University of Colorado at Boulder

Ombudsman Office
Annual Report

July 1988 - June 1989
# Table of Contents

To the Reader.......................................................... 1  
General Observations.................................................. 3  
Breakdown of Clients.................................................. 4  
Ethnic Minority Student, Staff and Faculty Use of Office........... 5  
Student Use of Office.................................................. 6  
   Student Case Categories........................................... 7  
   Commentary on Student Case Categories.......................... 8  
Staff Use of Office.................................................... 9  
   Staff Case Categories.............................................. 9  
   Commentary on Staff Case Categories............................. 10  
Faculty Use of Office.................................................. 11  
   Faculty Case Categories.......................................... 11  
   Commentary on Faculty Case Categories........................... 11  
Parent Use of Office.................................................. 12  
Ombudsman Assistance and Case Outcomes............................ 13  
   Types of Assistance by Ombudsman................................ 13  
   Outcomes of Ombudsman Cases...................................... 13  
Non-Client-Related Accomplishments.................................. 14  
   Conflict Management Workshops................................... 14  
   Training Others.................................................. 14  
   Sexual Harassment Work.......................................... 14  
   Teaching.......................................................... 15  
   Presentations/Consultations..................................... 15  
   Committee Work.................................................. 15  
   Special Projects................................................. 16  
   Professional Development......................................... 16
1988 - 89 Ombudsman Office Annual Report

To the Reader:

Attached you will find a simple statistical report describing types of clients, types of cases, types of assistance provided by the Ombudsman Office staff and outcomes of cases. Narrative accompanies each section to provide comparisons to previous years. There is one additional section to this report: a summary of non-client related accomplishments including: conflict management workshops, training, presentations/consultations, sexual harassment work, committee work and special projects.

Overall, this year was one of great stability and productivity. A permanent full-time Associate Ombudsman was hired, we served more clients than ever, offered more workshops than in previous years, and developed and coordinated the Conflict and Community Symposium. With the implementation of the Sexual Harassment Policy (11/88) the Ombudsman Office provided increased leadership and service in the handling of the often complex and challenging sexual harassment cases. Both Ombudsmen have been extensively trained in this area and have provided many hours in education and training on sexual harassment for the University community.

The Ombudsman Office received two grants during 1988-89. A one-thousand dollar grant came from the Parents Association to print and mail the Reminder Calendar to parents of all CU-Boulder freshman students. We received many positive comments from parents about this mailing. The increased awareness for parents about Ombudsman Office services caused contacts from parents to quadruple over last year. We saw this as a mixed blessing. Parental knowledge of our office affects our ability to serve freshman students and this aids in the retention of those students. The eighty-three new cases generated through parental contact also kept us very busy!

The second grant of $10,000 came from the Office of Housing Services and served to support the Cross-Cultural Mediation Project. This project had two major components: creation and implementation of on-site mediation services supported by trained volunteers for the approximately 900 units in Family Housing and a special training program for all Family Housing Staff in conflict management. The project was co-sponsored by the Multi-Cultural Center for Counseling and Community Development (MCCCD). All volunteer mediators and staff were trained in inter-cultural communication issues.

To further our commitment to embracing and understanding cultural diversity we also participated in MCCCD's year long cross-cultural training for staff, attended numerous conferences where ethnic diversity was the focus, increased our library on cultural issues and served on the Chancellor's Committee on Minority Affairs. Increasing access and services for minority
students, staff and faculty will continue to be a major focus for us in 1989-90.

