



**ANNUAL REPORT  
ACADEMIC YEAR 2014-2015**



THE UNIVERSITY  
*of*  
**WISCONSIN**  
MADISON

**Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff  
Annual Report for Academic Year 2014-2015**

**THE VISITORS: 94**

**Demographic Characteristics [Please note: comparative campus percentages are presented in brackets following each bullet point.]**

- Percentage of visitors by employee classification:
  - 57.45% academic staff [37% of campus faculty and staff].
  - 13.83% faculty (8 tenured, 5 non-tenured) [12% of campus faculty and staff].
  - 13.83% classified staff [29% of campus faculty and staff].
  - 13.83% student employees [14% of campus faculty and staff].
  - 1% non-university community members
- 7.45% minority status [20.3% of campus faculty and staff].
- 58.51 % female [47.9% of campus faculty and staff]
- 48.94% employed at UW-Madison for more than 5 years [54% of current employees have a UW Madison position that began more than 5 years ago.]

**Their General Concerns: The Ombuds assisted with a total of 199 issues, as visitors would sometimes bring more than one issue to our attention.**

**Percentages of individual issues identified by the Ombuds were:**

- 85.11% reported concern with evaluative and supervisory relationships.
- 43.62% reported conflicts with peers or colleagues.
- 26.60% reported concerns about career progression.
- 14.89% reported concerns with organization, strategic and mission related administrative issues.
- 11.70% reported concerns with employee compensation and benefits.
- 10.65% reported concerns with legal, regulatory, or financial issues
- 8.51% reported concerns with safety, health, or physical environment
- 6.38% reported concerns with values, ethics, standards
- 4.26% reported concerns with service and administrative issues

**Examples of Concerns**

- Changes in organizational structures or departmental processes create confusion or perceived inequity for employees.

- Unclear and inequitable position expectations.
- Confusion and misunderstanding regarding departmental/unit staff responsibilities regarding HR policies and processes.
- Understanding of policies and procedures regarding discipline, dismissal, and performance review.
- Supervisor failure to follow university processes or to honor prior commitments to employees.
- Hostile and intimidating behavior from supervisor, subordinate, or co-worker.

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

- 82.98% assisted with clarifying issues.
- 56.38% provided reflective listening and feedback.
- 47.87% generated alternative approaches to solve identified problems.
- 21.28% provided information only.
- 6.38% sought information or assistance for our Visitor from other people within the University.
- 5.32% with the agreement of the Visitor, contacted the visitor's supervisor for information.
- 5.32% acted as intermediaries in informal facilitation. We sometimes accompanied the Visitor to these arranged meetings.
- 1% arranged meetings among the visitor and University staff in a position to help.

### **Observed Problematic Trends On Campus**

- Interactions between supervisors and staff including uncomfortable interactions, perceived bullying and stressful environments.
- Employee understanding of process leading to non-renewal.
- Employee concerns regarding disciplinary and performance management issues.
- Increased responsibilities, unclear supervision and student/employee conflicts for graduate assistants.
- Need for coaching employees in communication strategies with supervisors, subordinates, and co-workers.
- Lack of employee understanding of University policies regarding a wide variety of personnel issues including FMLA, benefits, emeritus, insurances, retirement or termination benefit questions, ethics, and personal/personnel relationships.

## **THE OMBUDS**

### **Outreach Activities**

- Consulted with individuals directly related to specific visitors.
- Participated in campus events to publicize and educate staff regarding Ombuds' services:
  - Governance activities:
    - Academic Staff Assembly
    - Classified (University) Staff Congress
    - Faculty Senate
    - Academic Staff Executive Committee joint meeting with representatives of Committees on Academic Staff Issues (CASI's).
  - Professional Development for UW employees:
    - Benefits' Fair.
    - Badgerwatch Safety conference.
    - Graduate Students' Equity and Diversity Workshops.
    - New Chairs and Director's Orientation.
- Collaborated with other campus entities:
  - Met regularly with representatives of the Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) and SMPH Ombuds Office.
  - Co-chaired search committee for SMPH Ombuds.
  - Attended presentations by candidates for EAP staff position
  - Consulted with and advised the Ad Hoc Anti-bullying Committee.

### **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 and other Ombuds and HR providers. Quality assurance is maintained through weekly staffing meetings in which all on-going cases are discussed in detail. 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.