



# Quarterly Summary of Activities

July 1, 2023 to September 30, 2023

# Introduction

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

In this quarter, top concerns brought to the office were around the subject of evaluative relationships: communication, respect, performance, schedules, and supervisory effectiveness. Other significant concerns raised by visitors included treatment and communication within peer interactions, overall departmental atmosphere, and the perceived quality of services they received.

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.

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*.

My intention with this report is to increase awareness of the valuable services offered by the Ombuds Office. It is my hope that by sharing information about the office's functions and capabilities, more individuals will feel comfortable reaching out for assistance when needed. 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

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

During this quarter, the Ombuds Office engaged in a range of outreach initiatives aimed at increasing awareness of the office and highlighting its diverse and customizable programming offerings. In addition to providing individual consultations, the office organized and facilitated team-building exercises, workshops, guided conversations, and mediation sessions.

## Visitors and Contacts

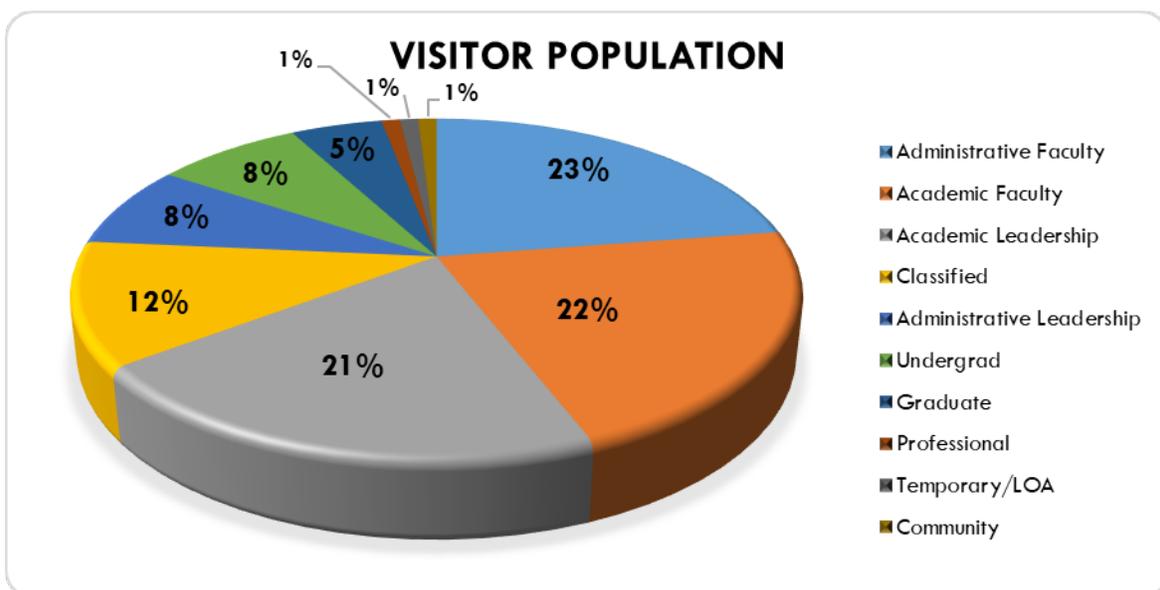
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In this report, a “visitor” refers to someone who seeks individual services from the Ombuds Office. This includes one-on-one meetings held in person, over the phone, or virtually.

In order to thoroughly assess and analyze its interactions with visitors, the office employs the term “contact” to encompass all forms of interaction or meetings, irrespective of whether they occur in-person or remotely. It is important to emphasize that a single visitor can engage with the office through multiple contacts over a period of time. This tracking approach enables the office to understand the frequency and nature of these interactions, ultimately ensuring that visitors receive appropriate support and guidance.

