A Message from the Campus Ombuds

This has been a record year for the Office of the Ombuds. At the beginning of the fiscal year, we put into place a number of efficiency measures to allow us to handle an increased volume of cases. We ended the year with 442 cases, which is 133 more than average, and 72 more than our previous busiest year on record. The increased business is evident in an increase in visitors from all campus constituencies; the proportion of each stayed roughly the same. The percentage of visitors who are faculty increased from 11% to 18% while the proportion of students (undergraduate and graduate) dropped from 42% to 39%. The proportion of visitors who are staff stayed the same at 37%. The total number of faculty who initiated contact with us this year was 78 (compared to 34 last year) students 173 (137 last year) and staff 164 (117 last year).

We are pleased to introduce two new metrics to describe the work that we do. First, we instituted a post-interview survey of visitors. These are collected anonymously in a box as our visitors exit. Our survey showed great satisfaction with the experience of meeting with an ombuds as well as support for the value of the service. Before meeting with the ombuds, 13% of respondents reported contemplating taking legal action or filing a formal complaint and 6% considered leaving their position. Comments on the survey included statements such as:

- “As Chair, there are confidential issues one cannot discuss with colleagues. This office is a boon – a sanctuary for those who want measured and uninvolved judgment.”
- “Very helpful…new perspectives on issues of diversity on campus as a minority student.”
- “I was thankful to have a safe place to learn about the options to deal with the difficult situations I was facing in my work. I gained helpful perspective on the possible effects of my decisions that helped me move forward with solving the problems.”

The second metric we instituted was to track case outcomes. Although tracking this does pose some challenges – such as complex situations unfolding over long periods of time – the data we were able to gather show that fully 70% of our cases ended with full or partial resolution.

Moving into fiscal year 2015-16, we will continue to pursue our mission: to offer a wide array of confidential consultation services for conflict prevention and management, decision-making, policy questions, university processes, work relationships and career coaching that serve all members of the UC Santa Barbara community. We offer a safe and confidential place to discuss these concerns, and offer strategies and options for resolution. We have enjoyed the support of Executive Vice Chancellor David Marshall, and appreciate his continued endorsement of our work in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,

Kirsi Aulin, MS, LMFT, CO-OPT™
Campus Ombuds
University of California, Santa Barbara
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Ombuds Overview

Mission Statement

The Office of the Ombuds (the Ombuds) is a confidential, impartial, informal, and independent resource for conflict prevention, management, and resolution that serves all members of the UCSB community, including faculty, staff, and students. The Ombuds assists those who seek guidance with the resolution of academic, administrative or interpersonal issues and disputes which are not being adequately addressed through other mechanisms. It is a safe, confidential, and impartial place to express concerns.

The Ombuds advocates for fairness and works to ensure that all members of the University community receive equitable treatment. The Ombuds serves the campus community by helping to resolve complaints, by providing information and referrals, and by making recommendations for constructive change when University policies or procedures generate conflicts or concerns. The Ombuds adheres to the highest standards of practice for the field to ensure excellent service, compliance with ethical standards and mitigation of legal risk. The Ombuds is also committed to a campus-wide prevention and education effort.

Standards of Practice

The Ombuds seeks to accomplish its mission by applying four core tenets: independence, impartiality, informality, and confidentiality. These are standards of practice established by the International Ombudsman Association (IOA).

**Independence:** The Ombuds is chartered by UCSB to be an independent entity. To ensure objectivity, it operates independently of usual administrative authorities and is not an office of notice to the University. The Ombuds reports to the Executive Vice Chancellor for administrative and budgetary purposes only, but not regarding the substance of matters addressed by the Ombuds.

**Impartiality:** The Ombuds is impartial. The staff will not take sides in any conflict, dispute, or issue, but will consider the interests and concerns of all parties involved with the aim of achieving a fair and equitable outcome. If the Ombuds believes a university policy or procedure is unfair, the Ombuds will advocate for fairness.

**Informality:** The Ombuds is informal. The Ombuds staff offer a variety of consultation services such as mediation or strategic assessment of a situation which work informally to address conflict. The Ombuds does not arbitrate, adjudicate, or participate in any internal or external formal process.

**Confidentiality:** The Ombuds will maintain strict confidentiality to the extent permitted by the law; the only exception to this confidentiality is when the Ombuds determines that an imminent threat of serious harm exists.
Staffing and Administration

Physical Space

The Ombuds has been located in 1205-K Girvetz Hall since May 2005.

