

UNLV Ombuds Office

Quarterly Summary of Activities

July 1, 2022 to September 30, 2022

Introduction

This report summarizes the activities of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas's Ombuds Office in the third quarter of calendar 2022. This was an active three months for campus and the Ombuds Office, as it covers much of the summer and the start of the 2022-23 academic year.

In this quarter, top concerns brought to the office included communication with supervisors, organizational climate, and change management. Harassment, discrimination, and compensation were also among the issues voiced by visitors.

The office performs four primary functions: its staff is present to *listen* to members of the university committee who have concerns; it can *educate* individuals 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 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

This quarterly report includes a description of visitor trends and common elements of concerns received during the third quarter of calendar 2022 (July 1 to September 30).

During this quarter, the Ombuds Office continued to provide consultations for individuals and to support groups by facilitating team-building activities, workshops, guided conversations and mediations.

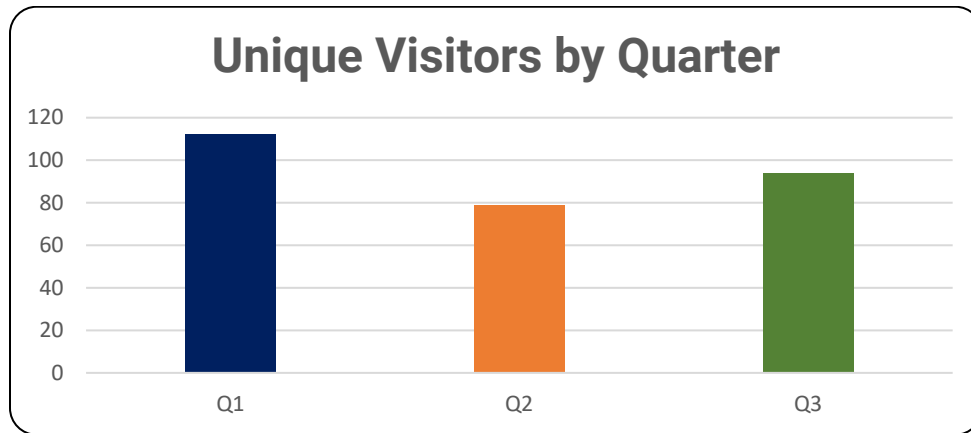
Visitors and Contacts

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. Those who only interact with the Ombuds in a workshop are not defined as “visitors.”

