



WISCONSIN

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

November 1, 2023

Dear Provost Isbell,

We are pleased to submit the Annual Report for the UW-Madison Ombuds Office for the Academic Year 2022-2023.

UW-Madison Ombuds are emeritus faculty, academic staff, and university staff from across campus. Ombuds continually update their knowledge of processes and policies relevant to all university employment categories.

The Ombuds Office is a safe place where UW-Madison employees can seek guidance regarding workplace concerns at any time, without fear of reprisal, and at no cost to them. Ombuds provide faculty and staff with a confidential place to collaboratively explore complaints, clarify issues, and consider options and resources to address their concerns. Ombuds are impartial and non-aligned, working to promote fairness in the workplace.

The Ombuds Office employs emeritus faculty and staff who work part-time as a team of consultants. There are six individuals who share these responsibilities and who report to the provost.

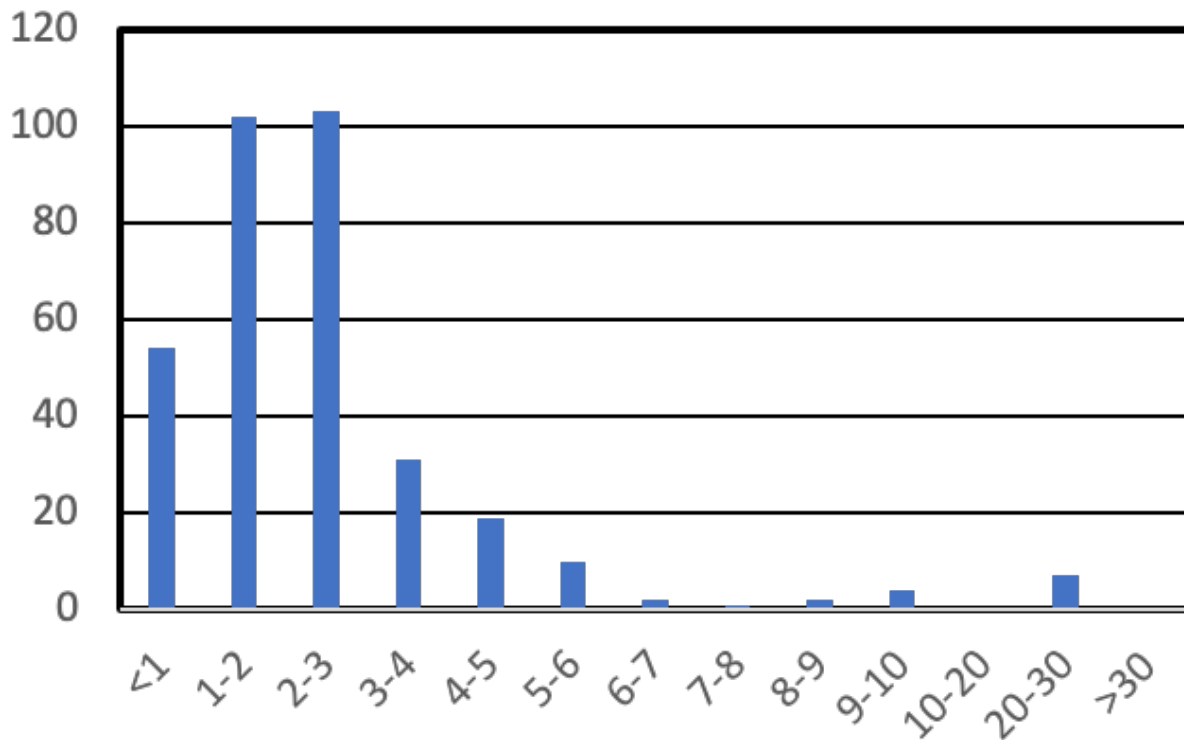
Important qualifications for Ombuds include:

- Knowledge of university policies and resources
- Extensive cross-campus experience
- Strong communication skills
- Ability to be objective and impartial