Visitors during this quarter are categorized as follows:

- 23 percent Administrative Faculty
- 22 percent Academic Faculty
- 21 percent Academic Leadership
- 12 percent Classified Staff
- 8 percent Administrative Leadership
- 8 percent Undergraduate Students
- 5 percent Graduate Students
- 1 percent Professional Students
- 1 percent Temporary/LOA
- 1 percent Community Members

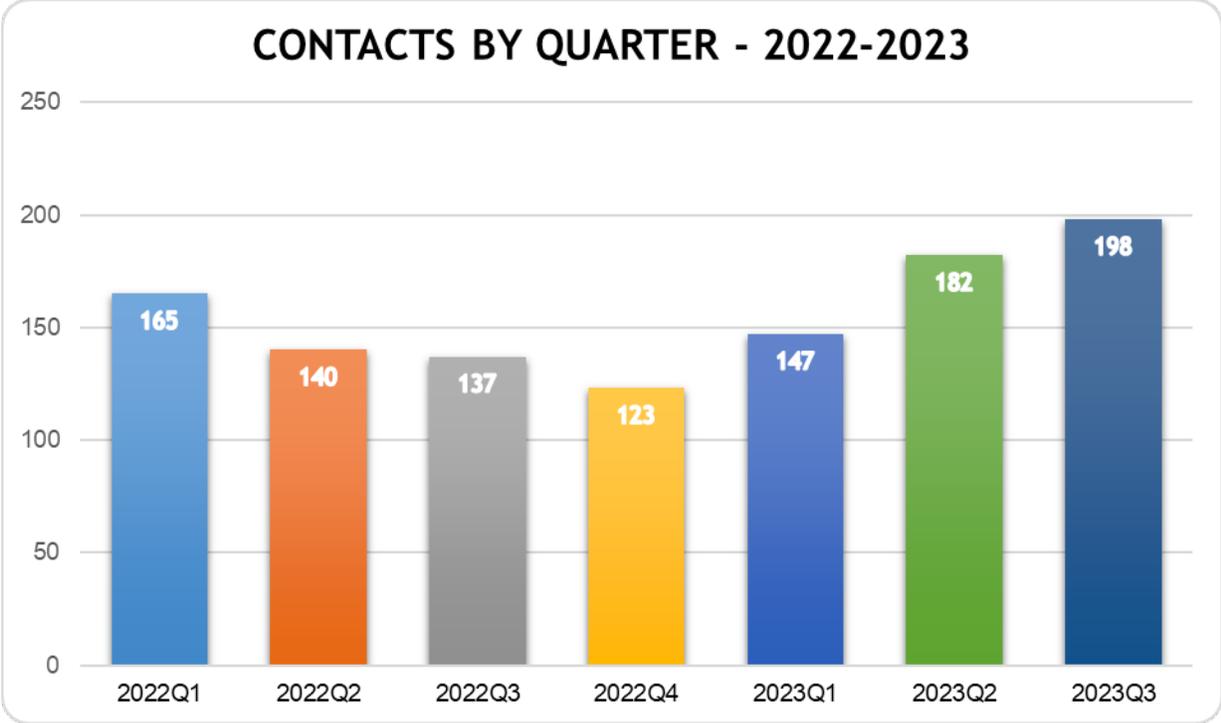


During this quarter, the office documented a total of 198 contacts with individuals seeking guidance and support. This marks a significant rise compared to the third quarter of the previous year, which had 137 contacts. The increased number of contacts underscores the consistent and increasing use of our services by the UNLV community.

## Contacts By Month



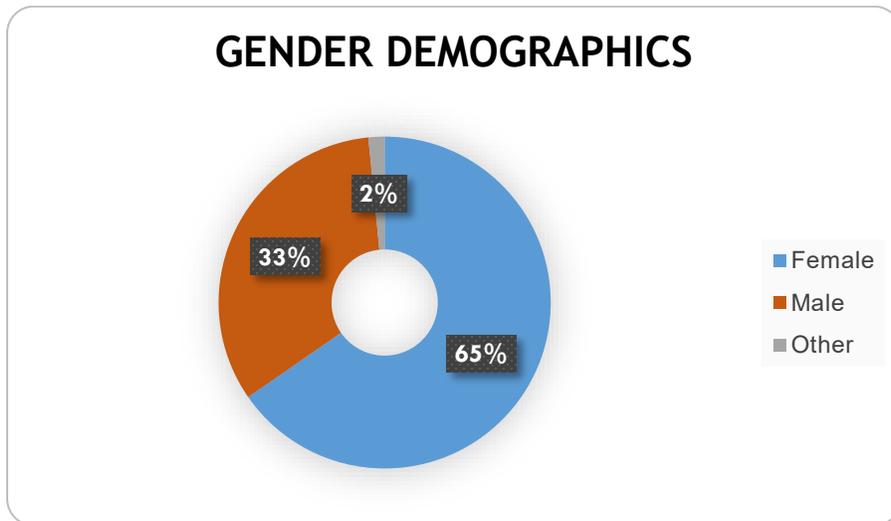
An important observation is that 36 percent of these contacts were individuals who had previously interacted with our office earlier this year, indicating a return for further engagement. This trend signals satisfaction with our office's services, and implies that these individuals value the support they received initially, prompting them to return as needed. This pattern underscores our effectiveness in addressing the needs of our visitors.



