The Office of the Ombuds at UC Santa Barbara is an in-house yet independent, impartial, and confidential resource providing informal consultation and conflict resolution to the UCSB community. The Ombuds serve faculty, staff, students, parents, or anyone else with a campus-related concern. The Ombuds address workplace issues, interpersonal conflict, academic concerns, policy questions, and many other problems, whether as a first step, last resort, or at any point along the way. As neutrals, the ombuds are not investigators or arbiters. The Ombuds do not advocate for any particular person or constituency’s interests but are committed to fairness in the handling of issues and provide feedback to University officials.

- The Ombuds ensure that people have a clear understanding of policies and processes to make decisions and access resources. The Office of the Ombuds is not an office of notice, and can help individuals identify options for making a formal complaint or report, or for informal resolution. The Office of the Ombuds is recognized by the University of California as a confidential resource for concerns related to sexual harassment and gender discrimination.

Ombuds Staff 2018-19

Caroline Adams, Campus Ombuds

Megan DeBrito, Assistant Ombuds

David Rasch, Associate Ombuds

Michael O’Connell, Faculty Ombuds

Services

Workshops
Group Facilitation & Team Building
Individual Consultations
Conflict Coaching
Referrals
Self-Directed Resources

Ombuds Advisory Committee

Carol Lansing, Faculty representative
Cherie Briggs, Faculty representative
Deb Karoff, Staff representative
Dorothy Satomi, Staff representative
Heather Macias, Graduate representative
Berenice Lopez, Undergraduate representative
The Office of the Ombuds provided over 30 unique trainings & skill building sessions specifically tailored for the audience, serving over 500 people, including:

- Communicating with Roommates for undergraduates, in collaboration with ONDAS
- Helping Others Deal with Disappointment
- Active Listening
- Managing Procrastination
- Navigating Challenges in the PhD-Advisor Relationship
- Collaboration
- Crucial Conversations™
- Positive Psychology in the Workplace
The Office of the Ombuds webpage [www.ombuds.ucsb.edu](http://www.ombuds.ucsb.edu) hosts:

- “How-To” guidelines and videos related to communication
- Links to helpful on-campus service providers and places to report misconduct
- Links to UCSB policies related to personnel and conduct
- Reading lists related to communication, conflict resolution, and engagement. These books are also available in the office’s collection.
- Communication tips and articles on social media
### Institutional Risk Highlighted by Visitor Concerns

- **Loss of Departmental Productivity**: 49%
- **Potential for Internal/External Grievances**: 46%
- **Unwarranted Attrition/Transfer**: 33%
- **Violations of Policy/Code of Conduct**: 29%
- **Negative Publicity**: 13%
- **Litigation Potential**: 12%
- **High Risk Safety Issue**: 6%

### Visitor Self-report: “Before I came to the office, I was considering.....”

- Giving up and remaining disgruntled: 29%
- Not talking to anyone about the issue: 26%
- Filing a lawsuit: 7%
- Leaving my position: 20%
- Filing a grievance/complaint: 20%
- Not sure what to do - exploring options: 7%
All Visitors

Visitor Position

- Undergrad: 28%
- Graduate: 8%
- Staff: 48%
- Faculty: 14%

Compared to Representation on Campus

- Undergrad: 61%
- Graduate: 8%
- Staff: 48%
- Faculty: 3%

Visitor Position (detail)

- Undergraduate: 23%
- Tenured: 8%
- Tenure-track: 0%
- Supervisor: 7%
- SMG: 2%
- Post-doc: 1%
- Parent: 1%
- Other Staff: 19%
- Manager/MSO/Director: 17%
- Lecturer/SOE: 2%
- Other: 1%
- Other Faculty: 0%
- Community Member: <1%
- Chair: 3%
- Alumnus/a: 1%
- Transfer (undergrad): 4%
- Graduate: 9%
- Tenure: 0%
- Post-doc: 1%
- Parent: 1%
All Visitors

Top Concerns of All Visitors 2017-18 & 2018-19

- Respect/Treatment
- Management Effectiveness
- Poor Communication Skills
- Communication
- Use of Positional Power
- Departmental Climate
- Performance/Appraisal/Grading
- Mental Health
- Equity of Treatment
- Ethical Dilemma/s
- Bullying/Mobbing

FY 18-19
FY 17-18
Visitors often come to the Office of the Ombuds to manage conflict with another individual, or to seek consultation related to the actions of another individual.

