OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON

2019/2020 ANNUAL REPORT

NAVIGATING
DIFFICULT
SITUATIONS
ON CAMPUS

Conflict Resolution · Policy Guidance
Empowerment · Confidential Conversations

Offered to Students, Staff, Faculty and A&P

Office of the Ombudsperson
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Quad Center Building, Suite 005
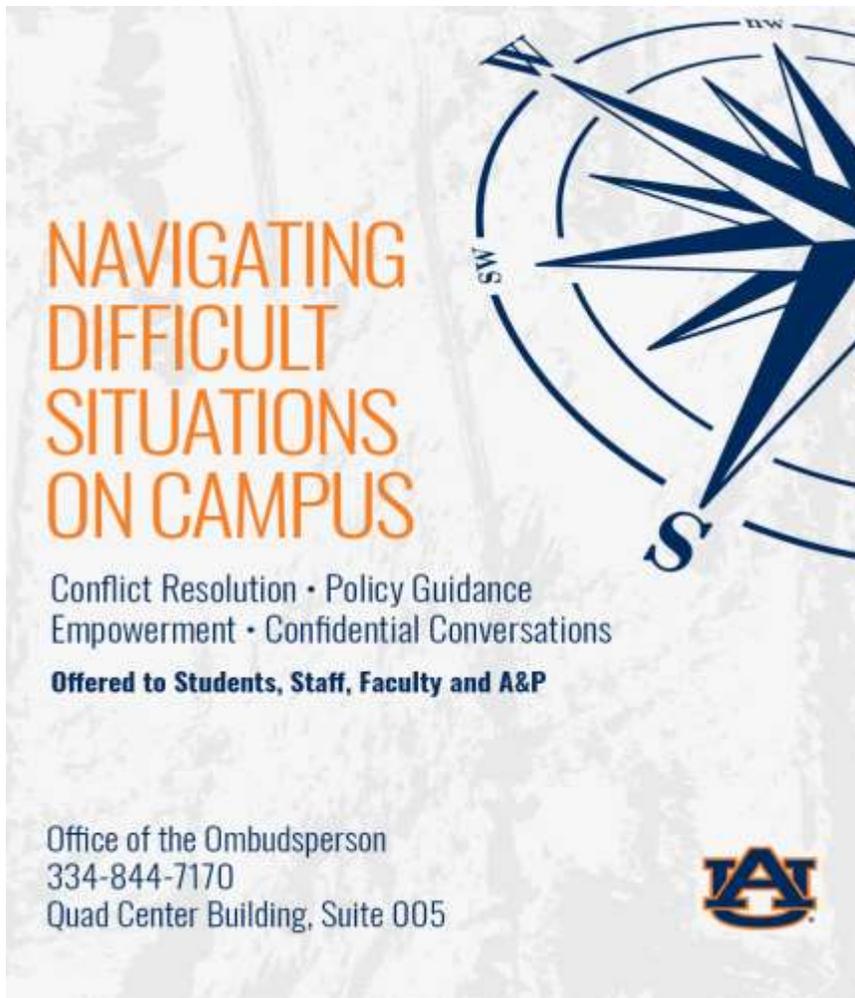
AUBURN
UNIVERSITY

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I.   INTRODUCTION

The mid-span of the 2019 – 2020 academic year began a challenging, epochal time for the people of Auburn University. Just prior to Spring Break in March 2020, the serious reality of a novel coronavirus known as Covid 19 began to be understood and acted upon. The students were instructed not to return to campus after their break and, although the university and all its members continued to work toward our common mission of instruction, research and outreach, the classrooms, concourses, eateries, and dormitories were silent and eerily devoid of the traditional, ubiquitous Auburn spirit.

The latter part of the academic year was a quiet yet enormously productive and collaborative time for Auburn University. Facing a previously unnavigated crisis, faculty, students, staff and A & P members, and administrators, worked together to achieve the mandate of the Auburn mission and meet important commitments. As a result, classes were given and completed, grades disseminated in proper order, degrees conferred upon graduating students, and employees earned and received uninterrupted paychecks. Other than by employees deemed necessary to work on campus or outreach premises, most of this work was accomplished from residences and other locations beyond the physical boundaries of Auburn University.

This effort represented teamwork at its collaborative finest. The crisis created an atmosphere where all the above referenced individuals were focused on the common goal of providing the Auburn University product and responding enthusiastically and unselfishly. As a result, there was less friction among employees than usual, and ombudsperson visitorship dipped by a third during the summer of 2020.

Office statistics were compiling at the same rate as previous years during the fall semester of 2019 – 2020 and, despite the covid challenge, throughout the spring semester too. Demand for ombuds services relaxed during the summer months, as visitors tended to be more concerned with policy questions and changes in university operations than with disagreements with other colleagues and supervisors. This writer believes that was partly due to the separation of individuals from normal workplace confines, but also because of our employees' commitment to safely confront a dangerous virus without allowing it to disrupt the necessary university work that needed to be accomplished.

The following retrospective graph demonstrates the impact the covid-related summer had on the numbers of "new" visitors to the ombudsperson office. For the 2019 – 2020 university year, 266 new visitors availed themselves of confidential ombuds services. In contrast the total new visitors seen in the previous two years, unencumbered by pandemic-related constraints, were 300 and 305, respectively.

OFFICE VISITORS
7-YEAR RETROSPECTIVE

2013 – 2014	2014 – 2015	2015 – 2016	2016 – 2017	2017 – 2018	2018 – 2019	2019 – 2020
183	195	202	271	300	305	266
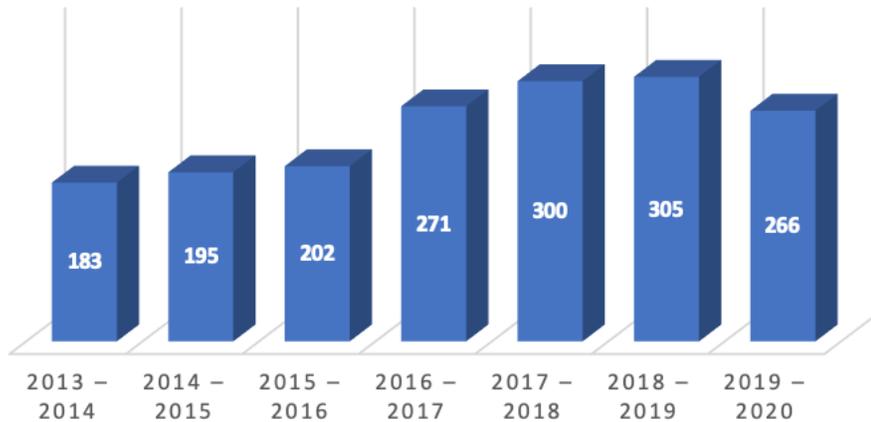
Happily, the number of complaints to the ombuds about bullying on campus have receded significantly during the last three years. This is a positive trend that will hopefully continue to work toward the enhancement of a cohesive, secure community.

