiality*, *Independence*, *Neutrality*, and *Informality* as described in the International Ombudsman Association Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics. Inherent in the application of these principles is the notions of *voluntariness*. First, engaging with the Ombuds Office is designed to be a voluntary option for members of the campus community. Secondly, the options discussed, often ranging from doing nothing at all to engaging the formal complaint system (including a host of informal options in between) are ultimately for the consideration of the visitor. There is no pressure applied to visitors regarding what they should do and a very common outcome of an initial visit is to take some time to consider the various options discussed. Quite often, there is no follow up visit and therefore the course of action selected, if

any, is not known to the ombudsperson. A third aspect of the voluntary nature of these interactions occurs when third parties are invited to participate in addressing a concern raised by a visitor. The original visitor or the ombudsperson may reach out to the third party to meet at the Ombuds Office for a discussion. Whether to accept such an invitation is also voluntary and it is inconsistent with the intent of the office to be regarded or affected negatively for declining to meet with the ombudsperson.

There are many goals on the minds of visitors contacting the Ombuds Office to discuss a concern, including obtaining information about a policy or practice, ascertaining the proper office to address a matter formally, and developing a strategy to handle a matter privately and on the terms with which they are comfortable. The data in this report, as does the data of most ombuds offices in a variety of workplace settings, indicate that concerns between employees (faculty and non-faculty) and their supervisors is the most common categorical context when raising a concern. Most of the discussions about these concerns (as well as many of the concerns in other categories) are about the manner and methods of effectively communicating a complaint informally as an alternative to engaging in a formal complaint process. The informal complaint process can be comprised of a limitless set of options that can be tailored to an individual's particular strengths, comfort level, creativity, and temperament. There is also a rich set of resources available in books, articles and web pages on techniques and strategies when communicating a complaint informally (the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has a particularly helpful database).

Examples of issuing an informal complaint include preparatory steps such as *seeking out a resource* to talk about the problem, such as the Ombuds Office or a trusted intermediary or mentor and *writing a personal account* of the problem and categorizing ideas as facts, opinions/feelings/assumptions, and expectations. When ready to initiate an complaint informally, steps may include *using an anonymous reporting channel*, *directly contacting the person* of concern in person or in writing, *enlisting a third party* to facilitate, and *generic approaches* that utilize an intermediary to ask that a concern be addressed to a larger group of people that includes the specific person or people of concern. Important in the consideration of initiating an

informal complaint is an understanding of the University's policies against retaliation when raising concerns in good faith (also important when initiating a formal complaint).

Though the Ombuds Office has a substantial library of resources on informal complaint strategies for visitors to the office, a goal for the upcoming year is to develop an electronic set of resources that can be housed on the Ombuds Office webpage and be available to anyone prior to or without necessitating a visit to the office. Included in this resources will be strategies for preparing for protecting one's self in the event they feel they are being retaliated against in the future for previously raising a complaint informally in good faith.

The services of the Ombuds Office were expanded in October 2011 to include the student population. Though a modest number of students have contacted the Ombuds Office over the past year, a more concentrated effort to promote the office to the student population is being undertaken for the 2012-2013 academic year. These efforts include collaborating with the Division of Student Affairs, the instructors in the First Year Seminars and the Office of Student Academic Support, and contact with the Student Government Association and the Graduate Student Association.

Respectfully submitted,

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University Ombudsperson and Professor

August 14, 2012

IOA Standards of Practice

Preamble

The IOA Standards of Practice are based upon and derived from the ethical principles stated in the IOA Code of Ethics.

Each Ombuds office should have an organizational Charter or Terms of Reference, approved by senior management, articulating the principles of the Ombuds function in that organization and their consistency with the IOA Standards of Practice.

Standards of Practice

Independence

1.1 The Ombuds Office and the Ombuds are independent from other organizational entities.

1.2 The Ombuds holds no other position within the organization which might compromise independence.

1.3 The Ombuds exercises sole discretion over whether or how to act regarding an individual's concern, a trend or concerns of multiple individuals over time. The Ombuds may also initiate action on a concern identified through the Ombuds' direct observation.