As always, the staff of the Ombudsman Office welcomes your feedback on ways to improve all of our services. We continue to believe that the healthy management of conflict contributes to a productive academic community. The staff of the Ombudsman Office looks forward to a productive 1989-90 where the prevention and management of campus disputes will continue to be our major focus.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

Susan Hobson-Panico
Director, Ombudsman Office
OMBUDSMAN OFFICE
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GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Total contacts for 1988-89 reached 657, a 26% increase over 1987-88 and an 85% increase over 1985-86. The 26% increase may be somewhat misleading in that we have kept better track this year of client contacts (phone calls which result in no formal appointment, but where some assistance/information is provided). Client cases have always been carefully counted. Cases usually involve face to face meetings with the Associate Ombudsman or Director, fact finding and identification of appropriate alternatives for resolution. Of all Ombudsman Office contacts, students comprised 46%, staff 24%, parents 16%, unidentified (phone contacts) 8%, faculty 3% and non-university 2% (percentages total 99% due to rounding). The busiest months for client contacts in 1988-89 were September (91), March (69), August (67) and January (67). With the exception of March, this is likely due to the beginning of each semester, and particularly drop/add problems during Fall 1988.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<td>Students:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Freshmen</td>
<td>49</td>
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<td>Sophomores</td>
<td>61</td>
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<tr>
<td>Juniors</td>
<td>48</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>83</td>
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<td><strong>Subtotal:</strong></td>
<td>304</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff:</td>
<td>155</td>
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<td>Faculty:</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>Parents:</td>
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<td>Unidentified (phone contacts):</td>
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<td>Ethnicity</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sixty-three of the 657 client contacts/cases were with Asian (17), Black (21), Hispanic (16), Native American (2), or international (7) students, staff or faculty. Since nearly half of all Ombudsman Office clients' ethnicity is unknown the number of ethnic clients served could well be higher. Considering ethnic minority contacts are nearly 10% of all Ombudsman Office contacts whereas considerably less than 10% of the UCB community is comprised of ethnic minorities, it might be inferred that minorities experience a higher incidence of conflict or feel comfortable seeking assistance from the Ombudsman Office or both. Regardless of why minorities are seeking assistance from our office, the facts indicate that we have an increasingly important role in the retention of those clients through successful management of their conflicts/concerns.
STUDENT USE OF OFFICE

The Ombudsman Office assisted 241 undergraduates, 9 Continuing Education students and 42 graduate students in 1988-89. Graduate students decreased usage by an unexplainable 25% and undergraduates by 13% from 1987-88. Seniors comprised over 1/3 of Ombudsman Office undergraduate contacts with Sophomores 1/4 and Freshmen and Juniors 1/5 each.
Student Case Categories (a single case may fit into more than one case category)

Academic Advising .................................................. 17
Access to documents/Confidentiality ................................ 2
Admission to CU/Questions/General info/MAPS .................. 14
Admission to Department, school or major ..................... 3
Bursar ........................................................................ 21
Cheating/Plagiarism/Academic dishonesty ....................... 12
Conflict with instructor ............................................. 22
Counseling/Personal .................................................. 1
Course Adds and Drops/Class schedule ......................... 78
Course concerns (syllabus, unclear info, etc.) ................. 6
Course credit/illness .................................................. 7
Disabled/Learning disabled ....................................... 7
Discrimination .......................................................... 6
Employment/Pay/Workstudy ....................................... 9
Exams/Scheduling .................................................... 7
Expenses/fees/Finances/Fines/Purchases ....................... 3
Financial Aid/other loans .......................................... 26
Grades ........................................................................ 61
Graduation and degree requirements/Diploma ............... 16
Health services/Insurance ........................................ 20
Housing complaints/Concerns ................................... 17
I Grades ..................................................................... 0
Legal .......................................................................... 6
Miscellaneous .......................................................... 50
Parking ........................................................................ 5
P/F Option .................................................................. 1
Personnel attitudes/Problems/Harassment .................... 13
Police ......................................................................... 6
Probation/Suspension/Dismissal ................................... 14
Rape .......................................................................... 3
Registration/SAVE .................................................... 14
Residency ................................................................. 7
Sexual Harassment .................................................... 9
Student Conduct ....................................................... 8
T/ship ........................................................................ 4
Thesis/Committee ..................................................... 2
Transcripts .................................................................. 5
Transfer credit .......................................................... 12
Use of buildings/phone problems/property .................... 9
Withdrawal ............................................................... 1

Resolved with no appointment/No show/Cancellation ...... 268
Commentary on Student Case Categories