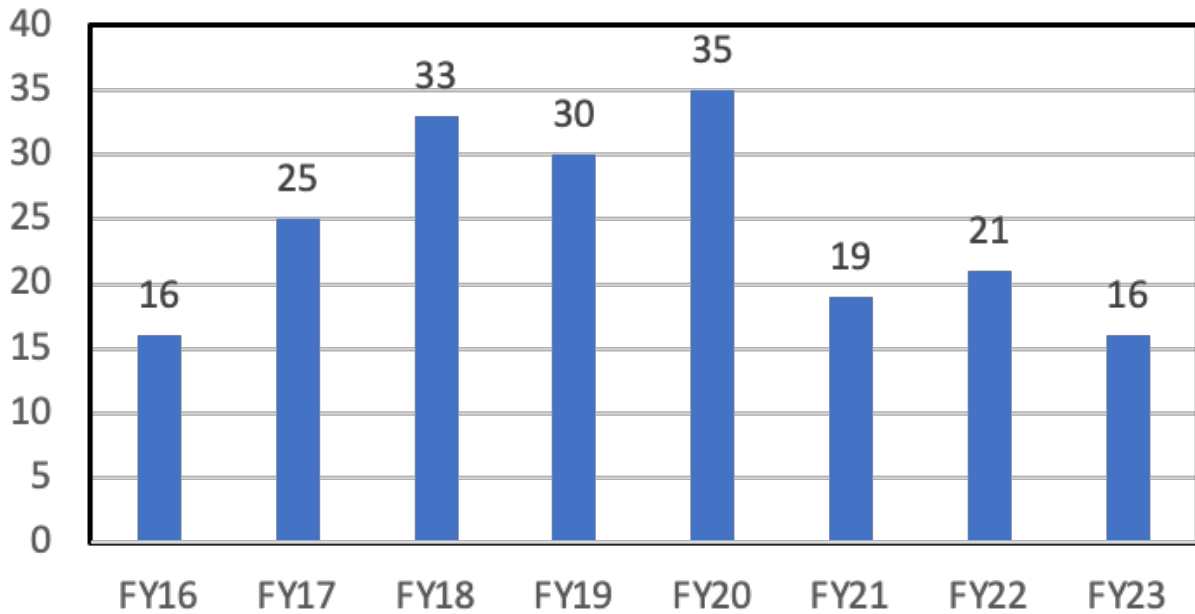
The following charts summarize this past academic year:

	AY 22-23	AY 21-22	AY 20-21
Cases (10.5% increase)	337	305	268
Average Hours per case	2.0	2.4	2.5
Hostile and Intimidating Behavior (HIB)	16.00%	21.30%	19.40%
Evaluative Relationships	56%	57%	64%

Hours/Case AY 22-23



% Hostile and Intimidating Behavior



Hostile and Intimidating Behavior related cases remain lower than pre-Covid amounts, probably related to much work still being done remotely during the AY23 timeframe. Employees seem to be more aware of the possibility of working informally to mitigate hostile and intimidating behavior, instead of filing a formal complaint. HIB training sessions, the HIB liaisons, and information on the HIB website all contribute to employees becoming more knowledgeable about HIB. Ombuds appreciate the work being done to improve the HIB process.