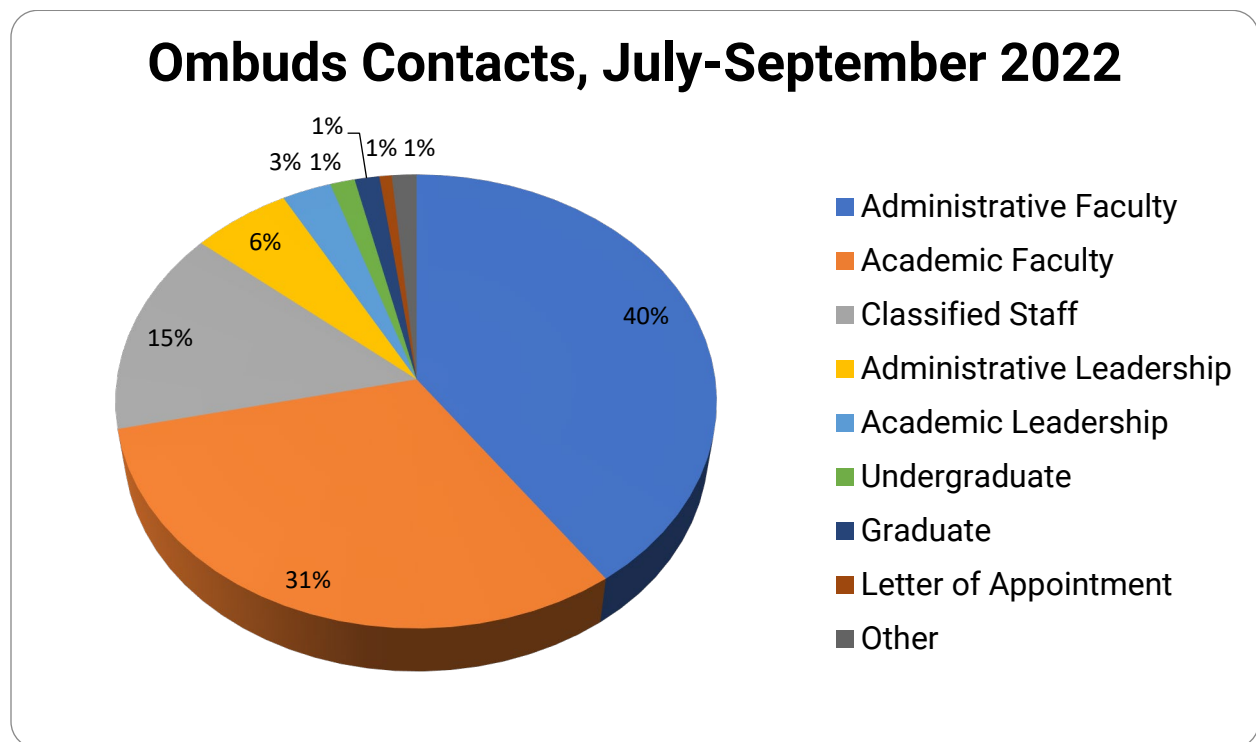
For tracking, the office counts any meeting or interaction, whether in-person or remote, with a visitor as a “contact.” One visitor may have multiple contacts with the office. Visitors were categorized as follows:

- 40 percent Administrative Faculty
- 31 percent Academic Faculty
- 15 percent Classified Staff
- 6 percent Administrative Leadership
- 3 Percent Academic Leadership
- 3 Percent combined: Graduate and Undergraduate Students
- 2 Percent combined: Letter of Appointment employees, parents, and community members.

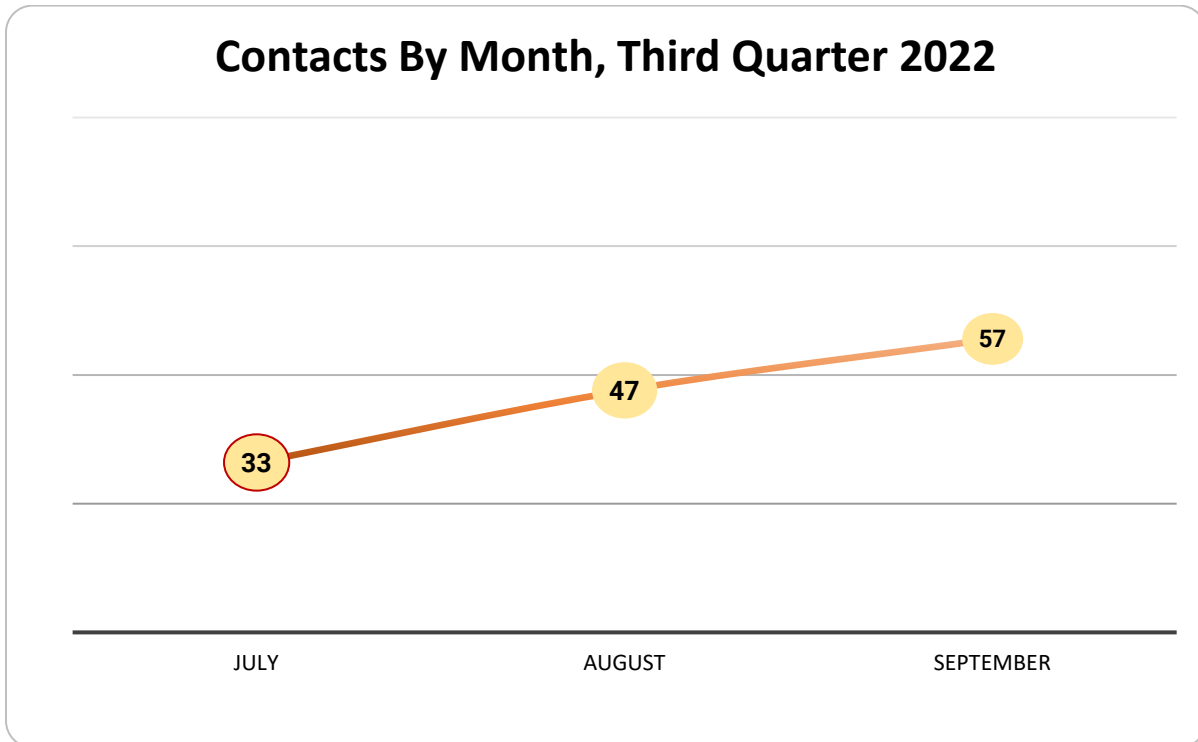
Between July 1 and September 30 of 2022, the Ombuds Office received 94 unique visitors. This compares well with the previous two quarters this year, showing a steady use of the office by the UNLV community.