1.4 The Ombuds has access to all information and all individuals in the organization, as permitted by law.

1.5 The Ombuds has authority to select Ombuds Office staff and manage Ombuds Office budget and operations.

Neutrality and Impartiality

2.1 The Ombuds is neutral, impartial, and unaligned.

2.2 The Ombuds strives for impartiality, fairness and objectivity in the treatment of people and the consideration of issues. The Ombuds advocates for fair and equitably administered processes and does not advocate on behalf of any individual within the organization.

2.3 The Ombuds is a designated neutral reporting to the highest possible level of the organization and operating independent of ordinary line and staff structures. The Ombuds should not report to nor be structurally affiliated with any compliance function of the organization.

2.4 The Ombuds serves in no additional role within the organization which would compromise the Ombuds' neutrality. The Ombuds should not be aligned with any formal or informal associations within the organization in a way that might create actual or perceived conflicts of interest for the Ombuds. The Ombuds should have no personal interest or stake in, and incur no gain or loss from, the outcome of an issue.

2.5 The Ombuds has a responsibility to consider the legitimate concerns and interests of all individuals affected by the matter under consideration.

2.6 The Ombuds helps develop a range of responsible options to resolve problems and facilitate discussion to identify the best options.

Confidentiality

3.1 The Ombuds holds all communications with those seeking assistance in strict confidence and takes all reasonable steps to safeguard confidentiality, including the following: The Ombuds does not disclose confidential communications unless given permission to do so in the course of informal discussions with the Ombuds, and even then at the sole discretion of the Ombuds; the Ombuds does not reveal, and must not be required to reveal, the identity of any individual contacting the Ombuds Office, nor does the Ombuds reveal information provided in confidence that could lead to the identification of any individual contacting the Ombuds Office, without that individual's express permission; the Ombuds takes specific action related to an individual's issue only with the individual's express permission and only to the extent permitted, unless such action can be taken in a way that safeguards the identity of the individual contacting the Ombuds Office. The only exception to this privilege of confidentiality is where there appears to be imminent risk of serious harm, and where there is no other reasonable option. Whether this risk exists is a determination to be made by the Ombuds.

3.2 Communications between the Ombuds and others (made while the Ombuds is serving in that capacity) are considered privileged. The privilege belongs to the Ombuds and the Ombuds Office, rather than to any party to an issue. Others cannot waive this privilege.

3.3 The Ombuds does not testify in any formal process inside the organization and resists testifying in any formal process outside of the organization, even if given permission or requested to do so.

3.4 If the Ombuds pursues an issue systemically (e.g., provides feedback on trends, issues, policies and practices) the Ombuds does so in a way that safeguards the identity of individuals.

3.5 The Ombuds keeps no records containing identifying information on behalf of the organization.

3.6 The Ombuds maintains information (e.g., notes, phone messages, appointment calendars) in a secure location and manner, protected from inspection by others (including

management), and has a consistent and standard practice for the destruction of such information.

3.7 The Ombuds prepares any data and/or reports in a manner that protects confidentiality.

3.8 Communications made to the Ombuds are not notice to the organization. The Ombuds neither acts as agent for, nor accepts notice on behalf of, the organization. However, the Ombuds may refer individuals to the appropriate place where formal notice can be made.

Informality and Other Standards

4.1 The Ombuds functions on an informal basis by such means as: listening, providing and receiving information, identifying and reframing issues, developing a range of responsible options, and – with permission and at Ombuds discretion – engaging in informal third-party intervention. When possible, the Ombuds helps people develop new ways to solve problems themselves.

4.2 The Ombuds as an informal and off-the-record resource pursues resolution of concerns and looks into procedural irregularities and/or broader systemic problems when appropriate.

4.3 The Ombuds does not make binding decisions, mandate policies, or formally adjudicate issues for the organization.

4.4 The Ombuds supplements, but does not replace, any formal channels. Use of the Ombuds Office is voluntary, and is not a required step in any grievance process or organizational policy.

