



Report on the
Faculty Ombuds Office
July 2015 through June 2016

*Prepared by Steve Madden, Ph.D., faculty ombuds, and submitted to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee:
B. Bunton, J. French, A. Barnes, K. Jagannathan; and to Ralph Byington, provost and executive vice president*

June 30, 2016

Executive Summary

This is the ninth report from the Faculty Ombuds Office to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and the Provost and Executive Vice President. This is my first report as the current ombuds and it is intended to serve as a continuation (yearly activities report), an evaluation of trends and issues affecting faculty, and my recommendations for consideration towards positive change for the faculty, the campus community and the ombuds office. This report and earlier reports can be accessed at <http://www.coastal.edu/ombuds/reports.html>.

Background

The Coastal Carolina University (CCU) Faculty Ombuds Office was established in March 2008 as a pilot at the recommendation of the Faculty Welfare and Development Committee, a standing committee of the Faculty Senate. Since 2008 the office has offered services to all faculty members with Charmaine Tomczyk initiating and serving as faculty ombuds on a part-time basis. She earned her certification as an Organizational Ombuds Practitioner (CO-OP) from the International Ombudsman Association in January 2012.

In the May 2012 Faculty Senate meeting, the faculty ombuds position was approved to become a permanent position effective December 2012. The approved motion stipulated “the individual serving as Faculty Ombuds would serve no more than two consecutive three-year terms.” This faculty position administratively reports to the provost and serves the Faculty Senate. In April 2015, following an internal search conducted by the Faculty, Welfare and Development Committee, voted by the Faculty Senators and approved by Provost Byington, Steve Madden, professor of communication, was appointed faculty ombuds beginning July 2015.

Ombuds services at CCU strive to adhere to the International Ombudsman Association’s (IOA) Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics and Best Practices (www.internationalombudsmanassociation.org). These include the principles of confidentiality, independence, impartiality and informality. The Faculty Ombuds Office is not a “place of notice” for official University reporting, as stated in its charter, <http://www.coastal.edu/ombuds/charter.html>.

Activities

Consultations and Facilitations

During 2015-2016 (July through June) there were 63 contacts made for ombuds services, which is slightly lower than the previous year. This is due in part to the transitioning aspect of getting the word out about the new ombuds and perhaps people being cautious knowing that a new person has filled this role. The bar graph below illustrates the numbers of contact each year since the inception of the office.

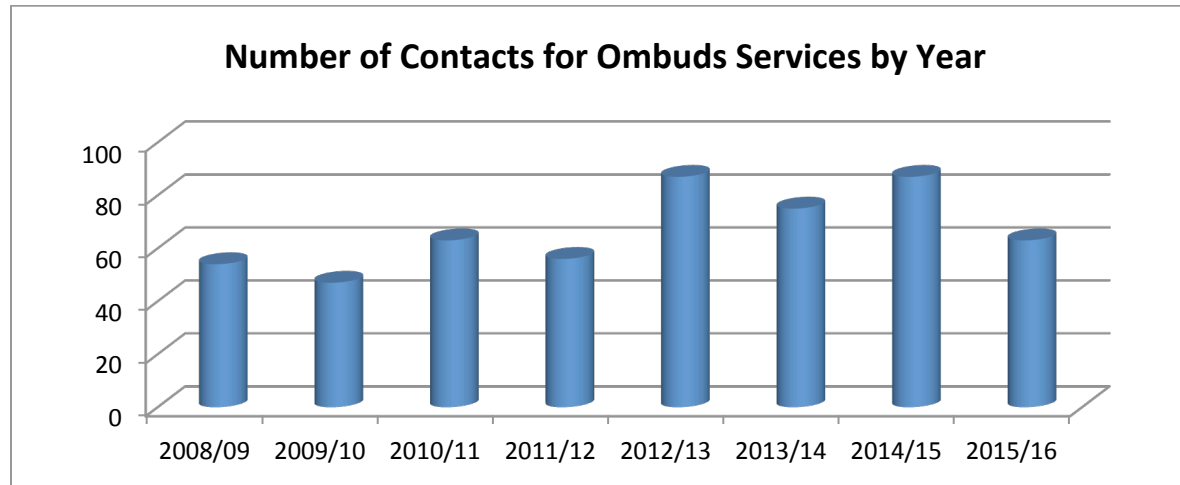


Figure 1

The three most frequently presented categories of issues as classified by the International Ombudsman Association (IOA) for 2015-2016 were Peer and Colleague Relationships; Evaluative Relationships; and Values, Ethics and Standards. The first two listed here were in the top three last year as well. Details regarding these issues are noted later in this report.