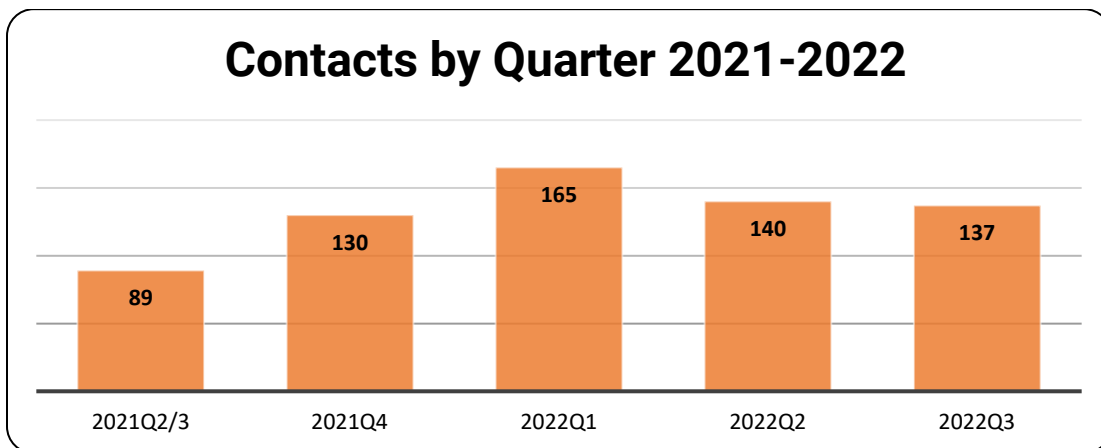
Over this quarter, the office logged 137 contacts. 31 percent of visitors were returning individuals who had previously used the office in this quarter. This is a positive sign that people who have used the office are comfortable returning to discuss their concerns and seek additional information about available resources.



As seen in the chart below, the number of contacts per month has steadily increased as the quarter has progressed. The average number of contacts per month, 46, is near last quarter's monthly average of approximately 47 contacts. The slight increase in monthly visitors during this quarter may be related to a few factors such as faculty, staff and students returned to campus for the fall 2022 semester, issues emerging from changing work arrangements, or more awareness of the office's resources for informal conflict resolution.