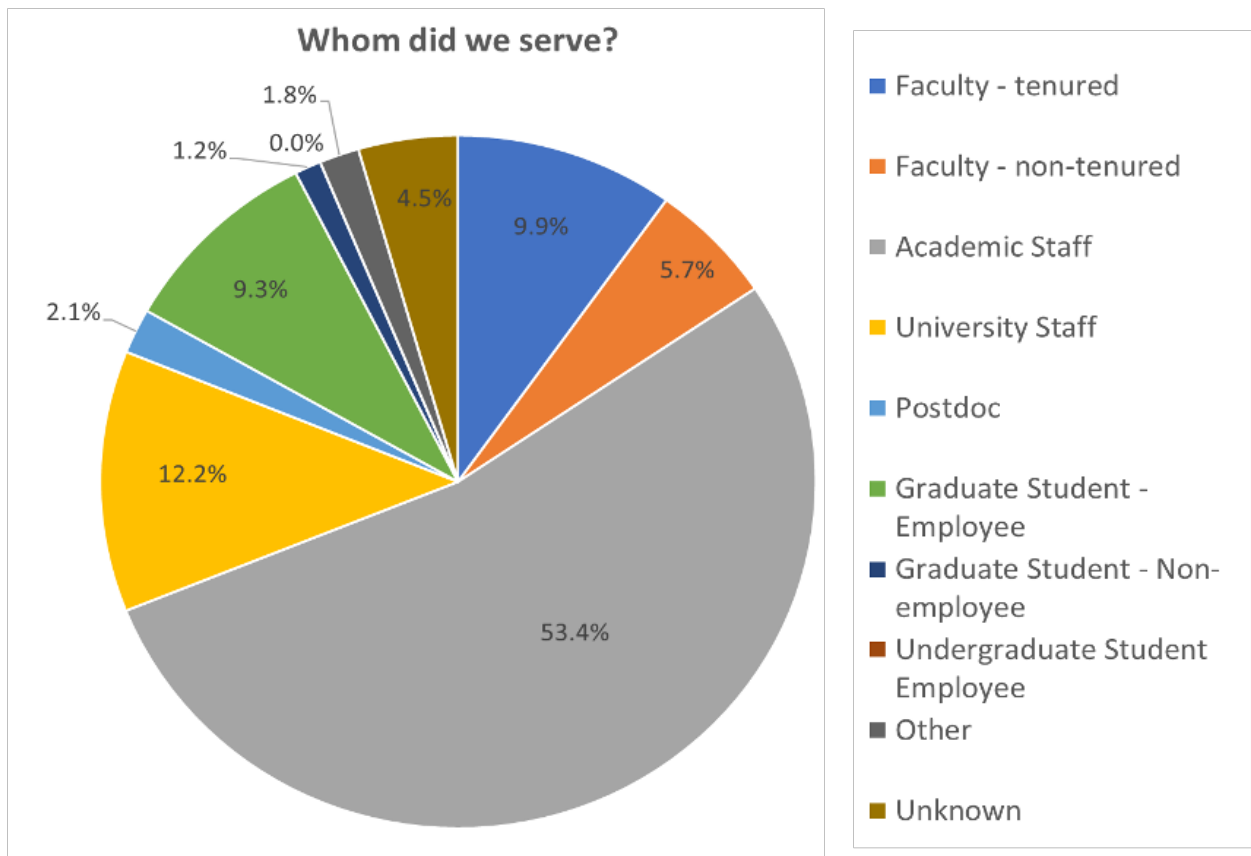
**Cases listing an International Ombuds Association Category
(cases may have multiple IOA categories)**

IOA Category of Issues	Count	Percent Cases AY 23 (AY 22)
Evaluative Relationships	187	56% (57%)
Peer and Colleague Relationships	71	21% (19%)
Career Progression and Development	70	21% (18%)
Compensation and Benefits	53	16% (13%)
Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related	37	11% (11%)
Safety, Health, and Physical Environment	36	11% (9%)
Legal, Regulatory, Financial and Compliance	35	10% (9%)
Services/Administrative Issues	30	9% (9%)
Values, Ethics, and Standards	24	7% (7%)

Evaluative Relationships: The International Ombuds Association uses this term to refer to a supervisor – employee relationship including major professor/Principal Investigator - Graduate Student. Reporting of this category remains the highest IOA category for all issues and supports a need for increased access to supervisor training, coaching, and accountability.

The Learning and Talent Development Office offer robust supervisory training such as Principles of Supervision and Management (offered in person and online) as well as workshops covering specific challenges. Their Fully Prepared to Lead Certificate Program or stand-alone courses are aimed at employees who are interested in developing their skills, even before they become supervisors.

Required individual coaching for new supervisors has proven very effective in developing professional supervisors. Like the training, this individual coaching requires a time commitment on the part of the new supervisors and their Human Resources staff.



Position Types	Count	Percent AY 23 (AY22)
Faculty – tenured	33	9.9% (11.8%)
Faculty - non-tenured	19	5.7% (6.6%)
Academic Staff	179	53.4% (49.8%)
University Staff	41	12.2% (15.2%)
Postdoc	7	2.1% (2.3%)
Graduate Student – Employee	31	9.3% (8%)
Graduate Student - Non-employee	4	1.2% (1%)
Undergraduate Student Employee	0	0% (0.3%)
Other	6	1.8% (3.4%)
Unknown	15	4.5% (0.3%)

As in previous years, Academic Staff dominated our caseload (53%). This was followed by University Staff (12%) and tenured Faculty (10%).

