

UNLV

**OMBUDS
OFFICE**

Quarterly Summary of Activities

April 1, 2023 to June 30, 2023

Introduction

This report summarizes the activities of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) Ombuds Office in the second quarter of calendar year 2023.

This was a quarter of increased usage and growing word-of-mouth for the Ombuds Office. As our busiest quarter yet, including our busiest month yet, the second quarter of 2023 set a new high water mark for the office.

The office's primary functions are to listen to concerns, educate on options and conflict resolution, provide mediation and facilitation services, and advocate for systemic change when needed. The [Ombuds Office website](#) has a complete list of the services and programs it offers; these range from informational sessions about the office itself to one-on-one conflict coaching to interactive workshops—in person or online—that promote productive conflict resolution.

In short, if you are stuck in a difficult situation, or feel you and those around you can do a better job of communicating, the Ombuds Office probably has something that would benefit you.

UNLV's Ombuds Office is operated in accordance with the [International Ombuds Association \(IOA\) Code of Ethics](#) and [Standards of Practice](#). This entails embodying the fundamental principles of *independence* in structure and function; *impartiality*; *informality*, in not participating in any disciplinary or legal processes; and *confidentiality*.

Just because we had a busy quarter doesn't mean we are going to coast. I am committed to making this an office that is accessible to and used by everyone in the campus community. If you aren't sure whether the office can help, I hope that this report gives you a better idea of what we do. If you are uncertain about the office's scope or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. Our team is here to support and guide you through any challenging situations you may be facing.

Sincerely,
David G. Schwartz
David G. Schwartz, Ph.D.
Ombuds
University of Nevada, Las Vegas



Overview

This quarterly report provides an overview of the visitor trends and common themes that were addressed by the Ombuds Office during the second quarter of calendar year 2023 (April 1 to June 30).

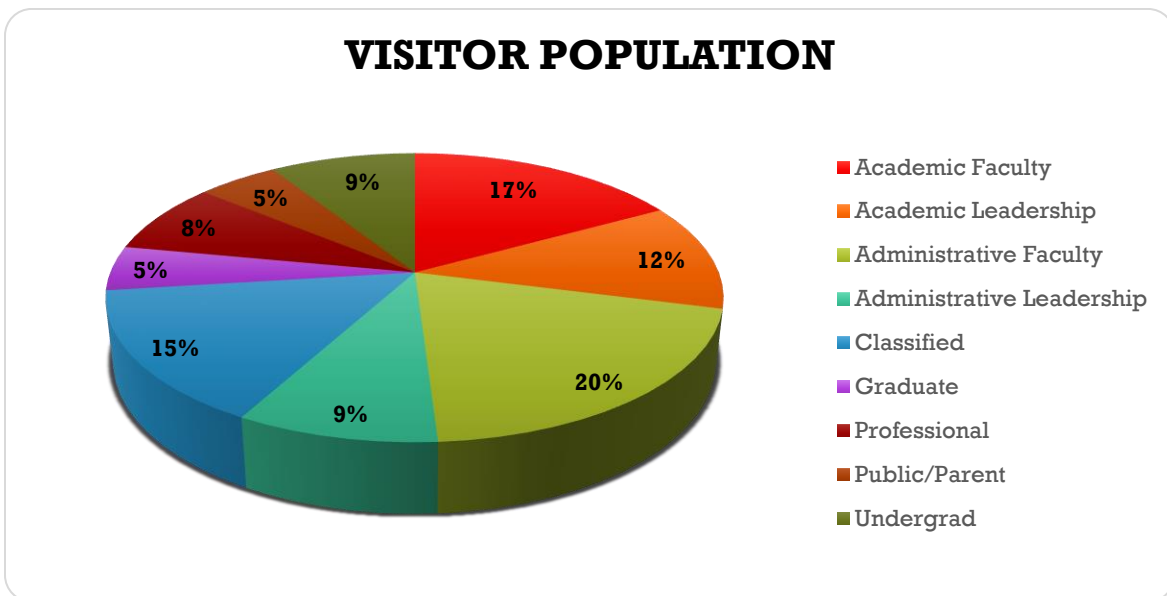
Throughout this quarter, the Ombuds Office actively assisted individuals by offering consultations and organizing various activities to promote teamwork. These activities included team-building exercises, workshops, guided conversations, and mediation. As a reminder, the Ombuds doesn't "solve" problems for people. Rather, people discuss options with the Ombuds and gain skills and perspective to resolve issues themselves.