Bullying Reports to Ombuds Office

2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
39	49	63	61	38	28
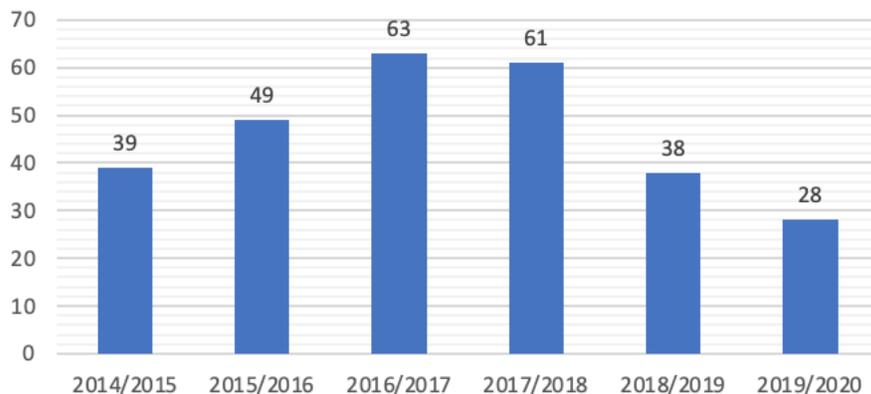
The ombuds speaks frequently towards building a stronger culture of civility amongst individuals on campus, and delivers an educational presentation on workplace bullying and mobbing approximately eight times per year. As in most of the ombuds' seminars, the bullying seminar is given through the Human Resources Development office, to units on campus upon invitation, and to individuals and small groups in the confidential, private, and safe space of the ombudsperson office.

In its effort to help campus community members work as productive team members, the Auburn University Office of the Ombudsperson practices under the Code of Ethics and Standards and Practices of the International Ombudsman Association. Pursuant to those ethics, the ombudsperson operates under four interrelated principles: 1) Independence;

2) Neutrality; 3) Confidentiality; and 4) Informality. This report will discuss the ethical requirement of Informality.

Set forth after that discussion is a non-confidential statistical report of issues and demographics heard and seen by the ombuds. Concluding the report will be lists of ombuds accomplishments, involvement with professional organizations, and educational outreach designed to help our university members work together more amicably and respectfully.

II.   INFORMALITY

The final of the four ethical cornerstones of an organizational ombudsperson office is "Informality." The ombudsperson has no university authority and is not a university decision-maker. The ombuds is instead an off-the-record help resource who assists office visitors empower themselves to resolve their issues. He or she does so through guidance and coaching, making referrals, educating, assisting communications, and helping the visitor brainstorm creative strategies with which to address their problem.

The ombuds process is voluntary. Anyone associated with the university may avail themself of the ombuds services, but it is not required that they do so. In fact, university policy stipulates that, just as no person can be retaliated against for seeing the ombuds, no person can be retaliated against for declining to see the ombuds. The process is purposefully self-determinative, and the office visitors maintain control of all decisions pertaining to them. The ombuds cannot direct any person to perform or refrain from performing any act. All choices are made by the office visitor.

The ombuds supplements but does not replace formal channels or processes. As an informal resource the ombuds will not participate in formal proceedings such as grievances, student conduct code hearings or academic grievances. The present ombuds does meet with participants involved in such formal processes to explain policy, help them understand the process, and to brainstorm ways of presenting themselves at the hearing. As a neutral and informal resource, the ombuds does not represent any individual and thus does not advocate, counsel, or provide support at a formal hearing. Pursuant to the International Ombuds Association's Code of Ethics, "The Ombudsman, as an informal resource, does not participate in any formal adjudicative or administrative procedure related to concerns brought to his/her attention." Under the following circumstances however, the present ombuds offers mediation with the parties' consent, in instances where a formal grievance process is underway.

To maintain the bright-line separation between formal processes and informal activity, all parties to the grievance proceeding and the grievance committee chair must agree in writing for the mediation to be held. Further, they must agree to suspend the formal proceeding until the voluntary mediation has concluded. Any party may withdraw from the agreement to participate in a mediation at any time and without need to provide a reason. Notice of intent to withdraw from the agreement must be given to all other parties, and that notice will automatically reactivate the formal grievance process. If the

parties fully resolve their dispute in mediation, then they will have no need to re-commence the grievance proceeding. If they are unable to negotiate a satisfactory conclusion to their conflict, they would simply return to the formal grievance process and submit their issue to a third party for a decision.

Although he or she sometimes looks into matters on a limited basis, the ombuds does not engage in formal investigations.   Moreover, the ombuds does not sit as a decider of "right or wrong" or "winner and loser."   Adjudicating such matters is the bailiwick of a judge, arbitrator, or hearing panel, not the informal ombudsperson. Likewise, the ombuds has no power to enforce policy or to sanction any person.

As stated in previous installments of ombuds ethics in this annual report series, the ombudsperson is neither a speaking agent of Auburn University nor is he or she an agent of notice for the institution. Due to the ombuds' confidentiality, independence, and informality, statements made by the ombudsperson are not imputed to Auburn University. The ombuds has no express or implied authority to bind the university to any agreement, other than in his or her capacity as director of the Office of the Ombudsperson. As manager of the office, the ombuds is empowered to purchase office supplies and other appropriate items, oversee the office budget, and to manage office personnel. The ombudsperson does not receive or keep records on behalf of Auburn University and shreds all work product notes when they are no longer needed.

The informal ombudsperson may sit in on committees and give input to committee members, administrators, or other relevant persons or bodies, but has no authority to mandate creation of policy or to vote for any person or proposal. The ombuds does not enjoy voting privileges anywhere within the institution.

The ombuds' informality allows him or her to work with individuals flexibly and in furtherance of their interests and needs. Because of the ethical requirement of informality the ombudsperson has no authority to impose a resolution upon any person, thus ensuring the self-determinative, empowering nature of the ombuds process. This assists visitors engage in creative brainstorming and invests them in resolutions designed by themselves. A greater degree of durability to their problem-solving decisions often accompanies the visitors' proactive involvement in the resolution of their issue.

III.   STATISTICAL REPORT

The following report consists of charts and statistical information regarding the different types of visitors and issues presented to the Ombudsperson office. The information contained in this report is purposely general so as to maintain the confidentiality of statements made by office visitors to the Ombuds. The issue categories are derived from the International Ombudsman Association's Uniform Reporting Categories, a copy of which is attached to this report.