The types of ombuds assistance provided (in order of prevalence) continued to be:

- Individual consultations - Offering strategies and options to help a visitor resolve his/her issues and analyzing the entire scope and ramifications of the issues involved to develop effective strategies and action plans,
- General information - Answering questions regarding policy, procedures and practices or referring faculty to specific departments or policies and procedures relevant to their expressed concerns,
- Group facilitation and/or informal mediation - Meeting with two or more faculty members to analyze common concerns, encouraging positive communication between and among colleagues and supervisors or within departmental units for improved workplace relationships and productivity, and
- Shuttle diplomacy wherein the ombuds (with the permission of the visitor) serves as a go-between for third party intervention to clarify issues and facilitate resolutions between individuals.

Faculty Development / Informational Events

The faculty ombuds presented an informational session, entitled Faculty Collegiality, through CeTEAL in Spring 2016 and presented an ombuds services seminar at the CCU Academic Leadership Seminar in June 2016. This seminar adds to the education and training development of new CCU mid-level administrators.

During Fall 2015 New Faculty Orientation, the ombuds staffed an EXPO table distributing brochures and general information about CCU ombuds services. Increasingly, new faculty members are more familiar with or aware of ombuds services and their beneficial role in the workplace. The Spring 2016 ombuds survey showed that the majority of respondents found out about the ombuds office, largely through three methods: a faculty colleague, the Faculty Senate, or the new faculty orientation.

Campus Service

The ombuds continues to contribute as a member of the now standing committee to review and revise the Faculty Manual. Several recommended revisions were forwarded to the Faculty Senate and subsequently approved with the continuing purpose of reviewing and improving the Faculty Manual.

The ombuds continues to keep informed about the CCU Anti-Bullying Working Group and researching reliable methods of measuring and assessing campus climate.

The development of a Faculty/ Staff Discussion Board was announced by the Provost as another vehicle by which faculty and staff can lodge concerns, questions and comments on workplace issues. To date the online Board has had minimal use and should be re-evaluated regularly for effectiveness.

The ombuds was invited by Associate Provost John Beard to present information about ombuds services and trends to the New Chairs Academy in January 2016.

Satisfaction Survey

The annual spring ombuds survey administered by the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment and Analysis yielded 143 respondents compared to 114 respondents the previous year. The Spring 2016 survey showed that approximately 80% of those who contacted the ombuds office last year were satisfied or very satisfied with the services provided. About one-third of these responded that if they had not used the ombuds office, then they would NOT have talked to anyone about the issue. Another third responded that they would have brought the issue up through a formal channel. Another 13% noted they would have left the University. The results of this survey (without the “comments section” so as to insure anonymity and confidentiality) are noted in Appendix A of this report. Appendix B of this report compares five years of ombuds survey responses.

Ombuds Training

The current faculty ombuds attended the International Ombuds Association's Foundation of Organizational Practice training conference July 2016. Additionally the ombuds bought and used three training webinars from the IOA in early Fall 2015. These training sessions provide current, helpful information applicable to the daily work of ombudstry.

Additionally, the ombuds was invited to serve as an IOA Journal manuscript committee member. After phone interviews with the IOA journal editorial staff it was recommended that the current ombuds serves on this committee to establish the groundwork for eventually applying for an editorial board member position. The ombuds read and completed one journal review edition in Spring 2016.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been listed for a few years and still hold a priority in the opinion of the current ombuds. A few minor changes have been made but overall recommendations will be pursued with productive and positive intent.

