

UNLV Ombuds Office

Quarterly Summary of Activities

April 1, 2022 to June 30, 2022

Introduction

I have been UNLV's Ombuds for over a year now (I took office on June 1, 2021). Together with Ombuds Office Admin Tifara Rachal, I have had the privilege of working with many people in the campus community, individually and in groups. This report will share some of the work of the office over the past quarter.

In summary, the office performs four primary functions: its staff is present to *listen* to members of the university committee who have concerns; it can *educate* visitors to the office about their options in a specific situation and help groups develop conflict resolution strategies; to offer *mediation* and facilitation services, and to *advocate* for systemic change when warranted. 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.

UNLV's Ombuds Office is operated in accordance with the [International Ombuds Association's 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*.

I believe that, in consonance with ombuds professional best practices, the regular release of information on the office's work that safeguards the confidentiality of those who use it, is the best avenue for accountability. The [Ombuds Office Annual Report 2022](#), which presents information about the office's operations throughout calendar 2021, was well-received on campus. This present report, summarizing the office's work over the second quarter of 2022, has been made available via the [Ombuds Office website](#) and provided to the Ombuds Advisory Panel and UNLV's leadership for their review.

I hope that this report will spread the word about how the Ombuds Office serves campus. If you have any questions about what the office can do for you, do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

David G. Schwartz

David G. Schwartz, Ph.D.

Ombuds

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Overview

In the second quarter of 2022, the Ombuds Office continued to aid a number of visitors. The Ombuds worked with individuals in one-on-one consultations and in groups, facilitating team-building activities such as group presentations, workshops, and facilitated conversations.

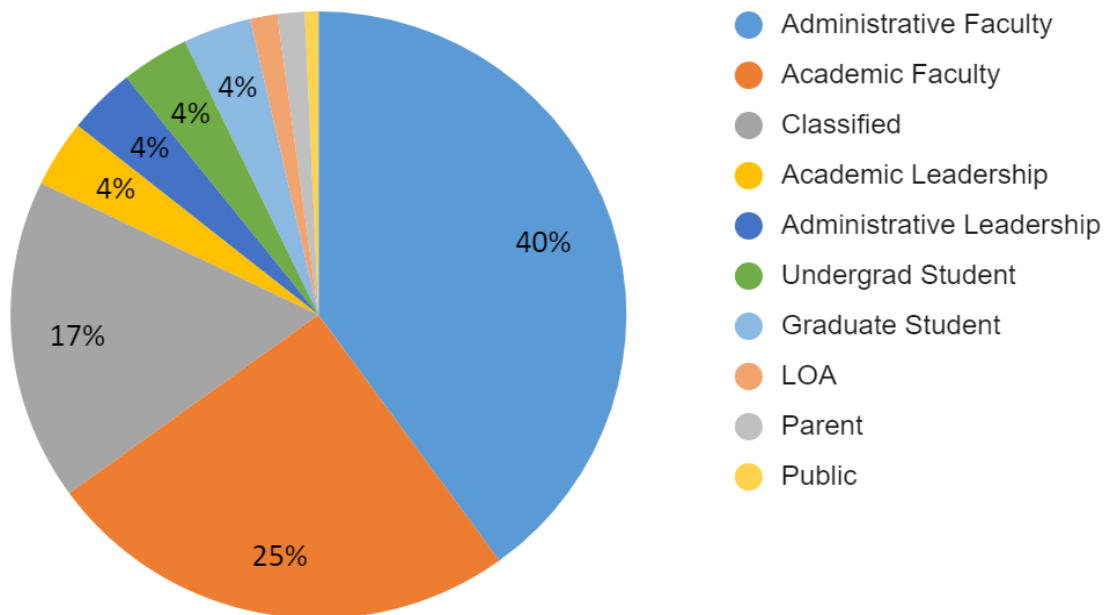
Visitors and Contacts

In this report, a visitor is defined as someone who utilizes the Ombuds Office for individual services, including one-on-one meetings, whether in person, by telephone, or remotely. Unlike the previous quarter, which saw a marked increase in visitors, this quarter saw a steady number across the period.

For tracking, the office counts any meeting or interaction, whether in-person or remote, with a visitor as a “contact.” One visitor may have multiple contacts with the office. Visitors were categorized as follows:

- 40 percent Administrative Faculty
- 25 percent Academic Faculty
- 17 percent Classified Staff
- 4 percent Academic Leadership
- 4 Percent Administrative Leadership
- 4 Percent Undergraduate
- 4 Percent Graduate
- 3 percent combined: Letter of Appointment employees, parents, and public visitors.