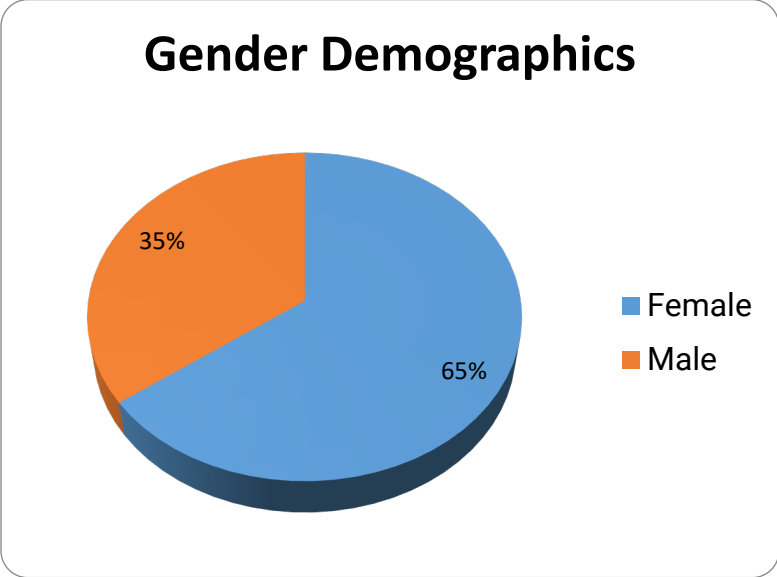


When comparing to last year's third quarter, when the office was in the process of being re-established, this year's numbers show a marked increase. They are relatively flat from the previous quarter, with the first quarter of 2022 remaining the highest contact period in the office's recent history. It remains to be seen whether this pattern will continue over the coming months.

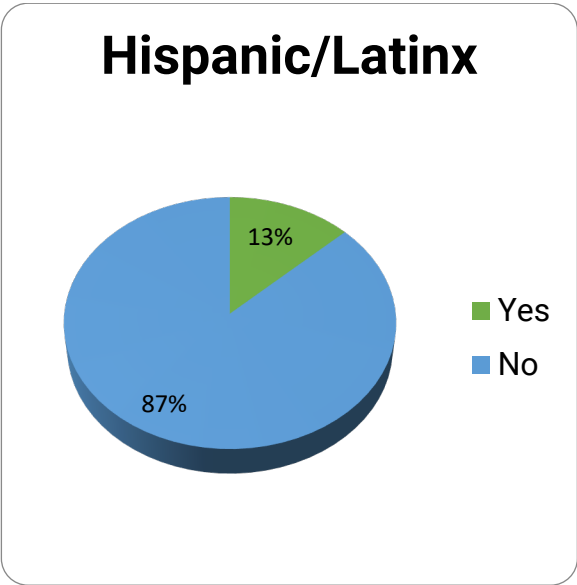
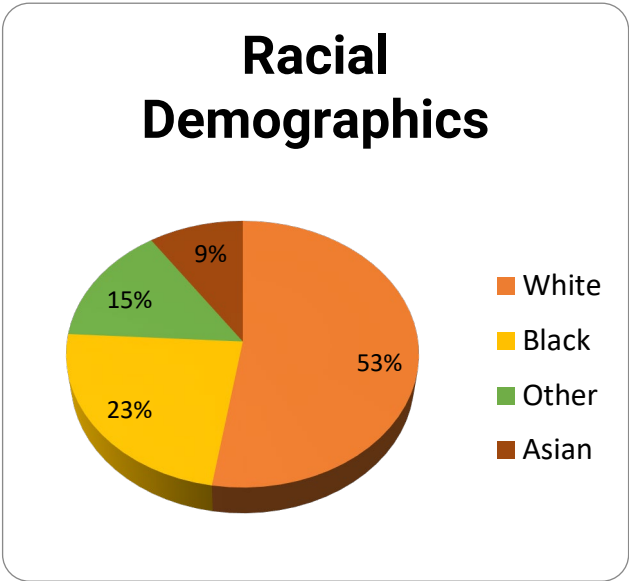


Office Visitors Served: Demographics

Visitors to the office in the third quarter were primarily female, making up 65 percent; males accounted for 35 percent. 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.