Visitors and Contacts

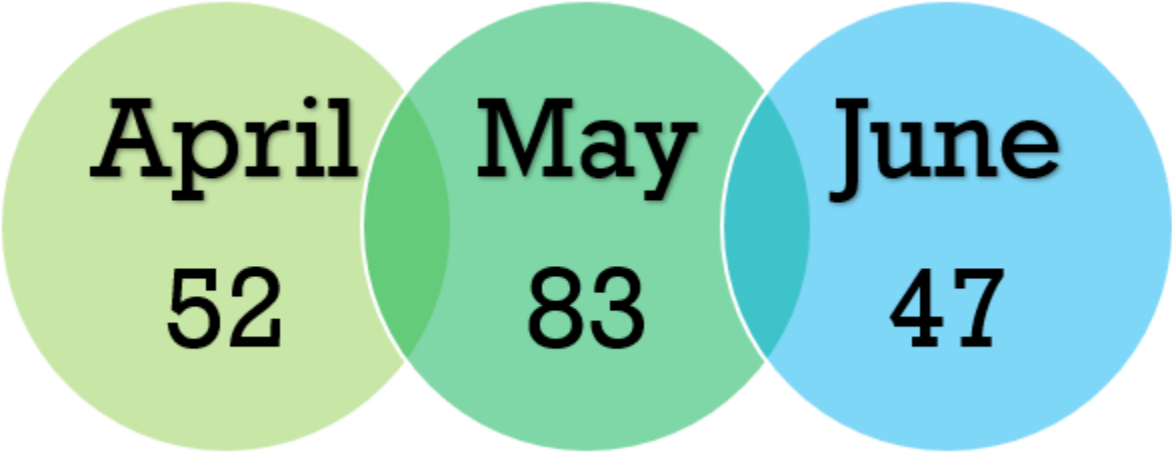
In this report, a "visitor" refers to someone who seeks individual services from the Ombuds Office. This includes one-on-one meetings held in person, over the phone, or virtually. Individuals who participate in workshops conducted by the Ombuds Office are not defined as visitors.

To effectively monitor and analyze its engagement with visitors, the office uses the term "contact" to encompass any form of interaction or meeting, regardless of whether it is conducted in person or remotely. It's important to note that a single visitor may have multiple contacts with the office over time. This tracking method allows the office to gain insights into the frequency and types of interactions occurring, ensuring that visitors receive the necessary support and guidance. Visitors during this quarter are categorized as follows:

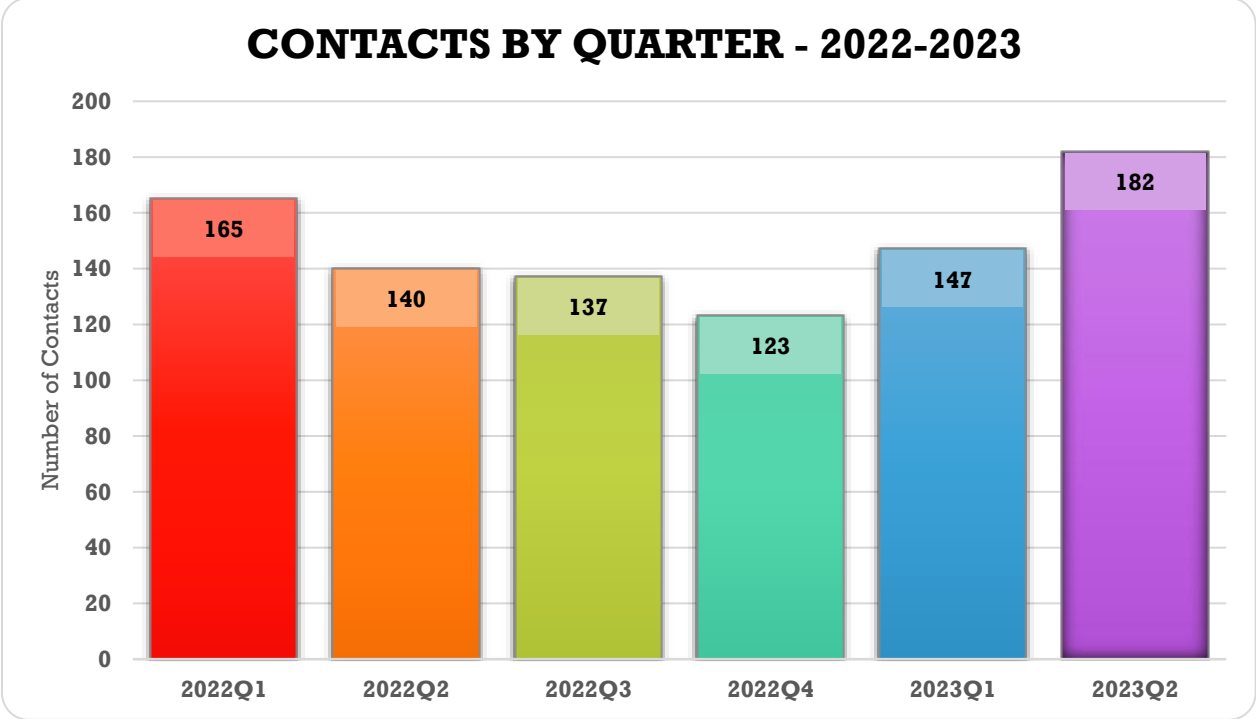
- 20 percent Administrative Faculty
- 17 percent Academic Faculty
- 15 percent Classified Staff
- 12 percent Academic Leadership
- 9 percent Administrative Leadership
- 9 percent Undergraduate Students
- 8 percent Professional Students
- 5 percent Graduate Students
- 5 percent Community Members and Parents



In this quarter, our office recorded a total of 182 contacts, representing various interactions with individuals seeking our services. When comparing to last year's second quarter count of 140, the increase in contacts indicates a consistent and continued use of our services by the UNLV community.

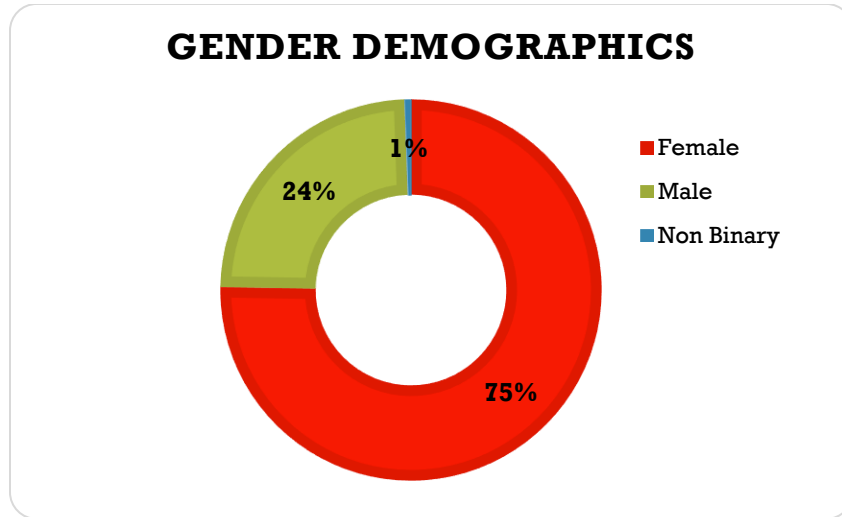


It is noteworthy that 39 percent of these contacts were returning visitors who had previously engaged with our office earlier this year. Returning visitors seeking further assistance is an encouraging indication of satisfaction with our office's services. It suggests that they are satisfied with the support and guidance they received initially, leading them to seek ongoing assistance when needed. This positive trend highlights the effectiveness of our services in meeting the needs of the office's visitors.