OFFICE VISITOR CONTACT TYPE

Informational 6%
Responder 15%
Initiator 79%
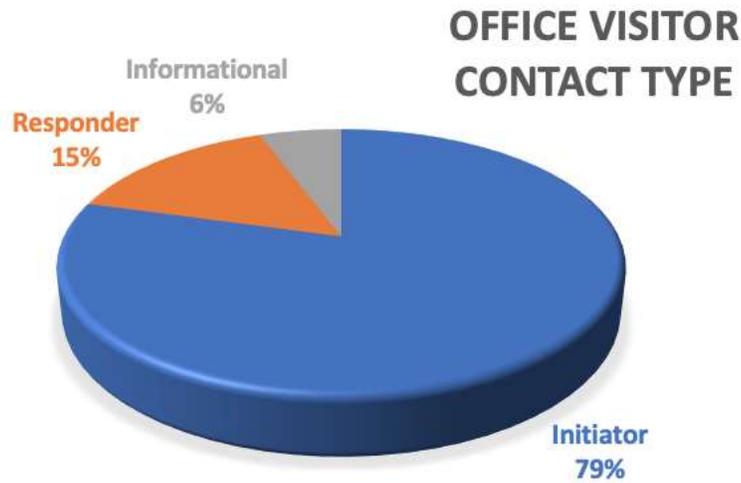
Types of Visitors	Number	Percentage
Initiators	211	79%
Responders	40	15%
Information Contact	15	6%
Total	266	100%

### Seven-Year Retrospective of Office Visitors

As stated above, use of the ombuds office abated during the Summer Semester relative to previous years. For that semester, usage declined by approximately one third. This resulted in a "new office visitor" total of 266 for the 2019 – 2020 academic year, in comparison to the new visitor total of 305 of the previous year. "New office visitors" are defined as visitors who bring a new matter to the ombuds, as described in the footnote, below.

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[1] "New office visitors" are defined as visitors who bring an initial new matter to the ombuds office. The office visitor can be a repeat visitor, but does not appear statistically in this report unless the subject matter of the subsequent visit arose from a new set of facts and circumstances. For purposes of this report, multiple succeeding appointments regarding the same facts and circumstances are not counted.

OFFICE VISITORS
7-YEAR RETROSPECTIVE
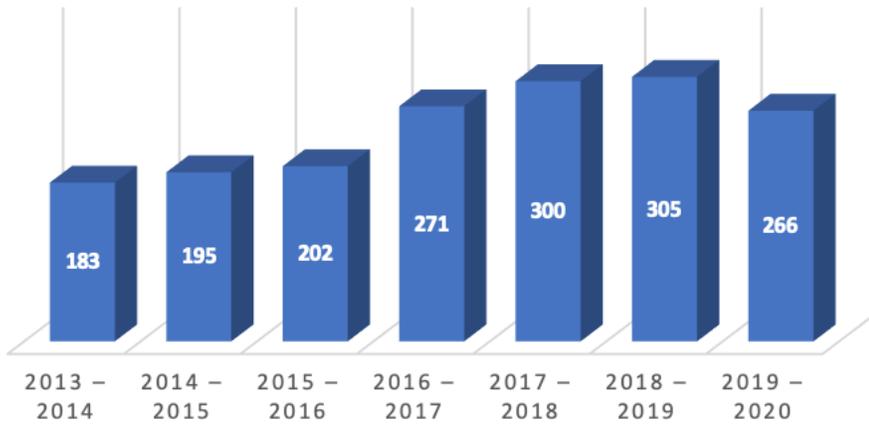
7-Year Retrospective of Visitors	Number
2013 – 2014	183
2014 – 2015	195
2015 – 2016	202
2016 – 2017	271
2017 – 2018	300
2018 – 2019	305
2019 --2020	266

2019 - 2020 Office Visitor Statistics

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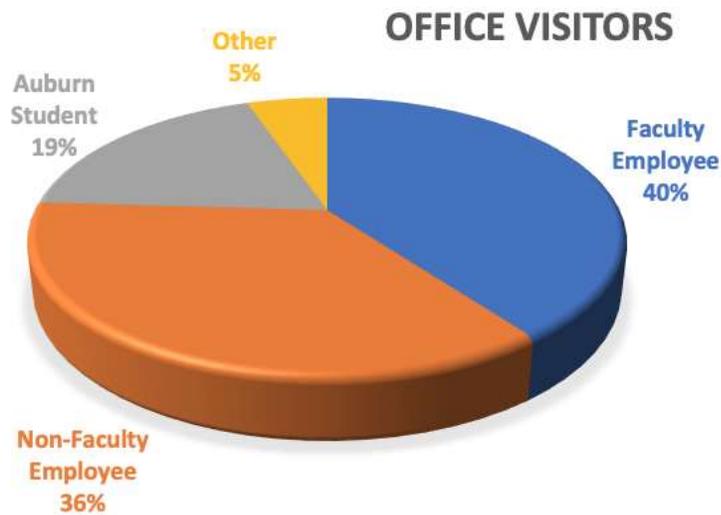
Visitor Classification	Number	Percentage
Faculty	106	40%
Non-faculty	96	36%
Students	50	19%
Other	14	5%
Total	266	100%

VISITOR TYPE

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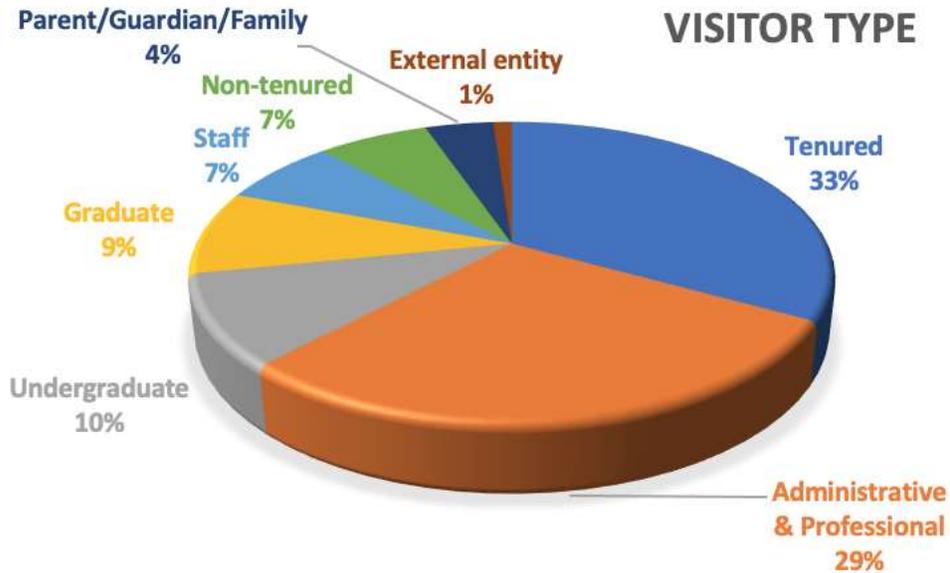
Office Visitors Expanded	Number	Percentage
Tenured Faculty	88	33%
Administrative & Professional	77	29%
Undergraduates	26	10%
Graduate Students	24	9%
Staff	19	7%
Non-tenured Faculty	18	7%
Parent/Guardian/Family	11	4%
External entity	3	1%
Total	266	100%