18-19 Concern about or Conflict with:

- Visitor: Graduate
  - Faculty: 54%
  - Staff: 14%
  - Student: 18%
  - Total: 8%

- Visitor: Faculty
  - Faculty: 60%
  - Staff: 21%
  - Student: 28%
  - Total: 19%

- Visitor: Student
  - Faculty: 39%
  - Staff: 28%
  - Student: 19%
  - Total: 18%

- Visitor: Staff
  - Faculty: 18%
  - Staff: 72%
  - Student: 0%
  - Total: 6%
60% of faculty concerns are related to another faculty member

Sonia and Robert are both faculty in the same department. Robert’s specific area relates to hands-on, direct work. Sonia’s area relates to theory. Robert values real world results and action. Sonia values innovative ideas with intellectual rigor. The two of them have very different views of how to value the work of their colleagues and students. Both feel disrespected by each other, and feel that department resources are distributed unfairly. *

The Ombuds can help each of them to explore their interests and try to understand each other better to improve their working relationship.

Keli is a full professor who is widely respected in the field and seems to control faculty meetings. Lee is new to the faculty and finds that every time they speak, Keli basically ignores them. Sometimes Keli will just speak over Lee, other times, Keli will use derogatory language to insult Lee. Lee cannot understand why the other faculty put up with this and thinks the chair should do something.*

The Ombuds can help Lee to raise concerns in a non-confrontational manner. The Ombuds could also provide guidance to the chair in constructive ways to address behavior in a faculty meeting.

*Not an actual scenario
Monty is chair of his department. One of his colleagues, Jack, is very stubborn and aggressive in meetings. Also, lately his outbursts seem to have gotten worse. Another member of the department reported that Jack said something racist to a graduate student.*

The Ombuds can help the chair walk through the many issues involved in the situation, as well as any applicable policies and other campus offices. Finally, the ombuds can help the chair think through different options for addressing the situation, and coach the chair in conversations he may consider having.

*Not an actual scenario
Top Concerns of Non-Supervisory Staff

- Management Effectiveness: 35%
- Communication: 32%
- Respect/Treatment: 24%
- Departmental Climate: 23%
- Work Related Stress/Work-Life Balance: 18%
- Poor Communication Skills: 16%
- Use of Positional Power: 13%
- Communication Failures: 12%
- Discipline: 12%
- Bullying/Mobbing: 11%
- Equity of Treatment: 11%

Top Concerns of Mid-Level Staff

- Management Effectiveness: 41%
- Respect/Treatment: 33%
- Poor Communication Skills: 30%
- Standards of Conduct: 25%
- Work Related Stress/Work-Life Balance: 23%
- Communication: 22%
- Quality of Services: 22%
- Departmental Climate: 15%
- Use of Positional Power: 15%
- Performance/Appraisal: 13%
- Career Development: 11%
- Change Management: 11%
- Bullying/Mobbing: 11%

Top Concerns of Directors and Administrators

- Communication: 30%
- Management Effectiveness: 27%
- Departmental Climate: 22%
- Poor Communication Skills: 19%
- Respect/Treatment: 18%
- Bullying/Mobbing: 16%
- Change Management: 13%
- Quality of Services: 13%
- Communication Failures: 10%
- Campus Climate: 10%
- Work Related Stress/Work-Life Balance: 10%
- Discrimination: 9%

UCSB Office of the Ombuds 2018-19
Sam has been in the department for 20 years and has a new manager, Roberto. She can’t believe that this person got the job over her. She doesn’t even think that Roberto has any management experience. Sam feels micromanaged and that it is a “hostile work environment.”*

Sam goes to the Ombuds to complain. The Ombuds talks about her options and helps Sam see the situation from Roberto’s perspective. The Ombuds coaches Sam in finding ways that she can communicate her value, skills, and what she needs from Roberto, as well as finding ways to collaborate with Roberto.

*Not an actual scenario

Gregory is relatively new in his department and is one of the few male staff. He feels like he’s kept in the dark. He’s not clear about the mission of his unit and his peers don’t keep him in the loop. If something doesn’t change, he is going to leave.*

He meets with the Ombuds who helps him think through options and goals. He decides as a first step to have a conversation with his supervisor about how he can be more helpful with more information.

Paulina is a director and is concerned about low morale in her unit. Since she came in 18 months ago, there has been a lot of turnover. She thinks it may be due to a very “toxic” employee. Even Paulina is afraid of her.*

The Ombuds discusses Paulina’s options with her, ranging from speaking directly with Paulina, to working with the unit as a whole. Paulina and the Ombuds decide to do a short survey of the team, followed by a series of team-building retreats and skill-building workshops.
**Graduate Students**

Robert was frustrated with his advisor’s responses to his dissertation research proposal. He felt that feedback from his advisor took a long time to receive, and was often confusing or contradictory. He was falling behind his cohort for advancing to candidacy, and having doubts about remaining in graduate school.

Robert was apprehensive about discussing the issue with his advisor, because she was extremely busy, and could be quite critical and moody.

After meeting with the ombuds he felt he had the tools for initiating a conversation that was clear and direct about his concerns, but also respectful.

Alicia sought help from the ombuds office after an argument with her primary advisor. She had come to the conclusion that they were not well matched.