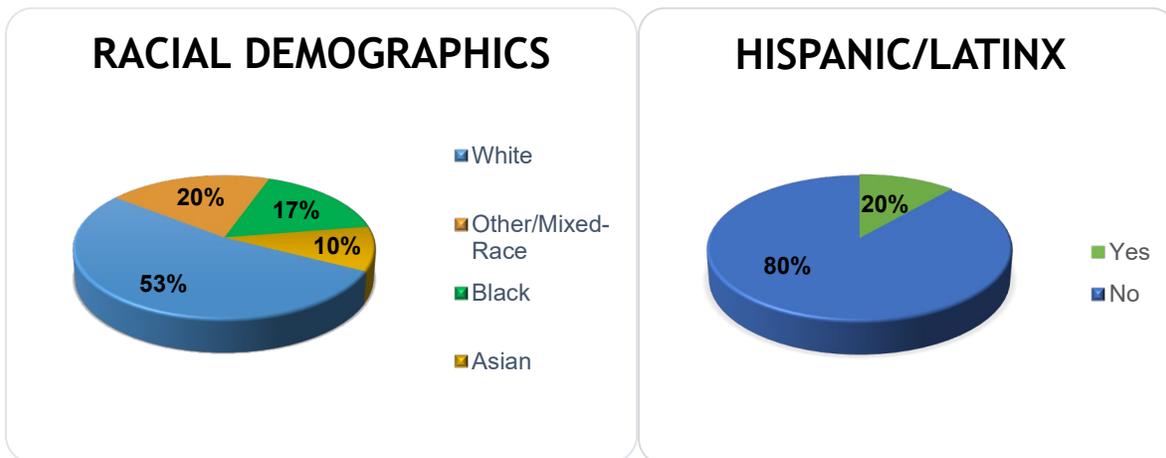
## Office Visitors Served: Demographics

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In the third quarter, the demographic composition of office visitors again leaned predominantly towards female visitors, constituting 65 percent, while males comprised 33 percent, those identifying as Other were 2 percent. This aligns with the historical usage pattern of the office over the past year, with a subtle uptick in male engagement. The office remains an inclusive space, welcoming all members of the university community.

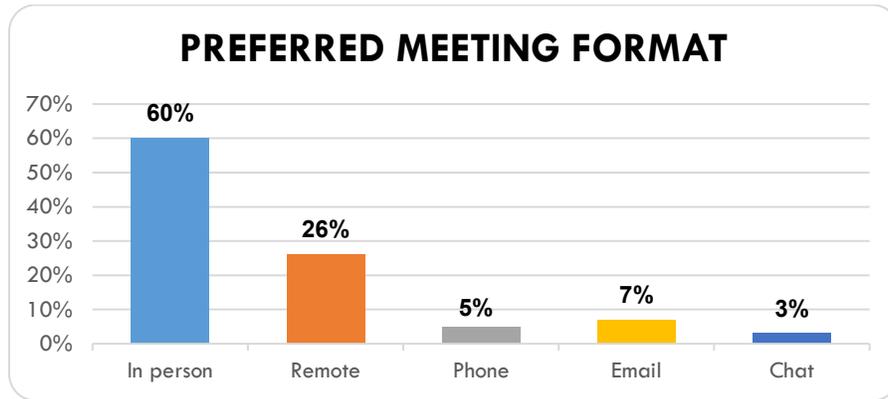


Within the visitor population, 53 percent, identified themselves as White. Visitors identifying with other or mixed-race backgrounds made up 20 percent of the visitor population. Seventeen percent identified as Black, and 10 percent identified as Asian. Additionally, 20 percent of the visitors reported their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latinx.