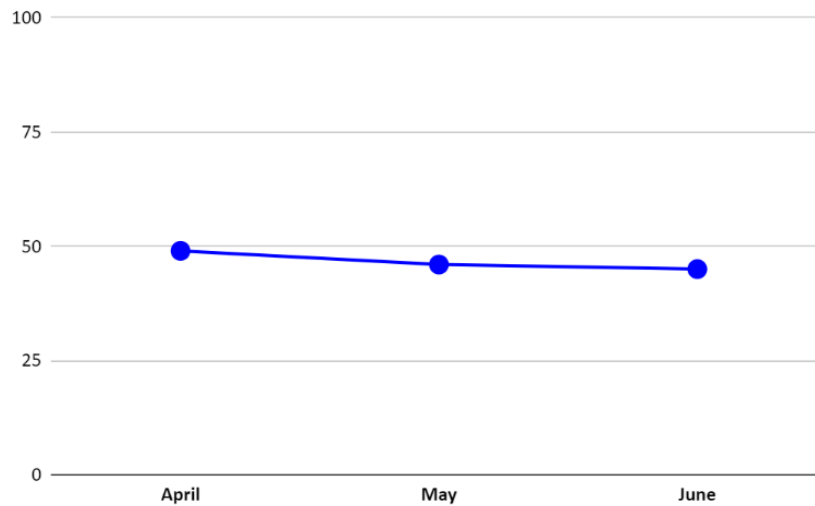
Ombuds Visitors Served



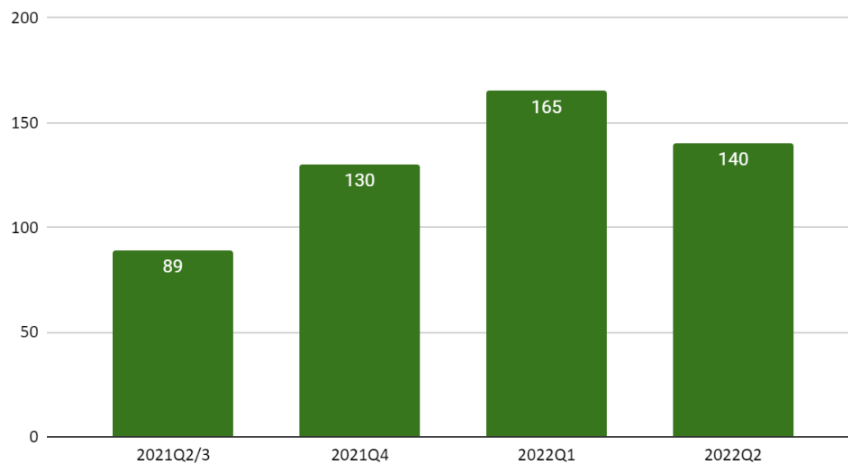
The Ombuds Office has had 304 contacts for the calendar year to date. Between April 1 and June 30 of 2022, the office had 140 contacts.

As is seen in the chart below, the number of contacts per month has remained relatively stable as the year has progressed. The average number of contacts per month, 47, is slightly less than last quarter's average of approximately 55 contacts. However, a lower number of visitors was expected as the campus population lessens significantly during the summer months as many of the academic faculty are off contract.