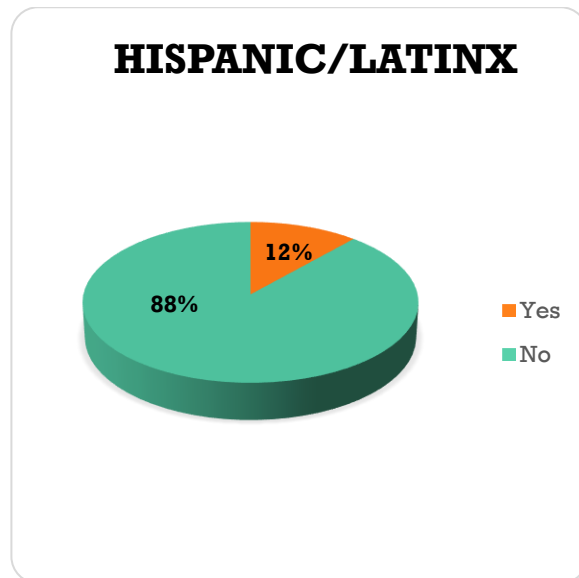
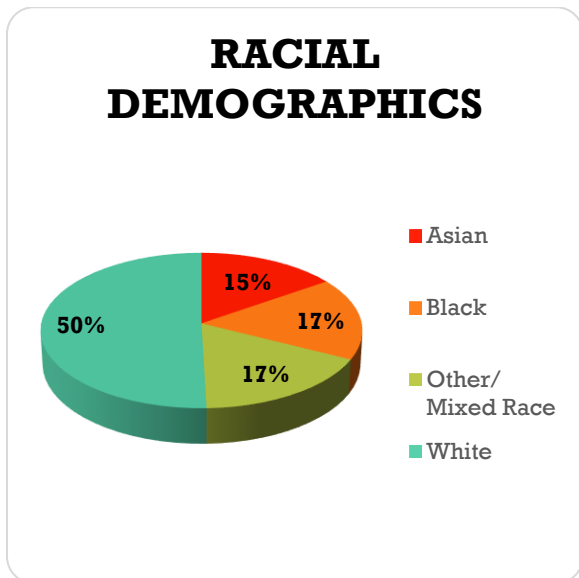


Office Visitors Served: Demographics

Visitors to the office in the second quarter were primarily female, making up 75 percent; males accounted for 24 percent; and 1 percent identified on non-binary. This is in line with the usage of the office over the past year. The office continues to be a space that is open to all in the university community.

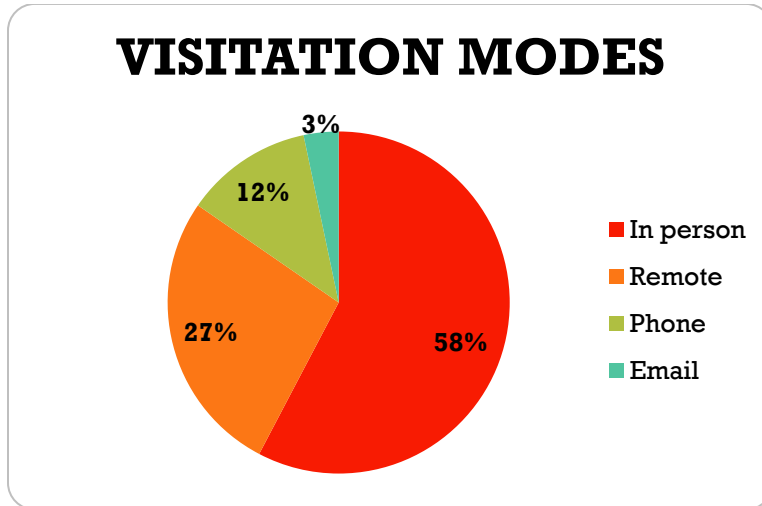


Among the entire visitor population, 50 percent identified themselves as White, making it the largest group served. Visitors who identified Black as well as those who identified as belonging to other or mixed-race backgrounds, each constituted 17 percent of the visitor population respectively. Fifteen percent of the visitors self-identified as Asian. Twelve percent of the visitors reported their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latinx.