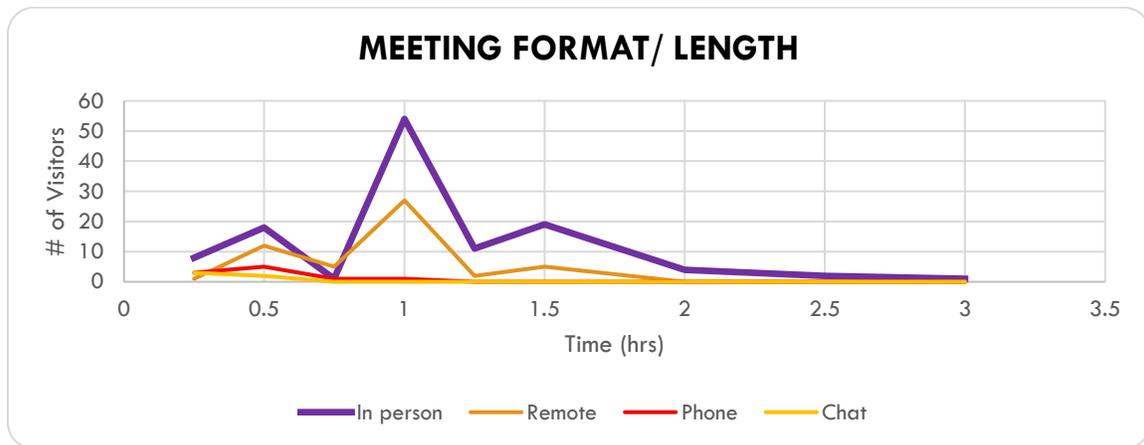


## Visitation Modes

The Ombuds Office, in accordance with IOA standards and its charter, maintains 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 third quarter, a substantial portion of our contacts, 60 percent, preferred in-person meetings. Twenty seven percent of individuals chose to engage with our office through virtual visits. Twelve percent of visitors chose to reach out via telephone, seven percent opted to use email as their preferred mode of communication, and one percent chose to engage with us through chat. Email and chat are still discouraged as mediums for confidential discussions, and any discussion there is typically brief.



As illustrated, the majority of visitors opt for in-person meetings with the Ombuds. These meetings generally last one hour, constituting 41 percent of all in-person meetings. Forty-eight percent of meetings fell within the 35 to 60-minute timeframe, 43 percent had a duration of up to 30 minutes, 19 percent lasted up to 90 minutes, with 4 percent extended for 120 minutes or more.

By offering multiple ways to “meet,” we remain accessible for those who may have constraints unable to meet in person and those who need to meet outside of business hours or for an extended time.