1. Given that evaluative and peer relationships have been the highest areas of concern over several years, it is evident that effective communication is still a concern, both verbal and written, among and between colleagues and supervisors. It is recommended that the University **establish a campus wide communication** protocol that sets a standard for regular and consistent communication in all units. The protocol might include guidelines for email communiqués – both style and content – (especially as more online faculty and programs are developed), guidelines for conducting collaborative meetings, and respectful conversations; all of which uphold the CCU Code of Ethical Conduct and promote professional courtesy. The prevalence of bullying, abrasive behaviors and disrespectful treatment should be examined and sanctions enforced for such conduct. The CCU Strategic Plan should incorporate such a communication protocol suitable to our stated values and vision.
2. A proposal to **expand the Faculty Ombuds Office services to staff (and then students)** was drafted and submitted to the Provost for consideration under the previous Ombuds and remains a priority with the current Ombuds. Each year there are several requests from staff for ombuds services, which have been provided. Conversations should continue to pilot the expansion proposal and assess its usage. Further, the IOA, the professional organization committed to supporting ombuds worldwide through training, certification, networking, mentoring and guidance in standards, codes and best practices, has been working on a professional proposal to begin certifying ombuds offices. This movement is getting closer to an actual **proposal from the IOA. Once finalized and ratified by the organization, it is recommended that CCU pursue this certification.**
3. To build trust and encourage transparency, it is recommended that the ombuds office work with other campus units to develop and provide personnel **development training to explore examples of and sanctions for violations of the CCU Code of Ethical Conduct**, CCU's foundation and framework for a responsible, healthy workplace upholding ethical behavior. The CCU Code of Ethical Conduct interpretations and applications require a more wide-reaching dialogue for better intervention. Further, examples of sanctions for violations of this code (and the processes leading to sanctions and appeals) must be clearly written and explained. If the campus

community currently does this for its students' Code of Conduct, then we should lead by example and clarify protocol for employees, too. Through these efforts our community will function more effectively and follow these codified CCU professional standards.

4. It is recommended that the University continue the expansion of **its mandatory training to include scenarios that focus on how to identify behaviors (cognitive and affective) that may lead to violence and how to take action to reduce an escalating scene or to seek intervention to reduce risk of harm.** A preventative approach may be as helpful as a checklist during the event or post-event. Also, creation and wide distribution of a preparedness plan and resources for this and related emergencies would be reassuring for the campus community (in combination with active shooter training). Also, expanded instruction on Title IX that includes scenarios and case studies to exemplify appropriate action by “responsible persons” could be beneficial.

July 2015 - June 2016 Activities

I. Contacts

One contact is defined as one visit to the Faculty Ombuds Office: an email, a phone call or another communication to the ombuds. This year there were sixty three (63) contacts. These contacts represented individuals from all colleges, the library and other academic offices. The distribution of contacts by unit varied compared to last year as illustrated in Figures 2a and 2b below.