Students' leading concerns brought to the Ombudsman Office in 1988-89 include: Course Adds and Drops/Class schedule (78), Grades (67), Financial Aid/Other loans (26), Conflict with instructor (22), Bursar (21) and Health services/Insurance (20). The 81% increase from 1987-88 in Course Adds and Drops/Class schedule reflects the Fall 1988 SIS difficulties. Other noteworthy increases over 1987-88 include: Academic Advising, Bursar, Health services/Insurance, Sexual Harassment and Rape, and Transfer credit. Significant decreases from 1987-88 include the categories of: Probation/Suspension/Dismissal, Exams/Scheduling, Conflict with instructor and Student Conduct. The most significant of the decreases was in the combined areas of Student Conduct, Police, Legal (1987-88, 38 cases and 1988-89, 20 cases). These categories represent the students who have been arrested as well as those who have gone through the student conduct process. The Ombudsman Office staff believes that this decrease is due, in part, to the supportive and educational approach used by the new Director (Constance Williams) of Student Conduct. Very few students have felt dissatisfied with the Student Conduct process as administered by Ms. Williams.
STAFF USE OF OFFICE

Staff contacts (155) with the Ombudsman Office increased by 89% over 1987-88 and were more than triple staff's 1986-87 contacts. Since the majority of our referrals come from word of mouth this may reflect a natural increase over the past few years as knowledge, understanding and credibility of the Ombudsman Office has grown. Additionally, the Ombudsman Office presented a much larger number of workshops for staff during 1988-89 which may explain, in part, the marked increase.

Staff Case Categories (a single case may fit into more than one case category)

- Alcohol ______ 4
- Benefits ______ 3
- Conflict with co-worker ______ 15
- Conflict with supervisor ______ 61
- Discipline ______ 1
- Discrimination ______ 7
- Evaluation/PACE ______ 9
- Family Housing ______ 1
- Harassment ______ 5
- Hiring/Firing/Promotion ______ 10
- Legal ______ 1
- Miscellaneous ______ 12
- Pay/Loans ______ 5
- Personal problems ______ 3
- Police/Parking ______ 4
- Sexual Harassment ______ 16
- Sick/Annual leave ______ 3
- State Personnel Grievance ______ 4
- Working conditions ______ 23

- No show/Cancellation ______ 15
Commentary on Staff Case Categories

Conflict with supervisor (61) comprised 39% of all staff contacts, followed (distantly) by Working conditions (23; 15%) Sexual Harassment (16; 10%), and Conflict with co-worker (15; 10%).

Each of the above areas represented a significant increase over 1987-88. Conflict with supervisor increased 74%; Working conditions, 360%; Sexual Harassment, eightfold (from 2 to 16); and Conflict with co-worker, 67%. Incidents of Harassment (non-sexual) rose from zero in 1987-88 to five in 1988-89, and Discrimination rose from one to seven in 1988-89. There were no significant decreases.

All of these increases point to a continued need to examine our human resource policies and practices, pursue training and education on conflict management for supervisors and staff, and maintain significant focus on sexual harassment training on campus.
FACULTY USE OF OFFICE

Faculty contacts (21) increased considerably over last year's 13 contacts. This increase may be a result of the increased "word of mouth" referrals from one faculty to another about the office function. The Ombudsman Office remains concerned about if and how faculty members resolve disputes between themselves and with administrators or other campus staff. The office intends to explore this question further during 1989-90.

Faculty Case Categories (a single case may fit into more than one case category)

- Benefits
- Conflict with colleague
- Conflict with student
- Discrimination
- General info/Miscellaneous
- Pay/Loans
- Sexual Harassment
- Student policies/procedures
- Tenure/Promotion (reappointment)
- No show/ Cancellation

Commentary on Faculty Case Categories

Primary concerns of faculty who contacted the Ombudsman Office in 1988-89 were Sexual Harassment (5) and Tenure/Promotion (4). The former increased from two in 1987-88; the latter remained the same as last year. There were no faculty complaints of discrimination in 1988-89, as opposed to four in 1987-88.
PARENT USE OF OFFICE