DEMOGRAPHICS

GENDER

OVERALL GENDER
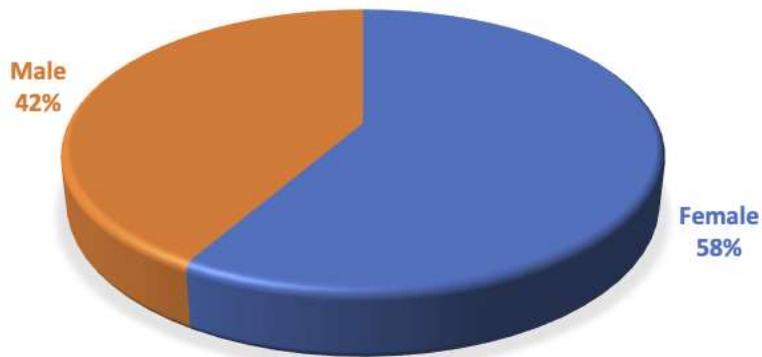
Male
42%

Female
58%

Gender – All visitors	Number	Percentage
Female	154	58%
Male	112	42%
Total	266	100%

Faculty Gender

OVERALL FACULTY GENDER
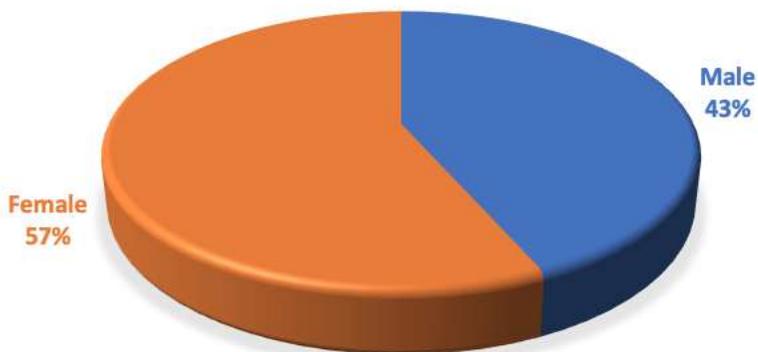
Male
43%

Female
57%

Gender – Faculty	Number	Percentage
Female	46	57%
Male	60	43%
Total	106	100%

Tenured Faculty Gender
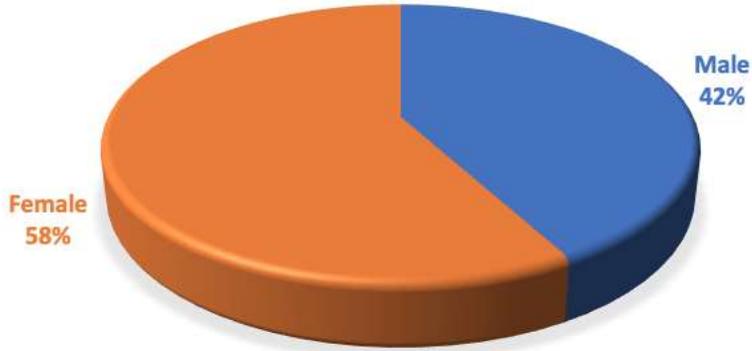
TENURED FACULTY

Gender – Tenured Faculty	Number	Percentage
Female	51	58%
Male	37	42%
Total	88	100%

Non-Tenured Faculty Gender

NON-TENURED FACULTY
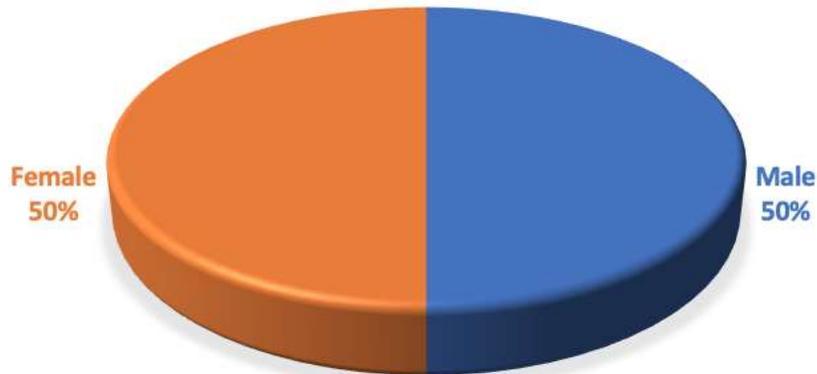
Gender – Non-Tenured Faculty	Number	Percentage
Female	9	50%
Male	9	50%
Total	18	100%

Administrative & Professional Gender

A & P GENDER
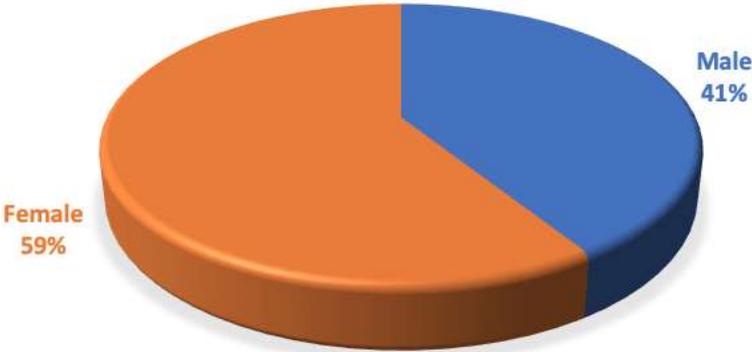
Male 41%

Female 59%

Gender – A & P	Number	Percentage
Female	45	59%
Male	32	41%
Total	77	100%

Staff Gender

STAFF GENDER
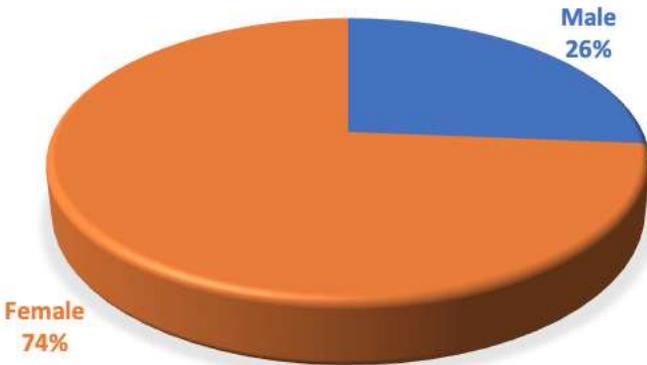
Male 26%

Female 74%

Gender – Staff	Number	Percentage
Female	14	61%
Male	5	39%
Total	19	100%

Student Gender

OVERALL STUDENT GENDER
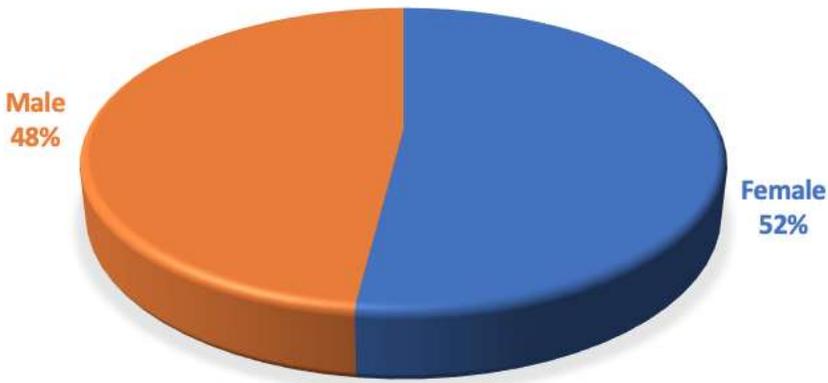
Gender – Students	Number	Percentage
Female	26	52%
Male	24	48%
Total	50	100%