# Top Visitor Concerns by Category

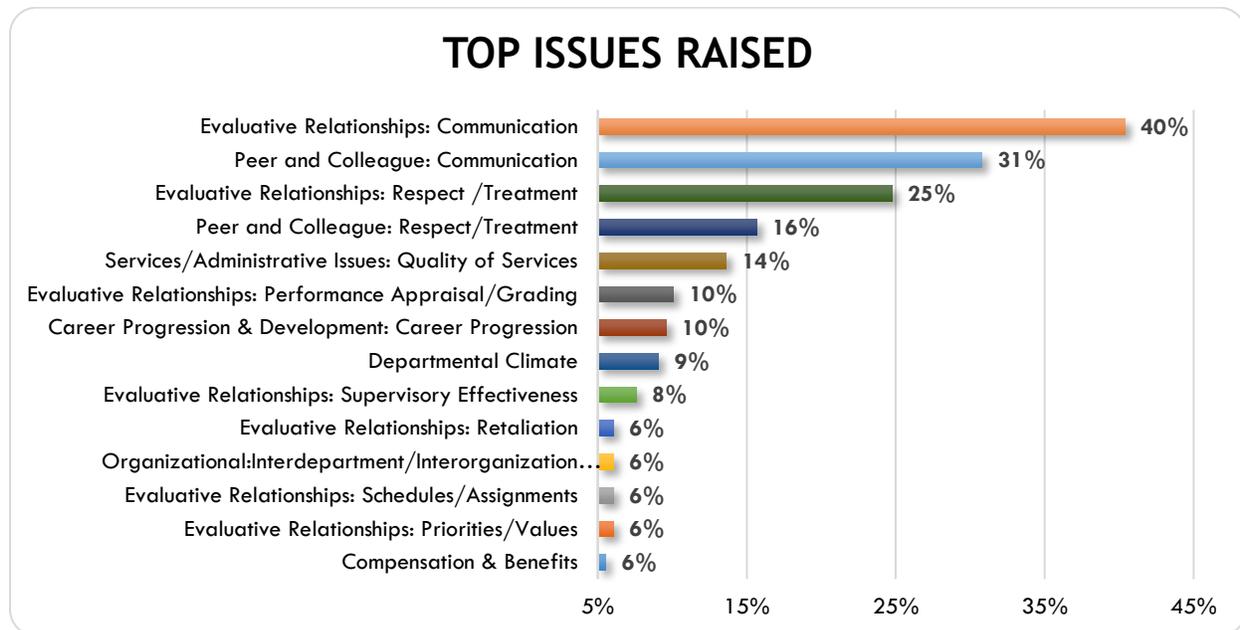
To safeguard the confidentiality of its visitors, the Ombuds Office tracks the concerns brought forward through non-specific demographics. This method allows for the identification of common trends and patterns within the campus community without disclosing specific individual details.

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 during the third quarter revealed several key categories, with the primary concern being **Communication and Respect/Treatment within Evaluative Relationships**, with 40 percent of cases centered on the quality and/or quantity of **Communication** in supervisory relationships. Additionally, 25 percent of visitors reported challenges related to **Respect/Treatment** within these relationships, making it the third most common concern. Other prominent categories related to supervisory relationships included: **Performance Appraisal**, which constituted 10 percent of cases. **Supervisory Effectiveness** accounted for 8 percent of cases. Concerns about **Retaliation**, constituted 6 percent of cases. With **Schedules/Assignments, Priorities/Values and Compensation & Benefits**, accounting for 6% of cases respectively.

Top visitor concerns were also related to their interactions with colleagues. 31 percent of visitors identified challenges in effectively **Communicating with Colleagues**, and 16 percent of visitors raised concerns regarding **Respect/Treatment** from colleagues, highlighting the need for fostering a respectful and inclusive environment. Visitors also raised concerns regarding **Quality of Administrative Services**, accounting for 14 percent of cases. Concerns regarding **Career Progression and Departmental Climate** rounded out the top issues accounting for 10 percent and 9 percent respectively.

## Workshops, Presentations Facilitated Discussions

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During the third quarter, the Ombuds Office supported our campus community by organizing and leading a diverse range of enriching events. These outreach activities included active engagement at university events like new student orientation and the fall involvement fair through informational booths. Additionally, the office conducted interactive workshops, guided discussions, and provided informative presentations to departments and new faculty.

Participants in these events explored various topics related to enhancing communication and conflict resolution skills. The workshops and guided discussions delved into vital topics, including improving interpersonal communication, recognizing different conflict styles, comprehending group conflicts, and establishing group norms while identifying collective objectives.



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: Ombuds Week - October 9-13

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Organized by the American Bar Association (ABA), the ombuds profession celebrates [Ombuds Day](#) annually on the third Thursday of October. *This year's theme is "Ombuds: Diverse in Role, United in Service."* Intended to raise awareness about the ombuds profession, the day is commonly marked by events like lunch-and-learns, workshops, and seminars.

To mark the event, UNLV's Ombuds Office has planned a week of activities that are free, open to the UNLV community, and designed to engage participants in a variety of ways, including an open house, presentations to various campus groups, interactive workshops, and mediation panel.



You can see the list of ombuds week activities and other upcoming events by visiting our [website](#).

## In Closing

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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 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](mailto:ombuds@unlv.edu).

For more information about Ombuds Office programs and services, please visit the [Ombuds Office website](#).



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Data analysis and visualization by Tifara Rachal

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