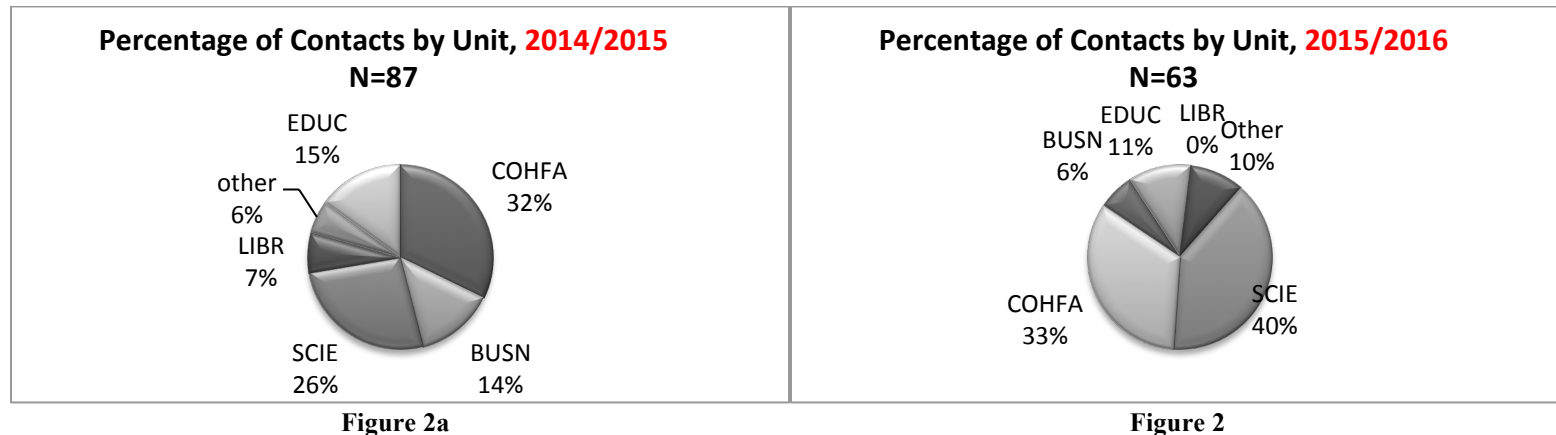


Figure 3 below shows the distribution by unit of total hours provided to faculty contacts.

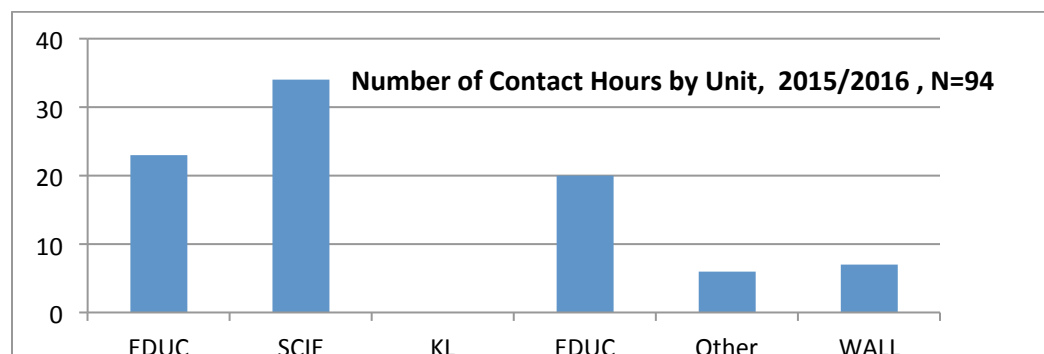


Figure 3

The prevalent method of contacting the ombuds continues to be visits to the office in Sands Hall 111. Whenever possible and most convenient, face-to-face meetings are the ombuds's preferred method of contact. Because email and voicemail are not considered confidential methods, and knowing that phone messages are linked to the email system, faculty members are encouraged to leave messages that simply provide their names, numbers and convenient times for a return call.

The Faculty Ombuds Office location is ideal for inconspicuous meetings that require confidentiality and anonymity. Visitors have no difficulty finding the office. The Other data category tracked in Figure 4 below includes meetings elsewhere on and off campus. Whichever method of contact is used, the ombuds's response time is typically within 24 hours, or sooner.

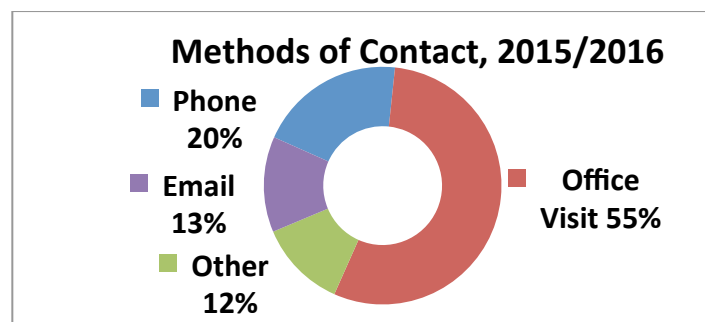


Figure 4

The Faculty Ombuds Office website (www.coastal.edu/ombuds) has been regularly updated to include links to other CCU and current external resources as well as new book materials added to the ombuds bibliography available in Sands Hall 111 and some in the Kimbel Library collections (with call numbers provided).

II. Topics of Concern / Issues Presented

In keeping with the IOA Principles and Standards, no individuals' names, detailed records, or related documents are maintained on any contacts, cases or issues presented to the ombuds. Statistics are collected as aggregate data to identify trends or patterns that may demonstrate needs to be addressed in broader contexts.