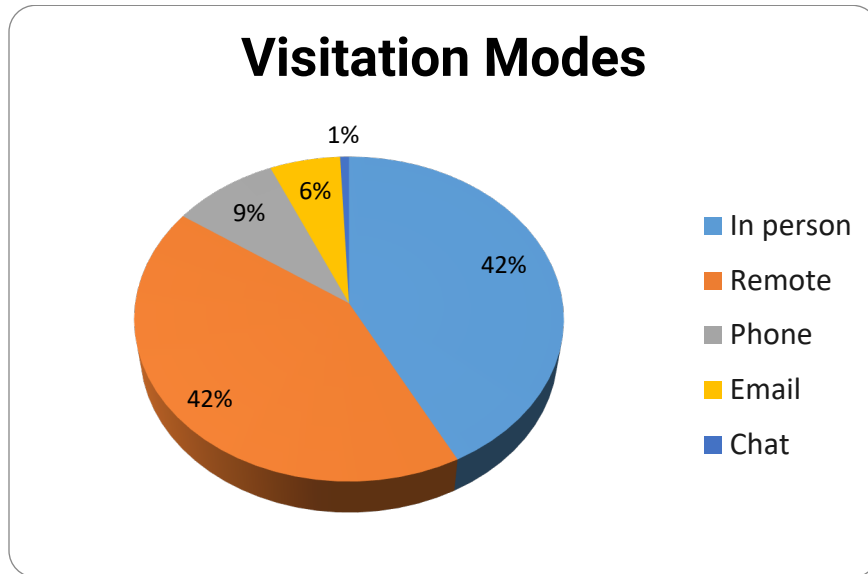


The population of visitors primarily identifying as White made up 53 percent of the office’s total visitors. The second highest demographic was Black, at 23 percent, followed by 15 percent identified being of mixed race or other ethnicity, and 9 percent identified as Asian. 13 percent of visitors reported being of Hispanic or Latinx ethnicity.



Visitation Modes

In-person and remote were equally popular during this quarter at 42 percent respectively, followed by 9 percent choosing to reach out via telephone. 6 percent of visitors used email and 1 percent chat, both of which are generally discouraged as a medium for a confidential discussion. Overall, the office has remained flexible to visitors' meeting preferences and varying work schedules.