4.5 The Ombuds does not participate in any formal investigative or adjudicative procedures. Formal investigations should be conducted by others. When a formal investigation is requested, the Ombuds refers individuals to the appropriate offices or individual.

4.6 The Ombuds identifies trends, issues and concerns about policies and procedures, including potential future issues and concerns, without breaching confidentiality or anonymity, and provides recommendations for responsibly addressing them.

4.7 The Ombuds acts in accordance with the IOA Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, keeps professionally current by pursuing continuing education, and provides opportunities for staff to pursue professional training.

4.8 The Ombuds endeavors to be worthy of the trust placed in the Ombuds Office.

1. Compensation & Benefits

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about the equity, appropriateness and competitiveness of employee compensation, benefits and other benefit programs.

- 1.a **Compensation** (rate of pay, salary amount, job salary classification/level)
- 1.b **Payroll** (administration of pay, check wrong or delayed)
- 1.c **Benefits** (decisions related to medical, dental, life, vacation/sick leave, education, worker's compensation insurance, etc.)
- 1.d **Retirement, Pension** (eligibility, calculation of amount, retirement pension benefits)
- 1.e **Other** (any other employee compensation or benefit not described by the above sub-categories)

2. Evaluative Relationships

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries arising between people in evaluative relationships (i.e. supervisor-employee, faculty-student.)

- 2.a **Priorities, Values, Beliefs** (differences about what should be considered important – or most important – often rooted in ethical or moral beliefs)
- 2.b **Respect/Treatment** (demonstrations of inappropriate regard for people, not listening, rudeness, crudeness, etc.)
- 2.c **Trust/Integrity** (suspicion that others are not being honest, whether or to what extent one wishes to be honest, etc.)
- 2.d **Reputation** (possible impact of rumors and/or gossip about professional or personal matters)
- 2.e **Communication** (quality and/or quantity of communication)
- 2.f **Bullying, Mobbing** (abusive, threatening, and/or coercive behaviors)
- 2.g **Diversity-Related** (comments or behaviors perceived to be insensitive, offensive, or intolerant on the basis of an identity-related difference such as race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation)
- 2.h **Retaliation** (punitive behaviors for previous actions or comments, whistleblower)
- 2.i **Physical Violence** (actual or threats of bodily harm to another)
- 2.j **Assignments/Schedules** (appropriateness or fairness of tasks, expected volume of work)
- 2.k **Feedback** (feedback or recognition given, or responses to feedback received)
- 2.l **Consultation** (requests for help in dealing with issues between two or more individuals they supervise/teach or with other unusual situations in evaluative relationships)

2.m Performance Appraisal/Grading

(job/academic performance in formal or informal evaluation)

- 2.n **Departmental Climate** (prevailing behaviors, norms, or attitudes within a department for which supervisors or faculty have responsibility.)
- 2.o **Supervisory Effectiveness** (management of department or classroom, failure to address issues)
- 2.p **Insubordination** (refusal to do what is asked)
- 2.q **Discipline** (appropriateness, timeliness, requirements, alternatives, or options for responding)
- 2.r **Equity of Treatment** (favoritism, one or more individuals receive preferential treatment)
- 2.s **Other** (any other evaluative relationship not described by the above sub-categories)

3. Peer and Colleague Relationships

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries involving peers or colleagues who do not have a supervisory-employee or student-professor relationship (e.g., two staff members within the same department or conflict involving members of a student organization.)