The rubric used to categorize issues of concern is the *Uniform Reporting Categories of the International Ombudsman Association (IOA)*. These nine IOA broad categories are defined below and their frequency is expressed in Figure 5. Individual contacts often contain multiple issues simultaneously and all are counted in the data presented here. With a new ombuds this year comparisons of categories are shown numerically but not as approximate trends.

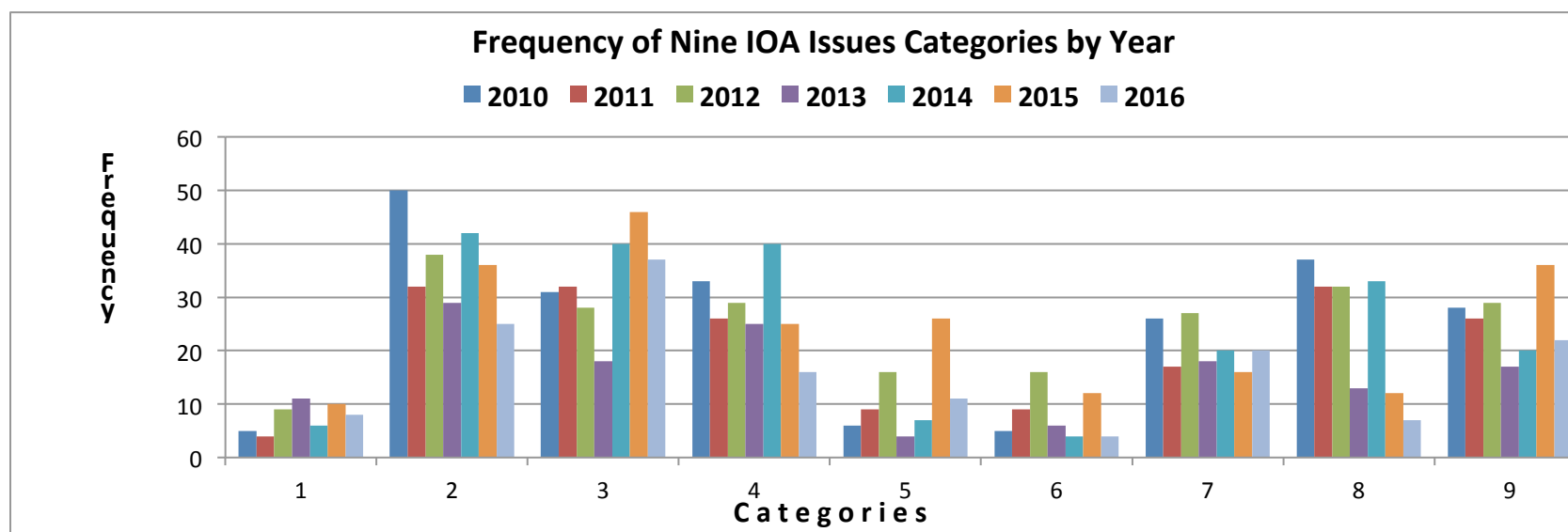


Figure 5

1. Compensation & Benefits - (Presented 8 times)

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

Most frequent concerns: Delays in processing compensation paperwork; loss of state-supported health and other benefits in the summer when faculty leave employment in May; (COBRA option is expensive, especially for families). There is a consistent perception that other universities offer this summer benefit to their nine-month faculty.

2. Evaluative Relationships - (Presented 25 times)

Defined as: Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries arising between people in evaluative relationships (i.e. dean-department chair, department chair – faculty member and peer review groups - faculty member)

Most frequent concerns: Disagreements between faculty members and supervisors regarding performance appraisals and ratings; summative not formative reviews with little advice on improvements; department's priorities are perceived to be misaligned with individual performance expectations and career progression; minimal timely feedback provided to faculty throughout year.

3. Peer and Colleague Relationships - (Presented 37 times; includes cases of bullying and/or mobbing)

Defined as: Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries involving peers or colleagues who do not have a supervisory-employee relationship (e.g., two faculty members within the same department or conflict involving members of a faculty group).

Most frequent concerns: Unprofessional behaviors including disrespect and poor treatment, perceived ruthless competition; yelling and harsh language; avoidance of communication leading to mistrust, loss of cooperation and integrity.