During this Fiscal Year, we have nearly completed the process of making safety improvements to our physical space. We received a safety assessment report from the Kroll Associates, which was commissioned by the Office of the President, and made the recommended structural changes. We received funding and administrative assistance from the Executive Vice Chancellor’s Office to engage in this project. The construction and other physical changes will be completed in Fiscal Year 2015-16. We have continued to use the “white noise” system to deal with acoustic issues related to confidentiality. It provides the necessary privacy enhancement that allows us to maintain our standard of confidentiality in a limited amount of space.

Website and Online Presence

We have continued to maintain a presence on Facebook - the UCSB Office of the Ombuds informational page. We continue to maintain our website including the emergency contacts link on the home page.

Professional Affiliation

All of our staff belong to the International Ombudsman Association (IOA). This organization provides professional affiliation, training, and certification, as well as ongoing problem-solving with regards to current challenges in our work. We operate consistent with the IOA standards of practice, including the four tenets described above. We believe our credibility as an office and as members of the profession is tied directly to adhering to these tenets.

Kirsi continues to maintain her status as a Certified Organizational Ombudsman Practitioner (CO-OP™) through the International Ombudsman Association. Caroline became a Certified Organizational Ombudsman Practitioner this year, and Ramey completed a year of practice as a prerequisite to becoming a Certified Organizational Ombudsman Practitioner.

Staffing

Kirsi Aulin continued as Campus Ombuds, providing leadership and coordination of services. She was the primary ombuds for 33% of our cases. She also participated with Ramey and Caroline in providing workshops, retreats and presentations to the campus. This year she has continued to provide service to the campus and the UC system through participation on campus and system-wide committees, and she continued her work as co-president of the Steering Committee of the Consortium on Abrasive Conduct in Higher Education (CACHE).

Caroline Adams continues to serve as Associate Ombuds, and has served as primary ombuds for 36% of cases. Caroline has spearheaded the launching of the Office of the Ombuds’ Education and Prevention Program. She has designed several new workshops as well as department retreats, tailored to address specific groups and their topical needs. Caroline also served as a reviewer for the Journal of the International Ombudsman Association, and she had an article published in the American Bar Association Alternative Dispute Resolution Magazine.
Michael O’Connell served as Faculty Ombuds, dealing primarily with cases involving faculty and graduate students, and was primary ombuds for 7% of our cases this year.

Ramey Mitchell primarily handled undergraduate student cases, for a total of 24% of our cases this year. Ramey provided triage for incoming cases, flagging high-risk situations for immediate intervention. She also performed case intakes, assisted us in workshops and presentations, and served in an administrative support role (as outlined below).

Administration

Kirsi provided administrative oversight and Ramey Mitchell provided administrative support. Both continued gaining experience and knowledge of new campus systems. Ramey handled an administrative workload that included the following:

- Provided travel arrangements & reimbursements for Ombuds staff as needed
- Updated the database
- Prepared statistical reports as needed
- Coordinated arrangements for the Ombuds Advisory Committee and prepared meeting notes
- Completed financial transactions and maintained appropriate departmental documentation, such as the General Ledger

Professional Development

Continuing education and related professional activities are essential in order for us to be able to provide the highest level of quality in our service to the campus community. It is critical that we are informed of the changing legal and academic landscape, and standards of practice, for the sake of the integrity of the consultation provided to the university community.

We have continued to attend all relevant briefings and trainings offered at UCSB regarding the campus (e.g. campus systems, processes, updates and concerns). This year we have continued to seek educational opportunities for staff. Much still needs to be done to provide ongoing education at a professional level. We participated in relevant webinars and other remote training opportunities as practicable, and specialized training as the budget allowed. Specific professional Ombuds trainings/meetings attended were as follows:

**Kirsi Aulin**
- Coaching Abrasive Leaders
- 3rd Annual Colloquium of the Consortium on Abrasive Conduct in Higher Education
- IOA Annual Conference
- Cottage Hospital Grand Rounds

**Caroline Adams**
- IOA Annual Conference
- ABA Labor and Employment Law Conference
- UCLA Management Training: Managing Up
- Ongoing webinars to keep abreast of relevant legal developments
Service:

Kirsi Aulin
- UC systemwide Task Force on Sexual Violence & Sexual Assault
- Campus Climate Survey Implementation Committee, and subcommittees - Staff Morale, Sexual Violence & Sexual Assault,
- Financial Aid Advisory Committee
- Threat Management Team
- New Student Convocation - Platform Party
- Steering Committee for the 3rd Annual Colloquium on Abrasive Conduct in Higher Education at Harvard Law School