Contacts By Month - Second Quarter 2022

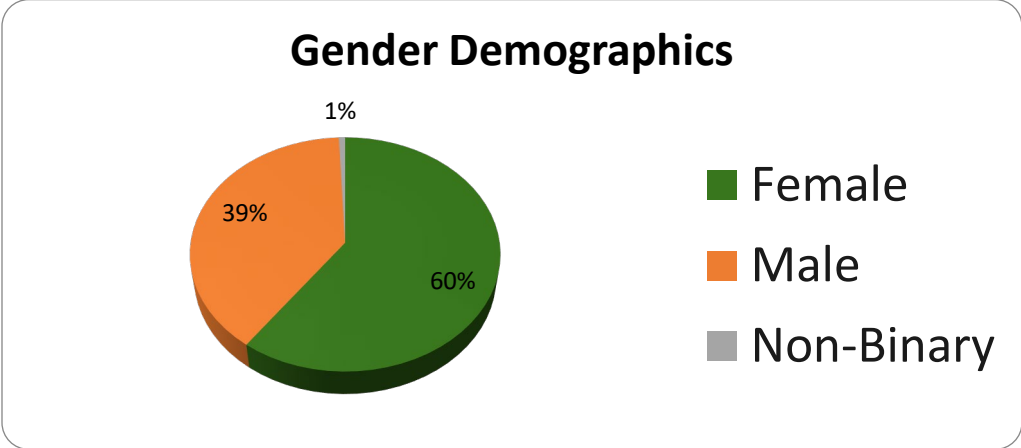


Contacts by Quarter - 2021-2022

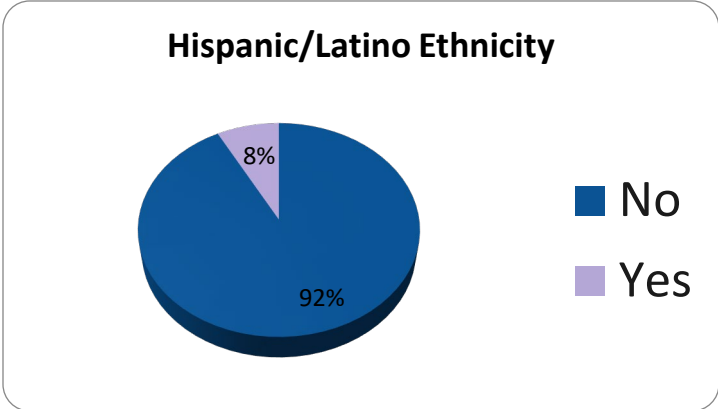
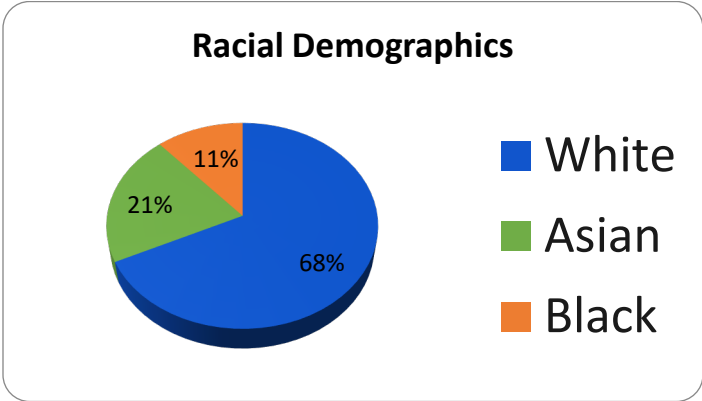


Office Visitors Served: Demographics

Visitors to the office were primarily female, making up 60 percent of visitors. Males accounted for 39 percent. 1 percent of visitors identified as non-binary. The office continues to be a space that is open to all in the university community.

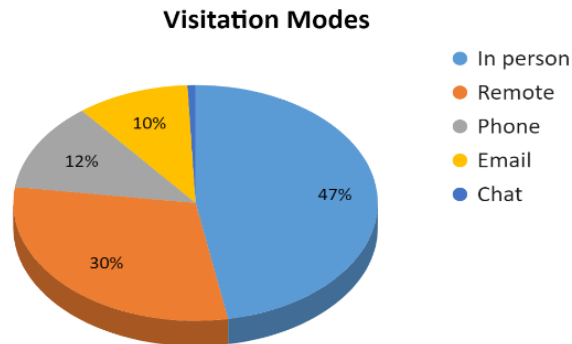


The population of visitors primarily identified as White, making up 68 percent. The second highest demographic was Asian, at 21 percent, followed by 11 percent Black. 8 percent of visitors identified as being Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.



Visitation Modes

In-person visits have continued to be the most popular choice, and saw a slight increase this quarter to 47 percent, followed by 30 percent virtual, and 12 percent choosing to reach out via telephone. 10 percent of visitors used email and 1 percent chat, both of which are discouraged by the Ombuds as it is not the best medium for a confidential discussion. Overall, the office remains flexible, meeting our visitors' needs through their preferred communication method.



Spotlight: The Ombuds Office

So where does that 47 percent of visitors visit? The physical location occupied by the Ombuds Office (FDH-165) is a discreet, welcoming (if sometimes chilly during winter months) space that seeks put visitors at ease to above all.