Graduate Student Gender

GRADUATE STUDENTS
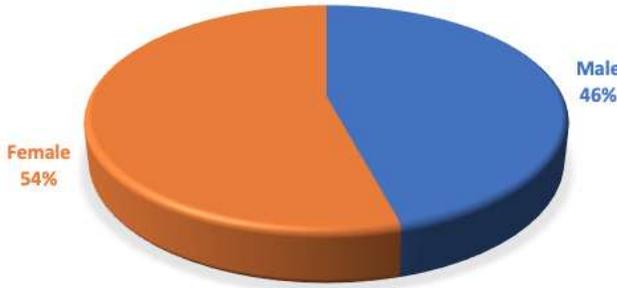
Gender – Graduate Students	Number	Percentage
Female	13	54%
Male	11	46%
Total	24	100%

Undergraduate Student Gender

UNDERGRADUATE GENDER
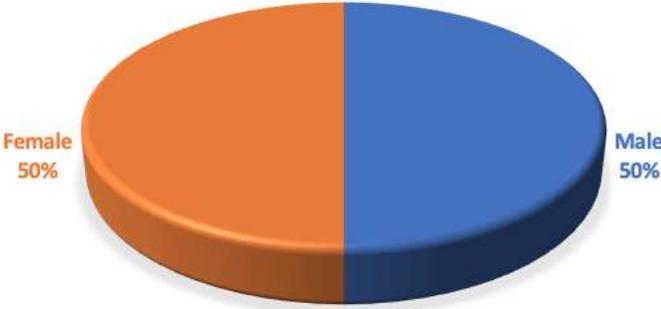
Gender – Undergraduate Students	Number	Percentage
Male	13	50%
Female	13	50%
Total	26	100%

RACE/ETHNICITY

OVERALL RACE/ETHNICITY
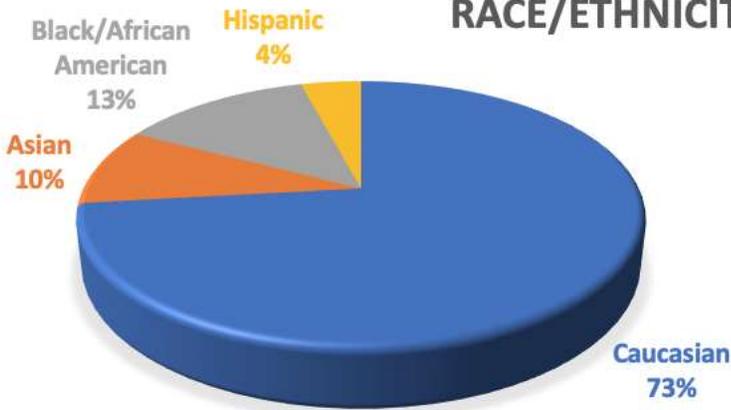
Race/Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
Caucasian	194	73%
Black/African American	35	13%
Asian	25	10%
Hispanic	11	4%
Indigenous	1	0%
Total	266	100%

Faculty Race/Ethnicity
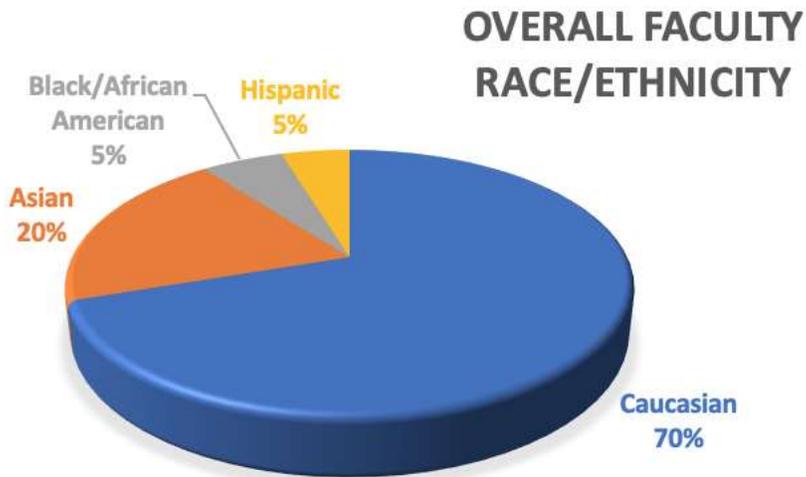
Faculty	Number	Percentage
Caucasian	74	70%
Asian	21	20%
Black/African American	6	5%
Hispanic	5	5%
Total	106	100%

Tenured Faculty Race/Ethnicity

TENURED RACE/ETHNICITY

Black/African American 6%
Hispanic 3%
Asian 24%
Caucasian 67%
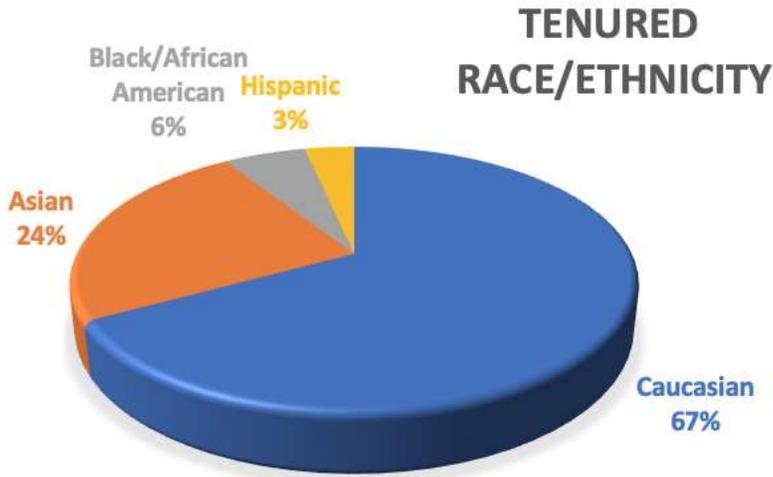
Tenured Faculty	Number	Percentage
Caucasian	59	67%
Asian	21	24%
Black/African American	5	6%
Hispanic	3	3%
Total	88	100%