4. Career Progression and Development (Presented 16 times)

Defined as: Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about dismissals for cause and non-reappointment or tenure denial, as well as processes and decisions regarding entering and / or leaving a position or added responsibilities, (i.e., nature of and changes in current assignments, job security, and separation).

Most frequent concerns: Career options after non-reappointment, especially when termination is immediate; frequent changes or additions to job expectations and performance levels; lack of clarity in some evaluative rubrics; lack of or absence of mentorship.

5. Legal, Regulatory, Financial and Compliance (Presented 11 times)

Defined as: Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries that may create a legal risk (financial, sanctions, etc.) for the organization or its members if not addressed, including issues related to waste, fraud or abuse; federally mandated compliance requirements (such as Title IX, harassment, hostile work environment, active shooter protocol).

Most frequent concerns: Over ¼ of these concerns were perceived harassment; others were perceived hostile work environment including abrasive, bullying treatment by colleagues and supervisors.

6. Safety, Health, and Physical Environment (Presented 4 times)

Defined as: Questions, concerns, or issues about Safety, Health and Infrastructure-related issues.

Most frequent concerns: Work-related stress and work-life balance due to a pattern of unprofessional treatment; insufficient mandatory training addressing only reactive moves (such as, after the violation or incident) instead of teaching preventative measures to be proactive.

7. Services/Administrative Issues (Presented 20 times)

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

Most frequent concerns: Perceived arbitrary judgments by administrators who disregard faculty recommendations.

8. Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related (Presented 7 times)

Defined as: Questions, concerns or issues that relate to the whole or some part of an organization's mission, goals, objectives and/or initiatives.

Most frequent concerns: Excessive use of positional power and authority without faculty input prior to decisions; lack of rationale expressed or without request for feedback before implementation; negative organizational and departmental climates.

9. Values, Ethics, and Standards (Presented 22 times)

Defined as: 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.

Most frequent concerns: Most frequent concerns: shifts in values and campus culture due to rapid growth; no apparent sanctions imposed for violations of Code of Ethical Conduct.

Summary

Activities and services of the Faculty Ombuds Office continue to provide a benefit to CCU faculty and to exercise fairness, respect, integrity and confidentiality. The 2016 Ombuds Faculty Survey confirms the satisfaction of faculty contacts to the office and its programs. Faculty contacts to the Ombuds Office expressing concerns over evaluative relationships and colleague interactions continue to be areas of strong and frequent conflict. Monitoring related campus climate issues from employees' viewpoints should be measured regularly through reliable surveys and other methods.

Serving as faculty ombuds during my first year, I am appreciative of the support from the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and the Provost in making ombuds services available to all faculty. It is my sincere hope that the office's services will be sustained, utilized, and expanded based on the needs of the faculty and that the staff of CCU will be given the benefit of a staff ombuds – and eventually CCU students to have a student ombuds. With this comprehensive model, evident at many academic institutions, the CCU community will gain the advantages of ombuds services and extend service equitably to all of its members.

Appendix A to Faculty Ombuds Report, 2016: Faculty Ombuds Online Survey, Spring 2016 (Responses without comments)

Faculty Ombuds
Spring 2016
N=143

Have you contacted the Faculty Ombuds Office, either this academic year or in the past?		
	#	%
Yes	21	14.7%
No	122	85.3%

Are you familiar with the Faculty Ombuds Office and the services they provide? (Asked of the respondents who answered that they have not contacted the Faculty Ombuds Office.)		
	#	%
Yes	71	58.2%
No	51	41.8%

Overall, how satisfied are you with the services the Faculty Ombuds Office has provided you? (Asked of the respondents who answered that they have contacted the Faculty Ombuds Office.)		
	#	%
Very Satisfied	9	45.0%
Satisfied	9	45.0%
Neutral	0	0.0%
Dissatisfied	0	0.0%
Very Dissatisfied	2	10.0%

When did you contact the Faculty Ombuds Office? (Asked of the respondents who answered that they have contacted the Faculty Ombuds Office.)		
	#	%
During 2015/2016	6	28.6%
Prior to 2015	15	71.4%