In her meetings with the ombuds she explored the pros and cons of changing advisors, and eventually decided to make a switch. She worked with the ombuds to develop a plan for finding a suitable new advisor, and communicating with her advisor and department about the change in a diplomatic way.

*Not an actual scenario*
Undergraduate Students

Thomas had received what he thought to be an incorrect grade on a paper. When he attempted to speak to the Professor, the Professor was dismissive and the initial conversation did not go well. He felt powerless and didn’t know what to do next.*

The Ombuds worked with the Thomas to develop communication strategies for future discussions, and explored various options. As a result, Thomas gained skills and an idea of how to move forward.

Tamara is on an exchange program from Bangladesh. She felt excluded and ridiculed by her class work group. She was embarrassed and hurt, not knowing what to do.*

She found the Ombuds office was a safe place where she could be heard. The Ombuds explored resources available to her and other steps she could take. She felt validated and empowered, and decided to propose alternative ways to complete the group project to the Professor.

*Not an actual scenario
This overview of concerns of the individual visitors to the Office of the Ombuds, 2018-19, shows Top Concerns selected from the following categories

**Individual Concern**
- Mental Health
- Substance Abuse
- Ethical Dilemmas
- Reputation
- Equity of Treatment
- Respect/Treatment
- Bullying/Mobbing
- Compensation/Benefits
- Career Development, Coaching, Mentoring
- Communication
- Hiring & Recruitment
- Classification and Job Description
- Tenure / Position Security
- Work Related Stress & Work-Life Balance
- Performance Appraisal/Grading
- Discipline
- Resignation
- Termination/Non-Renewal

**Concerns with Others’ Performance**
- Quality of Services
- Timeliness of Service Response
- Management or Faculty Effectiveness
- Use of Positional Power
- Poor Communication Skills

**Systemic Concerns**
- Administrative Decisions, Rule Interpretation/Application
- Change Management
- Departmental Climate
- Campus Climate
- Campus Leadership Priorities
- Allocations of Funding
- Standards of Conduct
- Values and Culture
- Communication Failures

**Policy or Legal Violation**
- Conflict of Interest / Ethics
- Business and Financial Practices
- Intellectual Property Rights
- Scientific Conduct/Integrity
- Safety
- Physical Violence
- Criminal Activity
- Harassment
- Discrimination
- Disability
- Accessibility
- Retaliation
Visitor Comments
from anonymous surveys

“The Office of the Ombuds really helped me during one of the most stressful times in my life. [The Ombuds] was extremely kind and helpful throughout this process. [Their] ability to be supportive yet neutral on the situation amazes me and would not be doing better without [their] help. The Office of the Ombuds is really the underdog at UCSB. They are here to help anyone. I would definitely come again.”

“This conversation really helped me understand my reaction to a conflict with my colleague and how to move forward from it.”

“Not only did I feel that someone listened and helped, but at the same time I was really impressed by the way he/she listened and helped. I feel being cared [for], respected and now at the ease of mind knowing what to do next. Thank you so much!”

“[The Ombuds] is an inspiration and very helpful to keep us on track with thoughts and words when asking questions or expressing needs in a professional respectful manner.”

“The Ombuds who helped me was a great listener and really gave me agency over the conversation. I came in unsure of what to do about my situation, and now, I feel like there are some tangible “next steps” I can take.”

“Very much valued the support. Made to feel that my problem was important. Thanks!”

“Very professional. I feel comfortable bringing up the issues.”

“Thanks very much for creating a safe space, for listening well, and talking it through thoroughly. Thanks for validating that this was a real issue and that my feelings about it were understandable.”

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Visitor Comments from anonymous surveys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would use the Office again or refer others to the Office.</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ombuds helped me identify and evaluate the options.</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ombuds carefully listened to and understood my concerns.</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt comfortable discussing my problem with the ombuds and was treated with respect.</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I trust the Office of the Ombuds to maintain confidentiality.</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt the physical space contributed to the sense of privacy/safety/confidentiality.</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was easy to contact the Office of the Ombuds.</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Individual Consultations
Demographics:
Gender

Faculty Visitors

Male Faculty 45%
Female Faculty 55%

All Faculty

Male 60%
Female 40%

Staff Visitors

Male 29%
Non-binary 1%
Female 70%

All Staff

Male 48%
Female 52%

Graduate Student Visitors

Male 38%
Female 54%
Non-binary 8%

All Graduate Students

Female 44%
Male 56%
Demographics: Race & Ethnicity

18-19 Undergraduate Visitors

- White Caucasian: 44%
- African American/Black: 5%
- Asian, Asian-American: 36%
- Mexican, Mexican-American, Chicano: 8%
- Native American/Alaska Native: 2%
- Spanish-American, Latino/Hispanic: 5%

All Undergraduates

- White/Caucasian: 38%
- Asian, Asian-American: 29%
- Chicano/Latino: 31%
- Native American: 1%
- Other: 0%
- African American/Black: 1%