Non-Tenured Faculty Race/Ethnicity

NON-TENURED RACE/ETHNICITY

Hispanic 11%
Black/African American 6%
Caucasian 83%
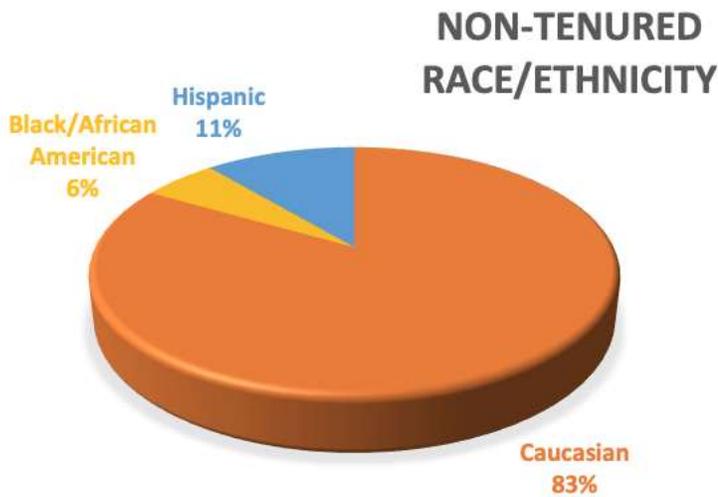
Non-Tenured Faculty	Number	Percentage
Caucasian	15	83%
Hispanic	2	11%
Black/African American	1	6%
Total	18	100%

Administrative & Professional Race/Ethnicity

A & P RACE/ETHNICITY

Black/African American 17%
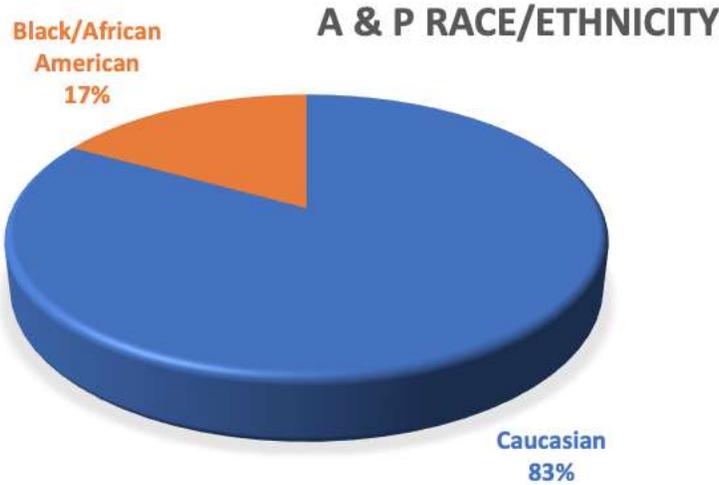
Caucasian 83%

A & P	Number	Percentage
Caucasian	64	83%
Black/African American	13	17%
Total	77	100%

Staff Race/Ethnicity

STAFF RACE/ETHNICITY
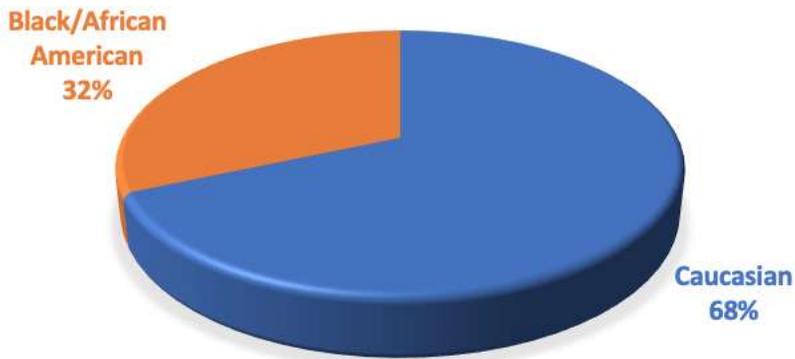
Staff	Number	Percentage
Caucasian	13	68%
Black/African American	6	32%
Total	19	100%

Student Race/Ethnicity

OVERALL STUDENT RACE/ETHNICITY
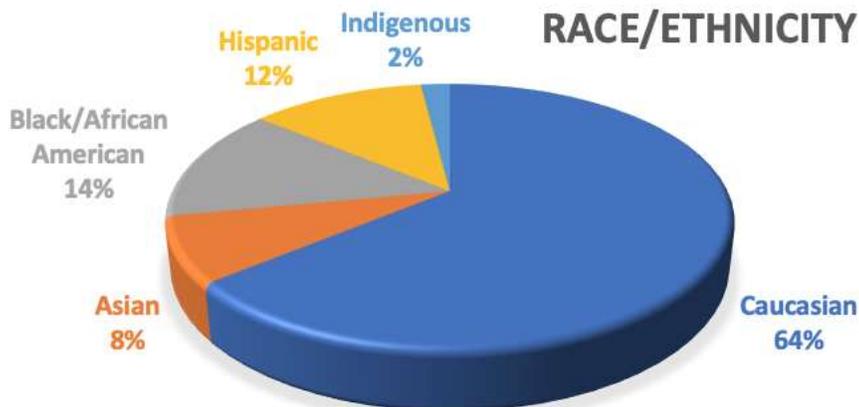
Overall Student	Number	Percentage
Caucasian	32	64%
Black/African American	7	14%
Hispanic	6	12%
Asian	4	8%
Indigenous	1	2%
Total	50	100%

Graduate Student Race/Ethnicity

GRADUATE RACE/ETHNICITY
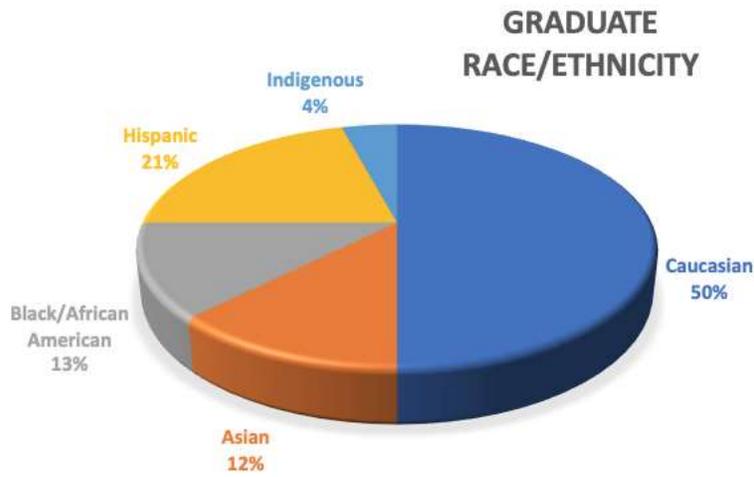
Graduate Student	Number	Percentage
Caucasian	12	50%
Hispanic	5	21%
Black/African American	3	13%
Asian	3	12%
Indigenous	1	4%
Total	24	100%