Visitation Modes

The Ombuds Office, in accordance with IOA standards and applicable laws, is committed to maintaining strict confidentiality regarding any information shared during discussions. This means that whatever visitors disclose, as well as the fact that they sought assistance from the ombuds, will be kept confidential.



Throughout the second quarter, a substantial portion of our contacts, 58 percent, preferred in-person meetings. This percentage aligns with the trends observed in previous quarters. This also reflects our commitment to cultivating personal connections and facilitating meaningful dialogue within units and teams.



27 percent of individuals chose to engage with our office remotely via video chat. This format provides a convenient and flexible option for visitors to access the office's resources from the comfort of their own locations. Virtual meetings offer a convenient option for individuals who may face geographical barriers, such as remote work, or have time constraints.



12 percent of visitors chose to meet via telephone, which highlights the diverse needs and preferences of our visitors. By offering multiple avenues of contact, such as phone calls, we ensure accessibility and convenience for individuals who may have constraints preventing them from attending in person meetings.



A minority, comprising 7 percent of contacts, opted to use email as their preferred mode of communication, and 1 percent chose to engage with us through chat. It is important to note that both email and chat are generally discouraged as mediums for confidential discussions due to their inherent limitations, as they can't guarantee the same level of security and privacy as other communication channels.

This data further emphasizes the importance of maintaining a robust and efficient communication system to cater to the varying preferences of the UNLV community. Overall, the office has remained flexible in meeting preferences and accommodating a variety of work schedules.

Top Visitor Concerns by Category

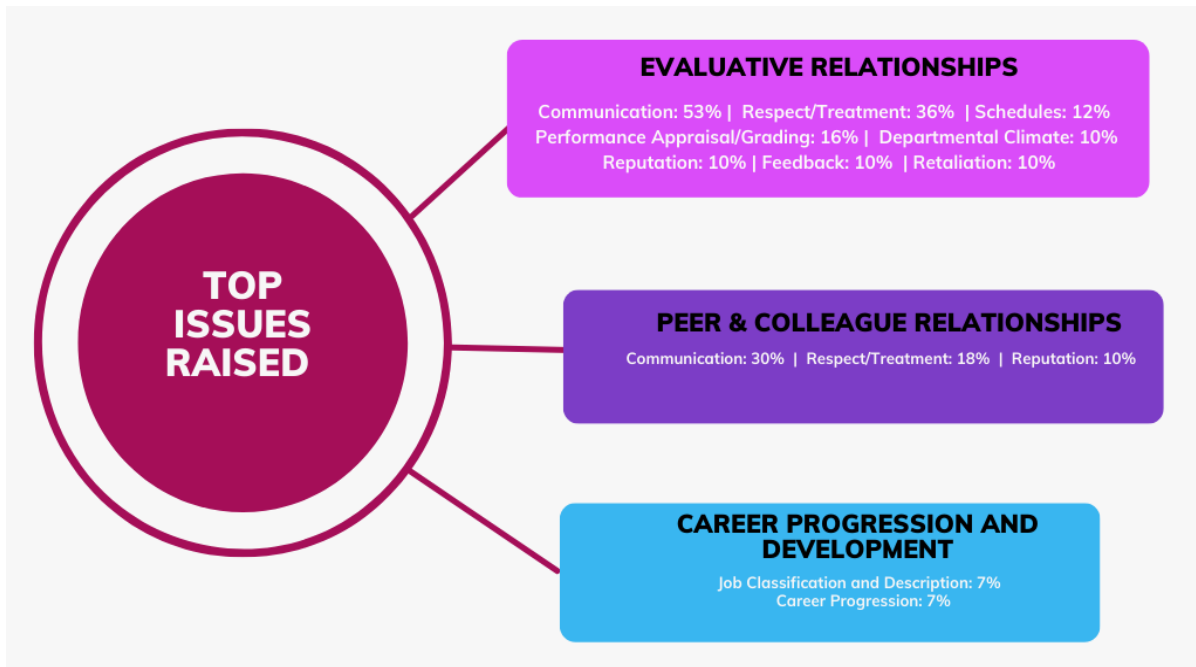
To safeguard the confidentiality of its visitors, the Ombuds Office tracks the concerns brought forward through non-specific demographics. This method allows for the identification of common trends and patterns within the campus community without disclosing specific individual details.