Top Visitor Concerns by Category

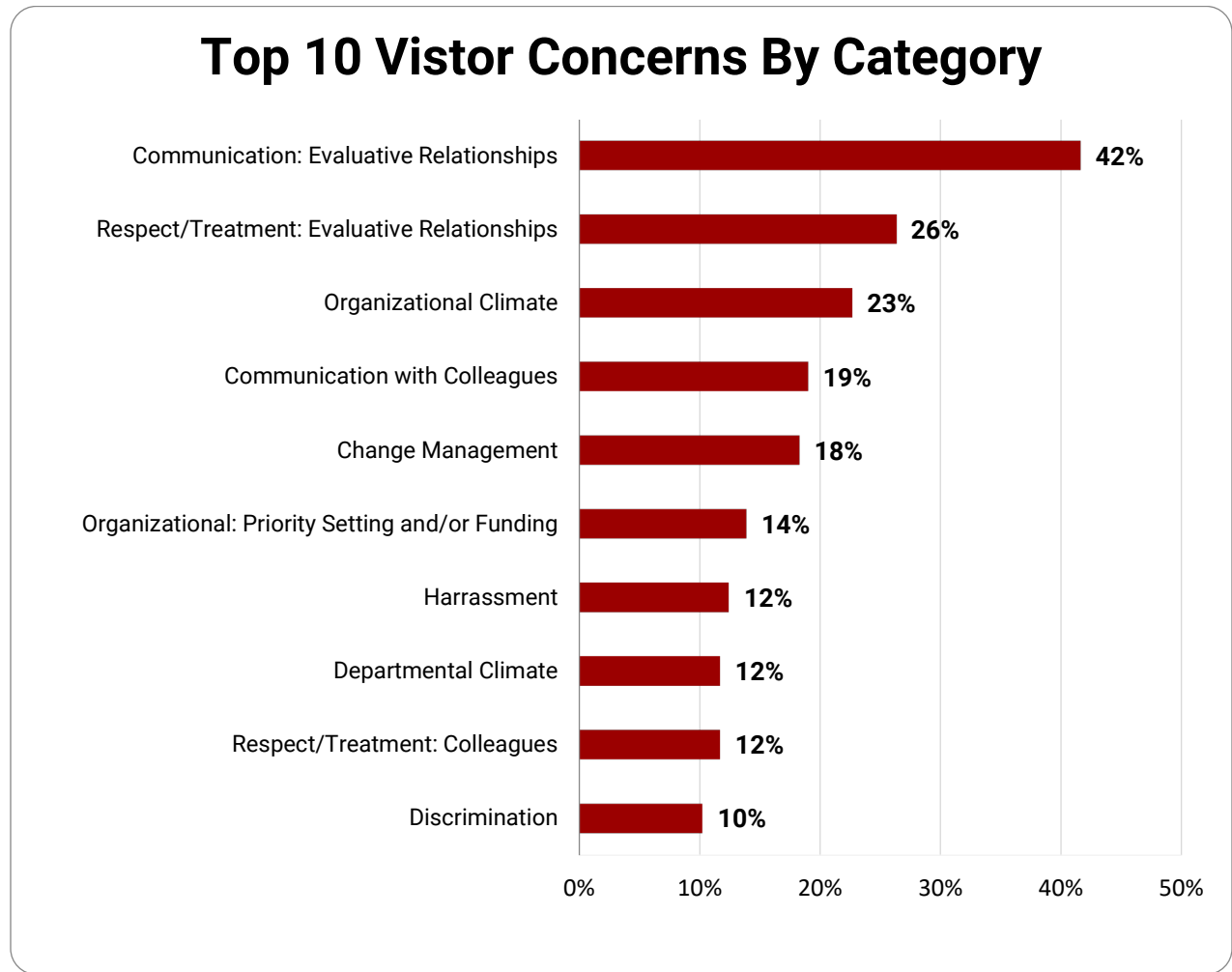
While always conscientious of safeguarding the confidentiality of its visitors, the Ombuds Office tracks the concerns brought forward through non-specific demographics, for purposes of identifying common concerns within the campus community.

Following International Ombuds Association (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.



Concerns that remain at the top of the list are communication and respect/treatment. **Communication with Supervisors** accounted for 42 percent of cases, while **Respect/Treatment in Supervisory Relationships**, the second most reported issue, made up 26 percent of visitors. 23 percent of visitors reported concerns with the **Organizational Climate**. 19 percent of visitors reported issues with **Communicating with Colleagues**, 18 percent of issues were related to **Change Management**, and 14 percent related to **Organizational Priority Setting/Funding**. Other top reported categories were concerns regarding **Harassment**, **Departmental Climate**, **Respect and Treatment from Colleagues**, and **Discrimination**.

Workshops, Presentations Facilitated Discussions

In the third quarter, the Ombuds Office held numerous interactive workshops and facilitated conversations on subjects such as effective communication among leadership teams, successfully managing changes at unit and department levels, identifying conflict styles, and identifying tools for successful conflict resolution. A full list of workshops and informational sessions is available on our [website](#).

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.



Spotlight: Ombuds Workshops in the Faculty Center

As part of its mission to support conflict resolution, UNLV’s Ombuds Office has partnered with the Faculty Center to facilitate interactive workshops and informal discussion sessions for faculty, staff, and students. These sessions are designed to help individuals communicate better, and foster productive interpersonal relationships. The upcoming workshop [Clear Communication with Your Chair or Supervisor](#) focusses on issues with supervisory communication, which has consistently made an appearance in the office’s top reported issues. This interactive workshop helps participants explore better ways to communicate and work collaboratively with their immediate supervisor, and suggests strategies for overcoming common obstacles to productive communication. The recurring monthly workshop [Rebel Conflict Roundtable](#) is an informal roundtable where participants have discussions about everyday conflicts, the impacts of unresolved conflict, and explore better ways to communicate and work collaboratively.

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](#).