Using the actual number of employees in each employment type from numbers in the 2022-2023 Data Digest, we compared the % of our Visitors in each employment type to the actual % of employees by category.

For all Faculty, we saw a greater proportion of tenured and non-tenured faculty (15.6%) than the percentage of actual faculty/all employees (10%).

The percentage and headcount of academic staff at the University of Wisconsin-Madison continues to increase. In the 2022-2023 academic year, 53% of Visitors to the Ombuds were academic staff; 41% of UW employees were academic staff. [In the 2021-2022 academic year, academic staff were 38% of University employees.]

As the academic staff at the University continues to increase, the percentage and headcount of University staff continues to decline. During the 2022-2023 academic year, university staff totaled 12.2% of our Visitors; 18% of UW employees were university staff. [In the 2021-2022 academic year, university staff were 19% of University employees.]

The percentage of Grad Students that the Ombuds worked with (8%) is lower than the actual percentage of all employees (13%). However, their role is somewhat different than regular employees in that they have concerns as a TA, or issues relative to their major professor/PI, or issues with respect to their research such as intellectual property, or difficulties with their PI allowing them to complete their appointment. The Ombuds participate in a series of presentations for all incoming graduate assistants annually hosted by Luis Piñero's office, to make them aware of the service the Ombuds provide.

Major issues that Ombuds have observed

1. **Supervisor Training, Coaching, and Accountability** – Historically, Evaluative Relationships remains the highest of all IOA categories for Visitor cases. Ombuds encounter this in almost two thirds of all Visitors in dealing with disciplinary related cases, performance evaluations, and general difficulties with the obvious power differential. Ombuds have observed that one-on-one new supervisor coaching and increased accessibility to supervisor training provides increased skills, knowledge, and tools for effective supervision.
2. **Hostile and Intimidating Behavior:** Employees reporting hostile and intimidating behavior less often than in pre-Covid times, probably due to less in-person contact. Ombuds have emphasized the need for clear information about the HIB reporting, investigation, and final report processes, including the differences involved in the informal and formal process.
3. **Need for Mediation Accessibility:** Ombuds have observed that in some cases mediation could be an effective strategy to use to first address situations that arise in the workplace, instead of going immediately to filing a complaint of hostile and intimidating behavior.

- 4. Access to Policies and Procedures for all employees: Having policies and procedures easily accessible on websites for all employment categories would be extremely helpful for all UW employees.
- 5. Employee Career Counseling Office expansion: During the last six months, this office has grown from one career counselor to 2.5 counselors and moved to the Office of Human Resources. The Career Counseling Office is an excellent resource for UW-Madison employees.

Ombuds Challenges/Goals and Action Plans

<p>Institutional memory of the Ombuds team. Ombuds serve staggered three year terms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Extensive use of Ombuds Box ● Review/update Orientation/Operations manual annually ● Mentor new Ombuds ● Role for new Ombuds for first six months: Learner ● Rotate Ombuds Roles -Convener, Recruitment, Training, Technology, Outreach, Resources ● Work closely with Provost Office Staff
<p>Continue to build and nurture campus partnerships and introduce newest Ombuds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● VP for Faculty & Staff – quarterly ● Secretary of the Academic Staff – quarterly ● Secretary of the Faculty – semi-annually ● Employee Assistance Office ● Employee Career Counseling Office ● Office of Strategic Consulting ● Workforce Relations, School and College HR Directors, HR Reps ● HIB Liaisons ● Division of Diversity, Equity, and Educational Achievement ● Employee Disability Resources Office ● Cultural Linguistic Services ● Chief Human Resources Officer <p>[partial list]</p>

<p>Continuous training of Ombuds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continuously fine tune and present our own Ombuds Training, updated annually ● Visitor case reviews at weekly Ombuds staff meeting ● Campus Partners (partial list above) regularly attend weekly Ombuds staff meetings to provide updated information
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Respectfully submitted,

The Ombuds Team:

Bruno Browning, Jane Dymond, Rob Howell, Gloria Hawkins, Tom Kuech, Beth Dawson

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