Adhering to IOA best practices, the ombuds logs those concerns using the IOA's Uniform Reporting Categories (URC). The URCs reflect concerns typically brought to ombuds offices around the world. These issues are classified under nine main categories:

1. Compensation & Benefits
2. Evaluative Relationships
3. Peer and Colleague Relationships
4. Career Progression and Development
5. Legal, Regulatory, Financial, and Compliance
6. Safety, Health, and Physical Environment
7. Services/Administrative Issues
8. Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related
9. Values, Ethics, and Standards

Within those groupings, concerns are further organized into dozens of discrete classifications. For example, an issue relating to an employee's job classification is identified as **1.a**; a concern about communication between an employee by their supervisor is **2.e**; comments and behaviors perceived as insensitive by peers is **3.g**; questions about career development, coaching and mentoring are **4.k**.

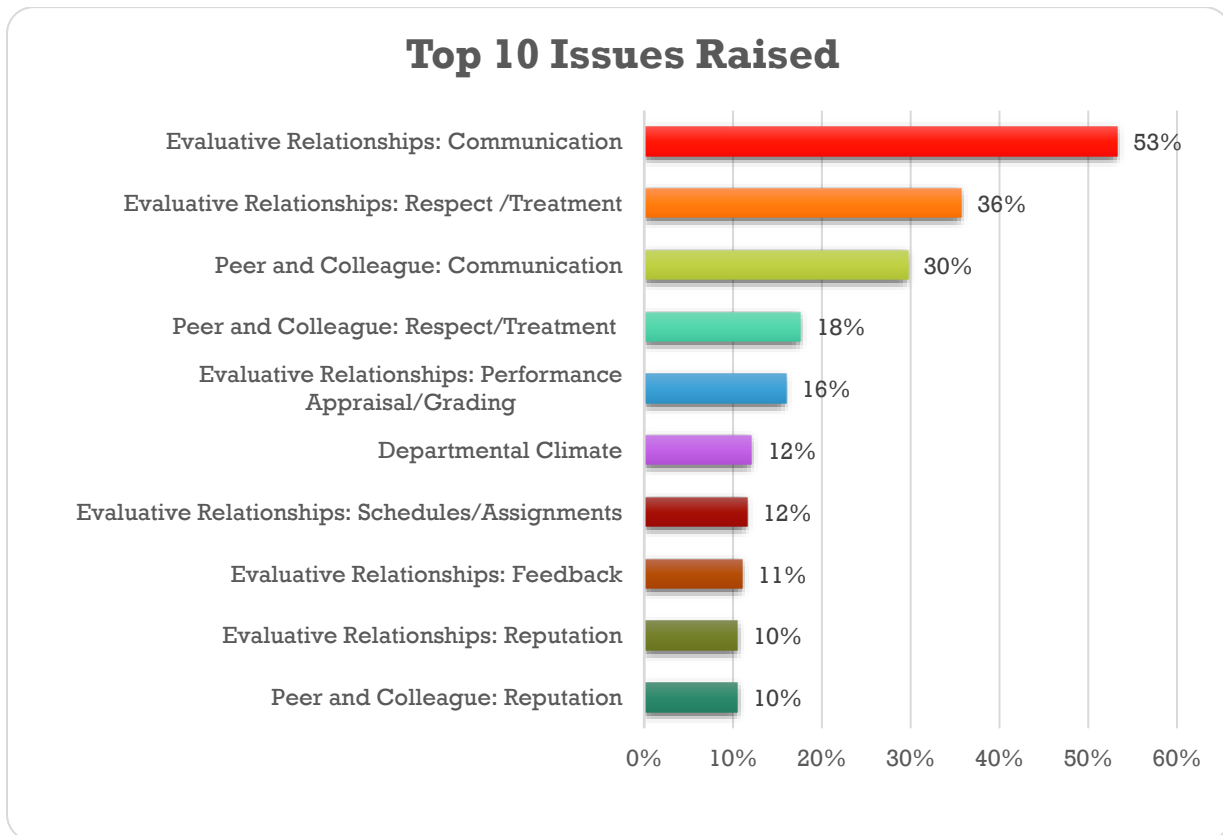
Visitors often report multiple concerns, in which case multiple category codes are recorded.