How did you find out about the Faculty Ombuds Office? (Asked of the respondents who answered that they have contacted the Faculty Ombuds Office or that they are familiar with the Faculty Ombuds Office.)		
	#	% of 21 respondents
Faculty colleague	28	133.3%
Faculty Senate	18	85.7%
New Faculty Orientation	32	152.4%
Ombuds brochure	8	38.1%
Ombuds website	8	38.1%
University or College meetings	40	190.5%
University news release	5	23.8%
Other	13	61.9%

**Percentages may not total to a 100 due to multiple responses.*

In what <i>other</i> ways did you find out about the Faculty Ombuds Office?
Through the Step Up Bystander Intervention training. About 2 years ago, I was teamed up with the previous Ombuds in presenting the Step Up Program to some students, and in preparing for the presentation, I got to know her and her function on campus.
Charmaine announced the Ombuds services at various meetings.
A presentation by someone in department meeting.
the person serving as Ombuds at the time I sought help was a good friend with whom I had spoken often. She was a natural choice as a confidant.
I know about this office from previous institutions where I have worked. I learned about your specific office from colleagues in my Department.
University meetings
I knew the previous ombudsman.
email
From the previous Ombudsman
I knew the Ombuds when appointed
Met the ombuds rep.

Faculty Ombuds
Spring 2016
N=143

I've contacted the Faculty Ombuds Office and... (Asked of the respondents who answered that they have contacted the Faculty Ombuds Office.)											
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Not Applicable
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
I was able to get an appointment with the ombuds promptly after contact.	16	80.0%	4	20.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1
I was able to meet with the ombuds for a reasonable amount of time.	16	80.0%	4	20.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1
The ombuds gave me the opportunity to express my concerns.	15	75.0%	5	25.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1
The ombuds appeared to understand the situation.	14	70.0%	4	20.0%	2	10.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1
The ombuds helped me identify and evaluate my options.	13	65.0%	4	20.0%	1	5.0%	2	10.0%	0	0.0%	1
The ombuds provided me with valuable information to help me make my decisions.	11	55.0%	4	20.0%	3	15.0%	2	10.0%	0	0.0%	1
Through my interactions with the ombuds, I developed skills or learned approaches that might help me resolve future problems.	8	42.1%	3	15.8%	3	15.8%	4	21.1%	1	5.3%	2
The ombuds was courteous and respectful.	18	90.0%	1	5.0%	1	5.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1
The ombuds was neutral, unbiased and fair.	13	65.0%	4	20.0%	2	10.0%	1	5.0%	0	0.0%	1
I found the ombuds conversant and knowledgeable about relevant institutional policies and procedures.	13	65.0%	6	30.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	5.0%	1
I trust the ombuds to maintain my confidentiality.	15	75.0%	2	10.0%	0	0.0%	3	15.0%	0	0.0%	1

Faculty Ombuds
Spring 2016
N=143

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: *(Asked of the respondents who answered that they have contacted the Faculty Ombuds Office or that they are familiar with the Faculty Ombuds Office.)*

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
I would refer others to the Faculty Ombuds Office.	34	37.4%	28	30.8%	21	23.1%	1	1.1%	7	7.7%

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: *(Asked of the respondents who answered that they've not contacted but are familiar with the Faculty Ombuds Office.)*

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Although I have not used the Faculty Ombuds Office, if I needed their services, I would access them.	24	33.8%	28	39.4%	12	16.9%	3	4.2%	4	5.6%

If you had not used the Ombuds Office, what would you have done regarding the issue? *(Asked of the respondents who answered that they have contacted the Faculty Ombuds Office.)*

	#	%
I would not have talked to anyone about the issue.	3	15.0%
I would not have brought the issue up as quickly.	3	15.0%
I would have brought the issue up through a formal channel.	6	30.0%
I would have left the University.	1	5.0%
Other	7	35.0%

What *other* action would you have taken?

It didn't matter. His course of action still got me dismissed
I seriously contemplated suicide...
I feel as though I would have handled it emotionally which would have led to a more unprofessional approach.
I would have talked to my spouse and mentor.
I would have sought other advice or counsel before moving forward with the matter at hand.