Caroline Adams
- Journal of the International Ombudsman Association reviewer
- American Bar Association Dispute Resolution Section, Ombuds Committee - Outreach Subcommittee and Chair of Law School Outreach
- Santa Barbara County Bar Association member
- UCSB Gaucho U instructor
- UCSB Professional Women’s Association Conference speaker
- Graduate Student Orientation committee
- International Ombudsman Association Conference speaker
- UC Ombuds Response to White House Task Force on Sexual Violence & Sexual Assault

Ramey Mitchell
- Served on IOA Conference Committee
- Presented informational sessions for Resident Directors, Assistant Resident Directors and Resident Advisors

Ombuds Advisory Committee

The Ombuds Advisory Committee met three times in the course of the academic year. The Executive Vice Chancellor appoints the members of this campus committee. Committee members’ terms of service are established with the possibility of individuals serving two consecutive terms and are staggered to ensure continuity. The undergraduate student representative each year is the Goodspeed intern, an internship coordinated by the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

The committee has two main functions:
• To act as a sounding board and advisor to the Ombuds in regard to such matters as the Annual Report and its distribution, promotion and marketing the Ombuds, hiring staff, professional development plans, and additional duties;
• To receive and respond to comments or complaints about the Ombuds and to convene the committee should such concerns arise.

The appointed members for 2013-2014:
• Mary Lum, staff representative
• Katya Armistead, staff representative
• Tyler Ray, graduate student representative
• Linda Putnam, faculty representative
• Heejung Kim, faculty representative
• Emily Potter, undergraduate representative

Ex-officio non-voting members during 2013-2014:
• Caroline Adams, Associate Ombuds
• Kirsi Aulin, Campus Ombuds
• Michael O’Connell, Faculty Ombuds
• Ramey Mitchell, Assistant Ombuds
Demographics

Our process for tracking our case work includes assigning a number to each visitor with a specific concern. In the course of working with the initial visitor regarding this concern, we often work with multiple people and departments. Our case numbering system is representative of the number of concerns we initiate work with each month and complete in a year. Therefore, it does not capture the total number of people involved in creating a resolution, nor does it capture the number of people who have benefited from our work.

In the course of this year, we handled 442 cases, 119 more than our nine-year average of 323. Our individual statistics, such as the visitor’s demographics, position and how they contacted us, are based on the initial visitor who contacts our office.

![14-15 Ombuds Office Cases/Month](image)

Staff members comprised 37% of our visitors, which is the same as last year.

18% of our visitors were faculty, which is a significant increase over last year. (Since visitor status represents only the initial visitor to the Ombuds, this percentage does not reflect our estimate that faculty members are directly or indirectly involved in approximately 50% of our cases.)

Student visitors this year amounted to 39% of our visitors; 25% were undergraduates and 14% graduate students. Overall, student percentages have remained quite consistent over a number of years.

The “other” category includes parents, community members, alumni, donors, etc. and constitutes 10% of our visitors.
We have continued using categories for reporting race and ethnicity consistent with California law regarding protected categories. The demographics form is only filled out by people who physically visit our office, so we are not capturing those who work with us via telephone.

14-15 Visitor Status

- Undergraduate Student: 25%
- Graduate Student: 14%
- Faculty: 18%
- Staff: 37%
- Other: 6%

14-15 User Background

- African American/Black: 2%
- Native American/Alaska Native: 1%
- Asian, Asian-American: 12%
- Pacific Islander: 4%
- Mexican-American, Chicano: 10%
- Spanish-American, Latino/Hispanic: 8%
- Middle Eastern: 6%
- White/Caucasian: 55%
- Decline to State: 0%
- Other/Mixed: 0%
- Unknown: 2%
This year we changed our intake form to allow visitors to define their own gender. We expected to show a much more nuanced representation of the people who come to us for assistance. However, only 1% of our visitors identified as anything other than male or female. We plan to continue to use this more inclusive and accurate format.

14-15 Visitor Gender

There is great variety in the number of hours we spend on a case. For example, many undergraduate student cases only need 1-3 visits with an Ombuds, and only take 1-3 hours. On the other end of the spectrum, some cases take many months to reach a resolution and can be well in excess of 20 hours.

14-15 Percentage of Cases by Hour Range
Cases are assigned to each ombuds based on areas of specialty, visitor affiliation and availability. We strive to make an appointment available to a visitor as quickly as possible.

