



# **ANNUAL REPORT ACADEMIC YEAR 2009-10**



THE UNIVERSITY  
*of*  
**WISCONSIN**  
MADISON

**Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff  
Annual Report for Academic Year 2009-2010**

**THE VISITORS**

**Demographic Characteristics**

- 60 total number of Visitors
- 63% academic staff; 15% faculty (8% tenured, 7% non-tenured); 10% classified staff; 4% students; 8% other or unknown
- 13% targeted minority status
- 72% female
- 58% employed at UW-Madison for more than 5 years

**Their General Concerns**

- 157 total number of issues identified
- 97% had concerns with evaluative and supervisory relationships
- 90% had conflicts with peers or colleagues
- 35% reported lack of respect or unequal treatment from colleagues
- 23% reported concerns with employee compensation and benefits
- 22% had concerns about career progression
- 12% reported problems with organizational matters and leadership

**Examples of Specific Issues**

- coworker conflict, involving incivility, disrespect, or bullying
- negotiation of parental or other leave requests
- stress due to unit reorganization or change in supervisors
- receiving appropriate medical insurance /sick leave hours
- denial of job reclassification or tenure
- lack of input and process in making a significant unit reorganization
- lack of clarity in procedures available for review of faculty

**Duration of Cases**

- 2.83 hours on average per Visitor
- Duration ranged from one telephone conversation to multiple visits with one or more individuals over several months

### **Ombuds' Actions with Visitors**

- 79% careful listening
- 75% assistance with clarifying issues
- 73% identified alternative approaches to solve identified problems
- 16% with the agreement of the Visitor, we contacted the visitor's supervisor for information
- 15% sought information or assistance for our Visitor from other people within the University
- 5% arranged meetings among the visitor and University staff in a position to help
- 5% acted as intermediaries in informal mediation. We sometimes accompanied the Visitor to these arranged meetings.

## **THE OMBUDS**

### **Outreach Activities**

- consultations with individuals directly related to specific visitors
- translated Ombuds' brochure into Spanish, Hmong, and Tibetan
- visits with campus leaders and units to prompt referral of Visitors
- appearance at campus events to publicize Ombuds' services, e.g., Diversity Forum, Benefits Fair, Women Faculty Mentoring Program Reception, Academic Staff Assembly, Faculty Senate, Union representatives
- attendance at campus and national and international events for professional development of Ombuds staff

### **Concerning Trends Observed on Campus**

- impact of budget restraints and reorganization on employees
- performance evaluation policies for academic staff
- civility among faculty, academic and classified staff
- unclear reporting lines in joint or dual appointments
- impacts of ineffective human resource management by inexperienced/untrained supervisors on vulnerable staff
- timely communication to staff being affected by supervisory, location, and procedural changes in the unit, e.g., crisis management, fiscal concerns.

### **Future Directions for Ombuds Office**

- align Ombuds Office priorities with relevant principles of framework for inclusive excellence
- address emerging UW workplace climate problems by being more" proactive"

and “collaborative.”

- identify avenues to reach underserved communities of workers, e.g., Hmong employees, Tibetan employees, late-shift workers
- build a constituency of campus partners to support Ombuds’ services
- promote “Best Practices” through commendations for achieving workplace equity and improving climate
- optimize opportunities for professional development of Ombuds staff

### **Accountability of Ombuds Office**

- The confidential nature of the service provided by Ombuds precludes an outcome assessment by visitors or third parties. Thus, we gauge our effectiveness through such indices as the timeliness of making initial contacts with Visitors, the number and range of interventions provided to visitors, and unsolicited feedback from Visitors. Quality assurance is maintained through weekly staffing meetings in which all on-going cases are discussed. In addition to visitor-centered activities, impact on the campus community can be observed in our modeling of effective communication and problem-solving strategies with others in the Visitors’ work environments. Finally, we attempt to generalize what we learn in working with specific individuals to the larger campus community.