

# 2017-2018 Annual Report



**Office of the Ombuds**  
*University of Colorado Boulder*



## ***A Message from the Director***

2017-18 was a year of many presentations for the Ombuds Office. We expanded our prevention efforts by engaging in many multiple conflict related trainings ranging from Crucial Conversations to email civility, advisor relationships to principles of conflict resolution. We partnered with Organizational and Employee Development, the Graduate School, Faculty Relations, Graduate Teacher Program and the College of Engineering.

Our team also completed an overhaul of our website in order to make it ADA compliant. We took this opportunity to change the focus of the website. We revised all of the language of the content to hone in on user experience and to be easy to navigate. We have enjoyed increased traffic to our website since the revision. In addition, our new website has generated applause in the ombuds profession, even being shown as “the best ombuds website” in a national conference keynote on ombuds and technology. We invite you to take a look: <https://www.colorado.edu/ombuds/>

We want to extend a thank you to the many campus departments with whom we have enjoyed deepening collaboration this past year. Some of these departments, such as HR, Faculty Relations, Student Affairs and the OIEC are mentioned in this report, and others must stay anonymous. Our appreciation, however, is genuine regardless of public mention.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kirsi Aulin, MS, LMFT, CO-OP ®  
Director, Ombuds Office  
University of Colorado Boulder

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## Staffing

### Kirsi Aulin, Ombuds Director

Kirsi continued in the role of Director. She is a trained mediator, a Certified Organizational Ombudsman Practitioner (CO-OP®) and a member of the International Ombudsman Association (IOA). Kirsi is one of the founders of the Consortium on Abrasive Conduct in Higher Education (CACHE). CACHE is a national organization made up of leaders from all different types of higher education institutions - from Ivy League schools to large public research universities to smaller liberal arts and community colleges. The consortium aims to bring together university leaders from around the country to promote dialogue, research and thought leadership to resolve the problem of abrasive conduct in academia. Kirsi is also on the Board of Directors for CO-OP®, the certifying organization for Organizational Ombuds. Kirsi's disciplinary background is psychotherapy, and as a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) treated adults, children, families, AIDS patients and people with severe mental illness. Kirsi is an alumna of Bryn Mawr College.

### Jerry Hauser, Professor Emeritus, Faculty Ombuds

Jerry has served CU Boulder faculty in several capacities. He was chair of the Boulder Faculty Assembly for two terms, was chair of the Communication Department for two terms, and served as a faculty mentor for the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program, with responsibility for new faculty in Education, Mass Media, and the Social Sciences. Jerry is a trained mediator and a member of the International Ombudsman Association and the Consortium on Abrasive Conduct in Higher Education. His disciplinary expertise in rhetoric includes rhetorical theory, political rhetoric, and vernacular rhetorics of the public sphere.

### Elizabeth "Liz" Hill, Associate Ombuds

Liz continued as Associate Ombuds. Before joining the CU Boulder Ombuds Office, Liz served as an Arizona Assistant Attorney General, Assistant Ombudsman for the State of Arizona and Ombudsman for Apollo Education Group. Liz is a graduate of Gonzaga University School of Law and earned her B.S. from Northern Arizona University. She is a trained mediator and Certified Organizational Ombudsman Practitioner® (CO-OP®). She is member of the State Bar of Arizona, International Ombudsman Association, and the American Bar Association's Alternative Dispute Resolution Section (ABA) serving as co-chair of the Ombuds Committee.

### Kerry Tay McLean, Ombuds Program Administrator

Kerry, an alumna of the University of Colorado Boulder, assists the Ombuds Office as the Program Administrator; tracking data, analyzing statistics and composing the annual report. While managing the office's administrative work and budgetary tasks, she strives to make our office a safe place to voice and clarify concerns, to understand conflict situations, and to brainstorm action-worthy options and constructive responses.

Lee Potts, Associate Professor Emerita, Faculty Ombuds

Lee has served CU Boulder faculty through participation in numerous college and university committees, as an administrator in the Department of Theatre and Dance, as facilitator for the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program's "Teaching in a Nutshell" and as a leader in numerous campus workshops. Lee is a trained mediator and a member of the International Ombudsman Association and the Consortium on Abrasive Conduct in Higher Education. Lee also has extensive training in psychotherapy through Boulder Psychotherapy Institute. Her disciplinary expertise is in communication and performance coaching and theatrical directing.