Undergraduate Student Race/Ethnicity

UNDERGRADUATE RACE/ETHNICITY

Black/African American 15%

Hispanic 4%

Asian 4%
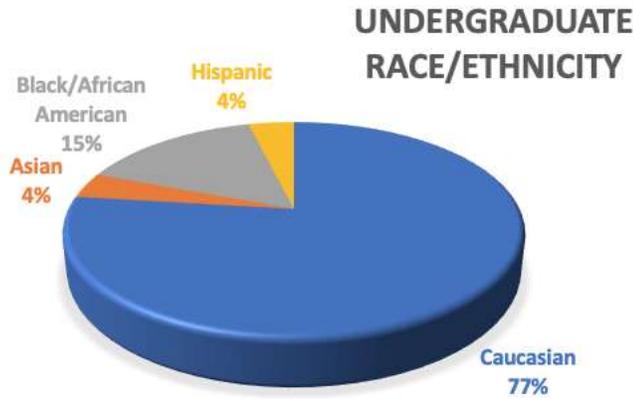
Caucasian 77%

Undergraduate Student	Number	Percentage
Caucasian	20	77%
Black/African American	4	15%
Asian	1	4%
Hispanic	1	4%
Total	26	100%

GENERAL ISSUE CATEGORIES

This report provides statistics on the types of broad concerns brought to the ombuds, such as evaluative relationships in the employment and classroom context, career challenges and progression through school, as well as legal, safety and ethical issues.
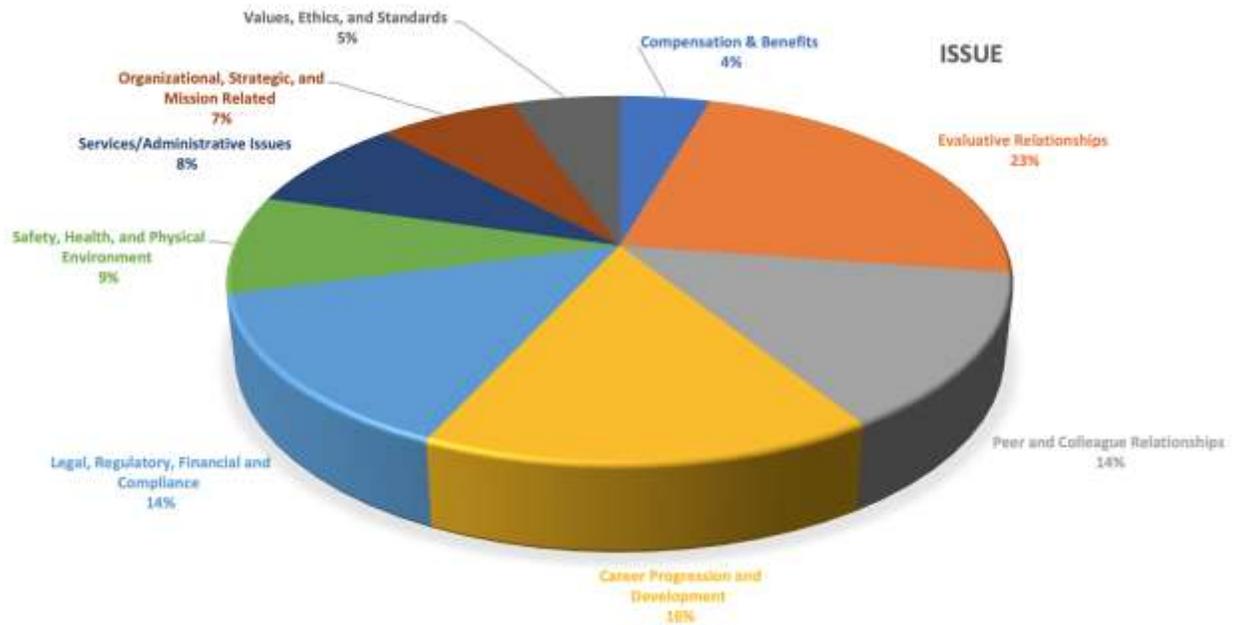
General Issue	Number	Percentage
Evaluative Relationships	77	23%
Career Progression and Development	53	16%
Legal, Regulatory, Financial and Compliance	47	14%
Peer and Colleague Relationships	46	14%
Safety, Health, and Physical Environment	29	9%
Services, Administrative Issues	28	8%
Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related	23	7%
Values, Ethics, and Standards	18	5%
Compensation and Benefits	15	4%
Total Discussions of General Themes	336	100%

TOP 7 SUBCATEGORY ISSUES (COMMON THEMES)

This entry highlights common themes on the more specific complaints heard by the ombudsperson. These entries reflect many underlying human interests, such as need for respect, fairness, integrity, dignity, trust, and safety.

TOP 7 ISSUE SUBCATEGORY THEMES
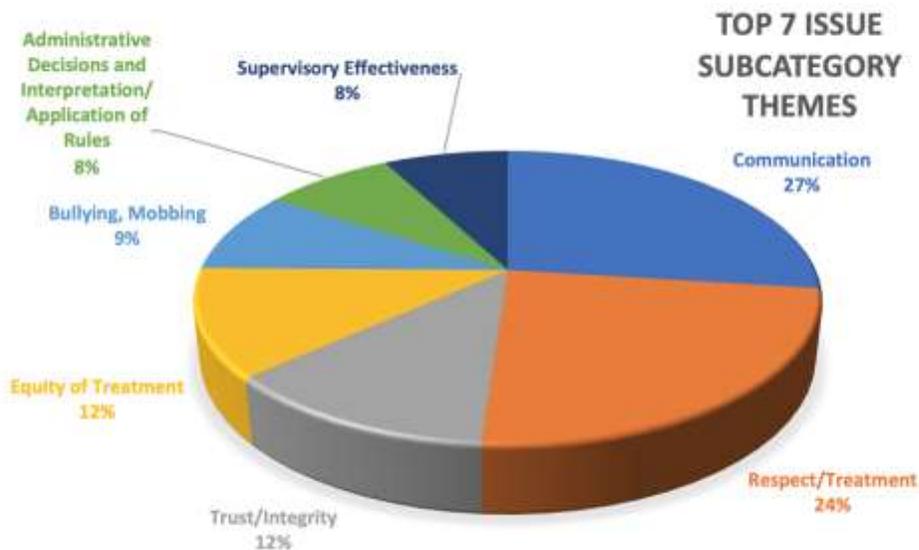
Top 7 Subcategories	Number	Percentage
Communication	84	27%
Respect/Treatment	75	24%
Trust/Integrity	38	12%
Equity of Treatment	37	12%
Bullying/Mobbing	28	9%
Administration Decisions and Interpretation/Application of Rules	25	8%
Supervisory Effectiveness	24	8%
Total Discussions of Top 7 Common Themes	311	100%