- 3.a **Priorities, Values, Beliefs** (differences about what should be considered important – or most important – often rooted in ethical or moral beliefs)
- 3.b **Respect/Treatment** (demonstrations of inappropriate regard for people, not listening, rudeness, crudeness, etc.)
- 3.c **Trust/Integrity** (suspicion that others are not being honest, whether or to what extent one wishes to be honest, etc.)
- 3.d **Reputation** (possible impact of rumors and/or gossip about professional or personal matters)
- 3.e **Communication** (quality and/or quantity of communication)
- 3.f **Bullying, Mobbing** (abusive, threatening, and/or coercive behaviors)
- 3.g **Diversity-Related** (comments or behaviors perceived to be insensitive, offensive, or intolerant on the basis of an identity-related difference such as race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation)
- 3.h **Retaliation** (punitive behaviors for previous actions or comments, whistleblower)
- 3.i **Physical Violence** (actual or threats of bodily harm to another)
- 3.j **Other** (any peer or colleague relationship not described by the above sub-categories)

4. Career Progression and Development

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about administrative processes and decisions regarding entering and leaving a job, what it entails, (i.e., recruitment, nature and place of assignment, job security, and separation.)

- 4.a **Job Application/Selection and Recruitment Processes** (recruitment and selection processes, facilitation of job applications, short-listing and criteria for selection, disputed decisions linked to recruitment and selection)
- 4.b **Job Classification and Description** (changes or disagreements over requirements of assignment, appropriate tasks)
- 4.c **Involuntary Transfer/Change of Assignment** (notice, selection and special dislocation rights/benefits, removal from prior duties, unrequested change of work tasks)
- 4.d **Tenure/Position Security/Ambiguity** (security of position or contract, provision of secure contractual categories)
- 4.e **Career Progression** (promotion, reappointment, or tenure)
- 4.f **Rotation and Duration of Assignment** (non-completion or over-extension of assignments in specific settings/countries, lack of access or involuntary transfer to specific roles/assignments, requests for transfer to other places/duties/roles)
- 4.g **Resignation** (concerns about whether or how to voluntarily terminate employment or how such a decision might be communicated appropriately)
- 4.h **Termination/Non-Renewal** (end of contract, non-renewal of contract, disputed permanent separation from organization)
- 4.i **Re-employment of Former or Retired Staff** (loss of competitive advantages associated with re-hiring retired staff, favoritism)
- 4.j **Position Elimination** (elimination or abolition of an individual's position)
- 4.k **Career Development, Coaching, Mentoring** (classroom, on-the-job, and varied assignments as training and developmental opportunities)
- 4.l **Other** (any other issues linked to recruitment, assignment, job security or separation not described by the above sub-categories)

5. Legal, Regulatory, Financial and Compliance

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries that may create a legal risk (financial, sanction etc.) for the organization or its members if not addressed, including issues related to waste, fraud or abuse.

- 5.a **Criminal Activity** (threats or crimes planned, observed, or experienced, fraud)
- 5.b **Business and Financial Practices** (inappropriate actions that abuse or waste organizational finances, facilities or equipment)
- 5.c **Harassment** (unwelcome physical, verbal, written, e-mail, audio, video psychological or sexual conduct that creates a hostile or intimidating environment)
- 5.d **Discrimination** (different treatment compared with others or exclusion from some benefit on the basis of, for example, gender, race, age, national origin, religion, etc.[being part of an Equal Employment Opportunity protected category – applies in the U.S.])
- 5.e **Disability, Temporary or Permanent, Reasonable Accommodation** (extra time on exams, provision of assistive technology, interpreters, or Braille materials including questions on policies, etc. for people with disabilities)
- 5.f **Accessibility** (removal of physical barriers, providing ramps, elevators, etc.)
- 5.g **Intellectual Property Rights** (e.g., copyright and patent infringement)
- 5.h **Privacy and Security of Information** (release or access to individual or organizational private or confidential information)
- 5.i **Property Damage** (personal property damage, liabilities)
- 5.j **Other** (any other legal, financial and compliance issue not described by the above sub-categories)
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6. Safety, Health, and Physical Environment

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about Safety, Health and Infrastructure-related issues.