Visitor concerns raised during the second quarter included several categories, with a particular focus on **Communication and Respect/Treatment within Supervisory Relationships**. The primary concern, accounting for 53 percent of cases, revolved around the quality and/or quantity of **Communication in Supervisory Relationships**. Additionally, 36 percent of visitors reported issues regarding **Respect/Treatment** in these relationships, making it the second most common concern.

Other prominent categories related to supervisory relationships included: **Performance Appraisal**, which constituted 16 percent of cases. **Departmental Climate**, which saw a notable decrease compared to the previous quarter and accounted for 12 percent of cases. **Schedules/Assignments**, which accounted for 12 percent of cases. **Feedback**, which constituted 11 percent of cases. **Reputation**, which accounted for 10 percent of cases. **Retaliation**, which also accounted for 10 percent of cases.

Visitors also expressed concerns related to their interactions with colleagues. Thirty percent of visitors reported issues with **Communicating** effectively with colleagues, while 18 percent expressed concerns about **Respect/Treatment** from their colleagues. Additionally, 10 percent of visitors were concerned about the impact of rumors and/or gossip on their professional **Reputation** among colleagues. Visitors also raised concerns regarding career progression and development with 7 percent respectively related to **Job Classification and Description** and **Career Progression**.



Workshops, Presentations Facilitated Discussions



In the second quarter, the Ombuds Office organized and facilitated a variety of engaging events to support our campus community. These included 9 interactive workshops and guided discussions, as well as 4 informational presentations. Throughout the quarter, participants had the opportunity to explore various topics related to enhancing communication and conflict resolution skills. The workshops and discussions covered areas such as interpersonal communication, effective listening, recognizing different conflict styles, understanding group conflicts, and addressing interpersonal conflicts.

Whether you are seeking to improve your communication skills, resolve conflicts, or enhance your understanding of various conflict styles, these events offer a wealth of knowledge and support. Explore the full list of workshops and informational sessions on our [website](#).

Spotlight: Shadowing

The ombuds has made a deliberate effort to gain a deeper understanding of how the UNLV community accomplishes their work by engaging with various departments through shadowing. The ombuds' approach to shadowing is to observe individuals passively and unobtrusively in their natural work environment. For the ombuds, shadowing extends beyond learning about other people's jobs. By actively reaching out and meeting people in their own spaces, the ombuds hopes to also increase awareness about the office by informing individuals about the role of the UNLV Ombuds Office. If you would like the Ombuds to spend some time in your unit, please [email us](#).



In Closing

The Ombuds Office exists to serve UNLV by providing an informal channel for conflict resolution and strives to increase collegiality, happiness, and satisfaction on campus.

The Ombuds facilitates and never dictates; visiting the office is confidential and nonjudgmental.

In presenting this report, we aim to shed light on the depth and significance of the work performed by our office. By showcasing the scale of our impact, we hope to foster a deeper appreciation for the value of confidentiality and the transformative power it holds in facilitating productive resolutions and fostering harmonious relationships within our university community.

The Ombuds Office continues to develop ways to serve the UNLV community, through individual consultations, group work, and online resources. If you have any questions or are interested in having the Ombuds work with you to develop a workshop, facilitated discussion, or other programs for your unit, please contact us at ombuds@unlv.edu.

For more information about Ombuds Office programs and services, please visit the [Ombuds Office website](http://www.unlv.edu/ombuds).



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