OTHER SUBCATEGORIES

Other Subcategories	Number
Assignments/Schedules	23
Diversity related	19
Harassment	19
Tenure/Position Security/Ambiguity	18
Career Progression	16
Performance Appraisal/Grading	16
Departmental Climate	14
Leadership and Management	13
Physical Working/Living Conditions	13
Discrimination	12
Priorities, Values, Beliefs	12

Other Subcategories	Number
Work Related Stress and Work-Life Balance	12
Compensation	11
Retaliation	11
Values and Culture	11
Standards of Conduct	10
Business and Financial Practices	9
Safety	9
Feedback	8
Other	8
Student Conduct	8
Job Classification and Description	7
Strategic and Mission-Related/Strategic and Technical Management	7
Use of Positional Power/Authority	7
Termination/Non-renewal	6
Behavior of Service Provider(s)	5
Career Development, Coaching, Mentoring	5
Change Management	5
Organizational Climate	5
Reputation	5
Cleanliness	4
Job Application/Selection and Recruitment	4
Privacy and Security of Information	4

OMBUDS RESPONSE

OMBUDS RESPONSE

Notify on behalf 0%
Inquiry on behalf 4%
Look into issue 3%
Upward feedback 3%
Facilitation with third parties 3%
Unit/group consultation 4%
Individual Consultation/Problem solving 50%
Referral to policy or office 33%
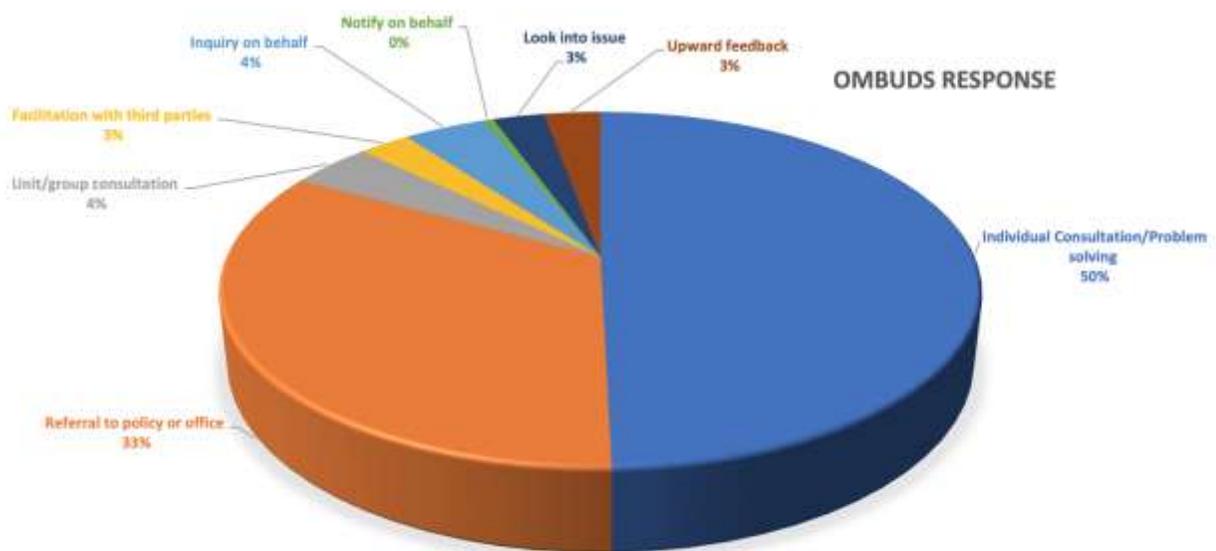
Ombuds Response	Number	Percentage
Individual Consultation/Problem solving	190	50 %
Referral to policy or office	128	33%
Unit/Group Consultation	16	4%
Inquiry on Behalf	16	4%
Facilitation with third parties	10	3%
Look into Issue	10	3%
Upward Feedback	11	3%
Notify on Behalf	2	0%
Total response	383	100%

IV.   SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Received *Valerie Craigwell White Leadership Award*, 46th Annual Conference of the California Caucus of College and University Ombuds
- Created new educational presentation, *Basic Conflict Management Techniques*
- Co-created *Ombuds as Sources of Hope -- Compassionately Exploring the Complexities of Campus Death by Suicide* with ombuds colleague for presentation at the subsequently cancelled annual International Ombudsman Association conference.
- Presented *Civility on Campus* at Faculty Senate meeting and Department of Poultry Science
- Facilitated group dialogue on free speech and LGBTQ+ issues
- Presented *The Art and Productive Capacity of Active Listening* seminar for Auburn University Research Administration
- Presented *Basic Conflict Management Techniques* at Department of Psychological Sciences and Auburn Student Veterans Association
- Guest lectured and conducted mock mediations with students in School of Communications and Journalism undergraduate classes

V.   PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND SELECTED CONFERENCES ATTENDED

- Member, International Ombudsman Association
  - Member, Programming and Planning Committees, 15th Annual Conference
  - Certified Organizational Ombudsman Practitioner
  - Mentor Ombudsman
- Member, California Caucus of College and University Ombuds
  - Attended 46th Annual Conference in Pacific Grove, California
- Member, Alabama State Court Mediator Roster

VI. EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

The Ombudsperson speaks to numerous groups throughout the year to inform them of the services offered by the Ombuds office, and to provide educational seminars and workshops. The Ombuds is available for and solicits invitations from all groups to appear as a speaker or to present conflict resolution seminars. Seminars and workshops presented in the 2019/2020 academic year were:

- *Basic Conflict Management Techniques*

- *Civility on Campus*

- *Teamwork: Building Results Collaboratively and Amicably*

- *Understanding Bullying and Mobbing in the Workplace and Academe*

- *Working with High Conflict Persons*

- *The Art and Productive Capacity of Active Listening*

- *Identifying Underlying Interests: Tips from Nature, History and the Cinema*

- *NBZ – The No Bullying Zone* (for AU camp counselors)

- *Cooperative Negotiation Strategy*, with Dr. Stefan Eisen of the Maxwell AFB War College

VII. COMMUNITY SERVICE

- Mediate civil cases at Lee County District Court
- Sewed cloth surgical masks for hospital personnel, first responders, colleagues, friends, and community members

VIII. CONCLUSION

The 2019 – 2020 academic year is one that will be remembered with sadness for the loss of family members, friends, and colleagues. The reaction to the incursion of Covid 19 by students, faculty, administrators, and employees of Auburn University was extraordinary, however, as they collaborated in a near-instantaneous pivot towards a practically 100% online modality of instruction and day-to-day communications. The ombuds feels fortunate to have helped members of our campus community understand covid safety protocols, policy changes, and to interact productively towards the furtherance of our mission.

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)

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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)

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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)

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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)

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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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