![14-15 Cases by Ombuds](chart)

We tracked the self-reports of visitors to determine how they heard about the Ombuds. (Since the self-reports are optional and offered only to visitors who physically come to the office, we do not have this information for every visitor.) The numbers reflect that our constituencies—staff, faculty and students—find us in different ways.
We encourage visitors to contact us by phone rather than by email because confidentiality cannot be assured using email. The vast majority of visitors contact us by phone or walk-in, but 8% of our visitors contacted us by email in the last year. This reflects the ease of use of email and
the general acceptance of email as a mode of communication. We do not, however, advertise our email addresses on our website. For some, particularly student visitors, the fact that we are accessible for walk-in visits, makes us an option for them as a resource when they need immediate help.

Once visitors have begun to work with us, we offer a variety of processes to help resolve their concerns. In nearly all cases, we begin with a consultative intake to get a general idea of the concern before assigning an ombuds or scheduling a longer consultation. We often provide referrals to other resources on and off campus. We may inform visitors by explaining policy or coaching them on communication skills. Sometimes we will research a policy-related question or informally investigate how a new change might affect a certain group. With permission of the visitor, we often contact another individual who may be involved in a conflict. Once we have exchanged most relevant information, we will usually help the visitor understand options and make good choices. This year, the two top processes utilized besides intake were Strategizing and Informing.
We continued collecting information this year on some of the risks posed by the cases we handled. We found that the two most common categories of risk were: Loss of Departmental Productivity and Potential for Internal/External Grievances. The potential impact of these concerns, if unaddressed, could be very great.

14-15 Risk Categories

This year is our first year for tracking case outcomes, and we saw 37% of our cases Resolved, and 33% Partially Resolved. We feel this is a very positive outcome for our visitors.
Primary Concerns

Most visitors have a “presenting problem” (e.g. grade dispute, performance evaluation, interpersonal conflict) but also have various underlying issues, such as management effectiveness, faculty conduct, or policy concern. When we track categories, we may note multiple categories per case, if relevant.

Taken in the aggregate, our visitors’ five most common concerns in Fiscal Year 2014-15 were Communication, Respect/Treatment, Performance Appraisal/Grading, Departmental Climate and Bullying/Mobbing.
STUDENTS

The five most common concerns for undergraduate students were Performance Appraisal, Standards of Conduct, Communication, Respect/Treatment and Administrative Decisions/Interpretation of Rules.
Among graduate students, the four most common concerns were Communication, Respect/Treatment, Bullying/Mobbing and Departmental Climate.
Faculty were most concerned with Communication, Respect/Treatment, Departmental Climate, Bullying/Mobbing and Performance Appraisal.

**14-15 Top 10 Faculty Member Case Concerns**

- Communication: 21%
- Respect/Treatment: 17%
- Departmental Climate: 15%
- Bullying/Mobbing: 11%
- Performance Appraisal/Grading: 11%
- Reputation: 7%
- Leadership and Management: 5%
- Organizational Climate: 5%
- Equity of Treatment: 4%
- Discrimination: 4%

Among concerns voiced by academic department chairs, Respect/Treatment, Communication and Departmental Climate were most common.
14-15 Top 10 Chair Case Concerns

- Respect/Treatment: 18%
- Communication: 17%
- Departmental Climate: 16%
- Reputation: 11%
- Performance Appraisal/Grading: 8%
- Mental Health Issues (possibly): 8%
- Harassment: 7%
- Ethical Dilemma/s: 5%
- Bullying, Mobbing: 5%
- Intellectual Property Rights: 5%
STAFF

Non-supervisory staff were most often concerned with Communication, Respect/Treatment, Bullying/Mobbing, Performance Appraisal and Departmental Climate.

### 14-15 Top 10 Non-supervisory Staff Case Concerns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>% of Cases</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Departmental Climate</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job Classification &amp; Description</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career Development, Coaching</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retaliation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; Management</td>
<td>4%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Administrators and Directors had quite a number of concerns, but Communication, stood out most often.
Every year, we field concerns about UCSB from people who are outside of UCSB constituents. This includes: parents, alums and concerned citizens. Their concerns are grouped as Other.