Contacts from parents quadrupled over last year, to 108 for FY 1988-89. This is probably the result of sending Ombudsman Office Reminder Calendars to parents of all incoming freshmen. Parents' major concerns on behalf of their students were: Course Adds and Drops/Class schedule, Academic Advising, Bursar and Health services/Insurance. The Ombudsman Office staff listens to parents' concerns and where appropriate refers them to relevant policies of offices. When their son or daughter has a more serious concern we work directly with that student to resolve their difficulty.
OMBUDDSMAN ASSISTANCE AND CASE OUTCOMES

Types of Assistance by Ombudsman (for students, staff and faculty):

- Referred client to another office: 9
- Alternative course of action clarified: 227
- Inquiries with respondent and other parties: 183
- Mediation, negotiation: 58
- Assistance in formal appeals: 40
- Neutral observation: 2
- Info only: 108

Outcomes of Ombudsman Cases:

- No feedback for client re: outcome: 124
- Client chose not to pursue: 32
- Claim not substantiated: 35
- Respondent provided part of client's request: 51
- Respondent provided all of client's request: 46
- No satisfaction - request ignored or denied: 29
- Pending: 9
- No need to pursue (information only needed): 107

Note: Ombudsman may provide more than one type of assistance in any given case. Usually there is one outcome per case. The total number of outcomes noted above is 433. This was the total number of cases handled by the Associate Ombudsman and Director. The remainder of case contacts were phone contacts which resulted in no formal appointment but where some assistance/information is provided by the support staff.
NON-CLIENT-RELATED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Conflict Management Workshops:

The Ombudsman Office spent 72 hours presenting twenty-one workshops and 333 total staff members participated. Groups that received workshops were:

- Student Administrative Services (1)
- Employee Assistance Program (2)
- Graduate Teacher Program (2)
- Academic Services Directors (1)
- Employee Development Program (7)
- Resident Assistants (1)

Seven workshops were provided to four other units on campus.

Training Others:

- Colorado Dispute Resolvers Forum
- Employee Development Fair
- Conflict Resolution Teleconference
- Financial Aid Aides

Sexual Harassment Work:

The Ombudsman Office staff participated in many meetings and trainings regarding the new sexual harassment policy. The staff spent 18 hours presenting a total of 12 training sessions to: students, staff, faculty, UCD department chairs and deans, ADCOM, Deans Council, Academic Services Directors, Academic Services Departments, and other trainers. The Ombudsman Office Director served as a consultant on two publications (one book, one article) and was a keynote speaker on sexual harassment.
Teaching:

Both Ombudsmen have guest lectured in the Departments of Women Studies and Sociology. Both Ombudsmen were asked to teach a Conflict Management course in Sociology and will possibly do so in Fall 1990.

The Associate Ombudsman and Director created a brief curriculum on Conflict and Communication and taught it to children (grades K-6) in a private elementary school in Boulder.

Presentations/Consultations:

Co-convener, 15th Annual California Caucus of College and University Ombudsmen
Presenter, Corporate Ombudsman Association
Facilitators, City of Boulder's Conference on Women, Work and the New Economy
Presenter, Colorado Council of Mediators and Mediating Organizations
Facilitators, several Boulder community agencies
Presenter, Vice Chancellor's Fellowship Program

Committee Work:

Student Conduct Advisory Board
Sexual Harassment Education Committee
Chancellor's Committee on Minority Affairs
Council of Associate Deans
Drop/Add Working Group
Training and Development Committee
Victim Assistance Committee
Special Projects:

New Student Welcome Panel
Parents Weekend
Conflict and Community Symposium
Observer Program
Associate Ombudsman Search
Cross-Cultural Mediation Project
Reminder Calendar

Professional Development:

Sexual harassment training and teleconference
MCCCD cross-cultural training
Affirmative Action Training
University and College Ombudsman Association conference
National Association of Women Deans and Administrators (multicultural conference)
Black History teleconference
CWAWAC conference on Women and AIDS