- 6.a **Safety** (physical safety, injury, medical evacuation, meeting federal and state requirements for training and equipment)
- 6.b **Physical Working/Living Conditions** (temperature, odors, noise, available space, lighting, etc)
- 6.c **Ergonomics** (proper set-up of workstation affecting physical functioning)
- 6.d **Cleanliness** (sanitary conditions and facilities to prevent the spread of disease)
- 6.e **Security** (adequate lighting in parking lots, metal detectors, guards, limited access to building by outsiders, anti-terrorists measures (not for classifying “compromise of classified or top secret” information)

- 6.f **Telework/Flexplace** (ability to work from home or other location because of business or personal need, e.g., in case of man-made or natural emergency)
- 6.g **Safety Equipment** (access to/use of safety equipment as well as access to or use of safety equipment, e.g., fire extinguisher)
- 6.h **Environmental Policies** (policies not being followed, being unfair ineffective, cumbersome)
- 6.i **Work Related Stress and Work-Life Balance** (Post-Traumatic Stress, Critical Incident Response, internal/external stress, e.g. divorce, shooting, caring for sick, injured)
- 6.j **Other** (any safety, health, or physical environment issue not described by the above sub-categories)
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7. Services/Administrative Issues

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about services or administrative offices including from external parties.

- 7.a **Quality of Services** (how well services were provided, accuracy or thoroughness of information, competence, etc.)
- 7.b **Responsiveness/Timeliness** (time involved in getting a response or return call or about the time for a complete response to be provided)
- 7.c **Administrative Decisions and Interpretation/Application of Rules** (impact of non-disciplinary decisions, decisions about requests for administrative and academic services, e.g., exceptions to policy deadlines or limits, refund requests, appeals of library or parking fines, application for financial aid, etc.)
- 7.d **Behavior of Service Provider(s)** (how an administrator or staff member spoke to or dealt with a constituent, customer, or client, e.g., rude, inattentive, or impatient)
- 7.e **Other** (any services or administrative issue not described by the above sub-categories)
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8. Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries that relate to the whole or some part of an organization.

- 8.a **Strategic and Mission-Related/ Strategic and Technical Management** (principles, decisions and actions related to where and how the organization is moving)
- 8.b **Leadership and Management** (quality/capacity of management and/or management/leadership decisions, suggested training, reassignments and reorganizations)

- 8.c **Use of Positional Power/Authority** (lack or abuse of power provided by individual's position)
- 8.d **Communication** (content, style, timing, effects and amount of organizational and leader's communication, quality of communication about strategic issues)
- 8.e **Restructuring and Relocation** (issues related to broad scope planned or actual restructuring and/or relocation affecting the whole or major divisions of an organization, e.g. downsizing, off shoring, outsourcing)
- 8.f **Organizational Climate** (issues related to organizational morale and/or capacity for functioning)
- 8.g **Change Management** (making, responding or adapting to organizational changes, quality of leadership in facilitating organizational change)
- 8.h **Priority Setting and/or Funding** (disputes about setting organizational/departmental priorities and/or allocation of funding within programs)
- 8.i **Data, Methodology, Interpretation of Results** (scientific disputes about the conduct, outcomes and interpretation of studies and resulting data for policy)
- 8.j **Interdepartment/Interorganization Work/Territory** (disputes about which department/organization should be doing what/taking the lead)
- 8.k **Other** (any organizational issue not described by the above sub-categories)
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9. Values, Ethics, and Standards

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about the fairness of organizational values, ethics, and/or standards, the application of related policies and/or procedures, or the need for creation or revision of policies, and/or standards.

- 9.a **Standards of Conduct** (fairness, applicability or lack of behavioral guidelines and/or Codes of Conduct, e.g., Academic Honesty, plagiarism, Code of Conduct, conflict of interest)
- 9.b **Values and Culture** (questions, concerns or issues about the values or culture of the organization)
- 9.c **Scientific Conduct/Integrity** (scientific or research misconduct or misdemeanors, e.g., authorship; falsification of results)
- 9.d **Policies and Procedures NOT Covered in Broad Categories 1 thru 8** (fairness or lack of policy or the application of the policy, policy not followed, or needs revision, e.g., appropriate dress, use of internet or cell phones)
- 9.e **Other** (Other policy, procedure, ethics or standards issues not described in the above sub-categories)
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