14-15 Top 10 Administrative/Director Case Concerns

14-15 Top 10 Other Case Concerns
Outreach

Marketing

Marketing includes:

- New staff orientation trainings
- New student orientation packets
- General Catalog and the quarterly Schedule of Classes
- Website with an array of information and resources
- Educational bulletin boards around campus with information and resources
- Presentations to campus groups regarding Ombuds services
- Facebook educational page with relevant resources—UCSB Office of the Ombuds

Group Meetings and Presentations

We continue to strive to inform the UCSB community that the Office of the Ombuds is available to them, and to educate the community about the purpose and many uses of Ombuds. This year’s introductions to our services included:

- Introductory meetings with new campus administrators
- Presentations to new student orientation staff and resident advisors
- Presentations to department chairs and business officers and to College and Divisional meetings
- Presentation at the Professional Women’s Association Conference
- Presentation at ABOG meetings
- Presentations to Facilities Management
- Informational meetings with CAPS; the behavioral health team; Alcohol and Drug Services; the Police Department; the Student Advocates; Office of International Students and Scholars.

Education and Prevention Program

In addition to addressing conflict and concerns on an individual basis, the Ombuds is committed to preventing conflict and reducing problems community-wide. The purpose of this educational initiative is to increase awareness of common campus difficulties, provide tools and strategies for addressing these difficulties and thereby both positively impact the campus climate and help prevent future conflict. Taking cues from the specific concerns brought to the office, Caroline has developed several new workshops to prevent concerns from arising and empower individuals to resolve conflicts. Communication and respect are top concerns for all visitors, and several workshops address these concerns as well as their underlying causes. The following is a sampling of this year’s Education and Prevention Program offerings which have each been offered to up to seven times:

Workshops
• Drive to Thrive to promote staff engagement and success
• Crucial Conversations to promote staff interpersonal conflict resolution
• Conflict Chameleon: 4 Conflict Styles to promote self-understanding and collaboration
• Conflict Chameleon: Building Effective Partnerships with Faculty to promote staff communication skills, understanding and collaboration with faculty

Tailored Department Activities
In addition, when concerns are brought forth which affect an entire department or group, we may engage a variety of department-wide solutions. We design and issue climate surveys and/or department interviews. We also design workshops to facilitate information sharing and group skill development. We make every attempt to involve participants and leadership in the development of the workshop.

Individual Meetings
We engage in outreach to our stakeholders in a variety of ways. Kirsi continued this year with individual meetings with campus leaders and senior administrators to hear their perspectives and concerns about the campus community. The meetings continue to include Deans, Directors, Vice Chancellors, etc. Caroline continued to meet with departmental Business Officers, Ramey met with departmental Undergraduate Advisors, and Michael had individual meetings with new chairs.

Observations and Interpretations
This year our country engaged in a number of national conversations on topics such as: marriage equality, race relations, police enforcement practices and sexual violence/sexual assault. We believe that these national conversations have catalyzed our community members to engage with renewed vigor and a heightened sensitivity regarding the campus climate and issues of fairness.

In the course of our work this year, we observed the following trends:

• Continuing concerns regarding administrative system changes that will be implemented on campus
• Continuing concerns regarding re-organization on campus
• Ongoing budgetary challenges (although with many areas of campus seeing relief from the worst budget cuts and freezes), FTE available for staffing levels has not increased, and this is putting a great deal of pressure on many departments
• Continued discouragement regarding compensation levels for non-represented staff and perceived lack of respect for the contribution staff make to the university
• Continued discouragement among staff regarding lack of career development opportunities
• Concern about a lack vision and strategic plan for the future of UCSB
• Concern about the situation in Isla Vista, and how to improve it
• Increased awareness of the need for strategies to deal with incivility
- Concern for the accuracy and equity of performance management on all levels of the university
- Increasing awareness regarding transgender members of the university community

We appreciate the fact that we have access to individuals at all levels of the institution and that, in general, senior administrators are open to hearing about concerns in their areas.

**Plans For 2015-2016**

- Provide high quality service to the UCSB community consistent with IOA Standards of Practice
- Roll out specialized Crucial Conversations training for faculty, senior administrators and business officers, and expand current offerings for staff
- Meet one-on-one with senior leadership, prioritizing new senior administrators
- Meet one-on-one with department chairs, department managers, and undergraduate advisors to initiate relationships and provide support and referral services.
- Increase our attendance of continuing education opportunities and professional development to maintain knowledge of the current landscape and improve our skills.
- Influence the development of our field by providing thought leadership in national organizations, authoring professional publications and presenting at professional conferences.
- Attend campus training sessions to learn and remain current on campus policies and procedures
- Share our resources (such as books from a small lending library and information about campus and community resources).