Top Visitor Concerns by Category

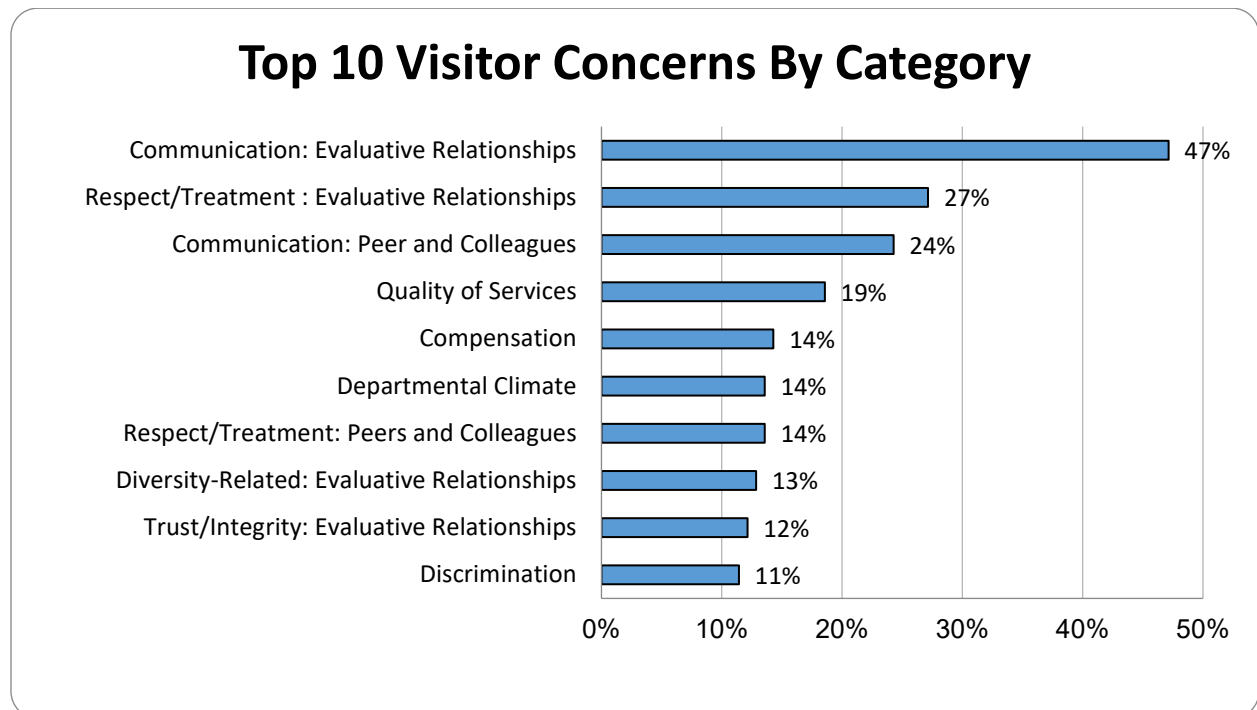
While zealously safeguarding the confidentiality of its visitors, the Ombuds Office tracks, in general terms, the concerns brought forward, for purposes of better understanding campus-wide climate.

Following International Ombuds Association best practices, the Ombuds logs those concerns using the IOA’s Uniform Reporting Categories. The UCRs, maintained by the IOA, reflect concerns typically brought to ombuds offices around the world. These issues are classified into nine broad divisions:

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 divisions, concerns are further sorted into dozens of discrete classifications. For example, an issue relating to an employee’s benefits is classified as 1.c; a concern about retaliation against an employee by their supervisor is 2.h; bullying or mobbing by peers is 3.f; an issue related to reappointment, tenure, or promotion is 4.e.

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



Concerns that remain at the top of the list are communication and respect/treatment. **Communication with Supervisors** accounted for 47 percent of cases, while **Communication with Peers** made up 24 percent of visitors. 27 percent of visitors reported concerns with **Respect/Treatment in Supervisory Relationships**, making it the second most reported issue. 19 percent of visitors reported issues with **Quality of Services**, and 14 percent of issues were related to **Compensation, Departmental Climate, and Respect/Treatment** in peer and colleague relationships. Other top reported categories concerned **Diversity, Trust/Integrity, and Discrimination**.

Workshops & Facilitated Discussions

In the second quarter, the Ombuds Office partnered with several university departments and units to hold interactive workshops and facilitated conversations on a variety of subjects such as managing change, difficult conversations, conflict styles, and conflict resolution. A full list of workshops and informational sessions is available on our [website](#).

Popular workshops include:

Speed Conflict Resolution the Wrong Way

Want to meet new people? Have fun trying to resolve conflict scenarios? And maybe win a prize for doing it wrong? This interactive session combines speed dating with conflict role play, letting you explore the worst way to resolve conflict in brief rounds. Along the way, we will get to know each other and discuss some good techniques for productive conflict resolution.

Exploring Conflict Styles: An Interactive Roleplay

Prior to this session, all participants will take an online assessment that will determine their preferred Thomas-Kilmann conflict style. After a brief introduction to Thomas and Kilmann's theory, we will explore, through interactive polling and group discussion, how conflict styles can exacerbate disagreements and complicate productive resolutions.

Difficult Conversations: Making Them Less Painful and More Productive

You might need to speak with a colleague about behaviors that are making your job harder. Or a supervisor about performance expectations that you think are unreasonable. Or a subordinate who is underperforming. Whatever the subject, this will not be an easy conversation to have. In this in-person workshop, we will explore, through interactive roleplay and group discussion, what makes conversations difficult, how to make them less painful, and how to make them more productive.

Facilitated (or guided) discussions give groups the space to discuss leadership, communication, change management, and other concerns in an informal but moderated setting. All sessions are facilitated by trained mediators, including the Ombuds and the Campus Mediators.

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.

In presenting this report, we hope to demonstrate the scale and impact of the “quiet work” done by the office as its staff help individuals and groups work through interpersonal concerns and procedural issues. Some of our work, like workshops and presentations, is highly visible. But much of what we do happens in private, under the cloak of confidentiality.

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](#).