### **Professional Development and Service**

Kirsi Aulin serves on the Board of Directors for the Board of Certification for Certified Organizational Ombudsman Practitioners®. Kirsi also serves as the Chair of the Steering Committee for CACHE. Kirsi attended the International Ombudsman Association Annual Conference.

Jerry Hauser attended the International Ombudsman Association Annual Conference.

Liz Hill currently serves as the Co-Chair of the ABA Dispute Resolution Section's Ombuds Committee. Liz attended two conferences: the International Ombudsman Association Annual Conference and the American Bar Association Dispute Resolution's Annual Conference.

Kerry Tay McLean completed the Supporting Student Resiliency Professional Development Series, obtaining concrete skills to better support students at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Lee Potts attended the International Ombudsman Association Annual Conference in Richmond, VA.

### **Physical Space and Operations**

The Ombuds Office is located in Suite N440 in the Center for Community (C4C). There is an auxiliary room in the basement of the ARCE building that is available for overflow. We are grateful for the support of the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs that has allowed the Ombuds Office to use a conference room in C4C for consultations until the end of fall semester 2018.

The Ombuds 2015 ARPAC review recommended having a single location for the Ombuds Office, and until a larger location is identified, we are working in tight quarters. As anticipated in our FY 2016-17 Annual Report, the continuing increase in cases is causing significant space-related problems in our office operations. Having employed several strategies to accommodate our increased volume of business, it was also necessary to adopt non-optimal strategies, such as decreasing outreach efforts.

In 2017-18, the Ombuds Office refined reporting categories for tracking data. Improving these reporting categories will provide greater campus concern detail.

The Ombuds Office revised its website this year to adhere to ADA compliance standards. After revision, we have received numerous compliments on it both from people in our profession as well as campus community members.

### **Demographics**

To track our work, we assign a case number to each person who brings a concern to our office. In the course of working with a person to find a resolution to their concern, we often work with multiple people and departments. Although many cases involve only one meeting to assist the visitor in clarifying issues, interests and options, most cases involve seeking additional information on campus policies, follow-up meetings after the visitor has acquired additional information, or meeting with others.

Our case numbering system does not capture the total number of people involved in creating a resolution, nor does it capture the number of people who have benefited from our work. Therefore we make an effort to estimate the number of people who felt an impact from our work. The number of people who directly benefited from our case consultation services was 880. And we estimate that on 78,747 occasions, people indirectly benefited. Combining case consultation numbers with the number of people who attended trainings we taught and with whom we conducted individual informational meetings, the Ombuds Office reached campus constituents an estimated 81,598 times this year.

When people come to our office for a case consultation, we ask them to complete an anonymous survey. Our response rate for this survey is 33%. In it, we ask visitors to self-report what action they would have taken had they not contacted the Ombuds Office. It is interesting to note the differences in strategies among campus constituent groups.

#### **All survey participants:**

Before I came to the Ombuds Office, I was considering...

35.26%	giving up and remaining disgruntled
24.74%	not talking to anyone about the issue
21.05%	filing a grievance or complaint
11.58%	filing a lawsuit
29.47%	leaving my position

#### **Student survey participants:**

Before I came to the Ombuds Office, I was considering...

52.94%	giving up and remaining disgruntled
27.45%	not talking to anyone about the issue
21.57%	filing a grievance or complaint
9.80%	filing a lawsuit
15.69%	leaving my position

**Staff survey participants:**

Before I came to the Ombuds Office, I was considering...

29.67%	giving up and remaining disgruntled
24.18%	not talking to anyone about the issue
19.78%	filing a grievance or complaint
10.99%	filing a lawsuit
41.76%	leaving my position

**Faculty survey participants:**

Before I came to the Ombuds Office, I was considering...

17.65%	giving up and remaining disgruntled
23.53%	not talking to anyone about the issue
52.94%	filing a grievance or complaint
17.65%	filing a lawsuit
17.65%	leaving my position

**Administrator survey participants:**

Before I came to the Ombuds Office, I was considering...

25%	giving up and remaining disgruntled
25%	not talking to anyone about the issue
8.33%	filing a grievance or complaint
16.66%	filing a lawsuit
8.33%	leaving my position

**Researcher survey participants:**

Before I came to the Ombuds Office, I was considering...

54.55%	giving up and remaining disgruntled
9.09%	not talking to anyone about the issue
9.09%	filing a grievance or complaint
9.09%	filing a lawsuit
18.18%	leaving my position

The chart below represents some of the risks posed by a case as assessed by the Ombuds assigned to the case. More than one risk can be present in a single case.

**Risk Category and Percent of Cases Which Indicated This Specific Risk:**

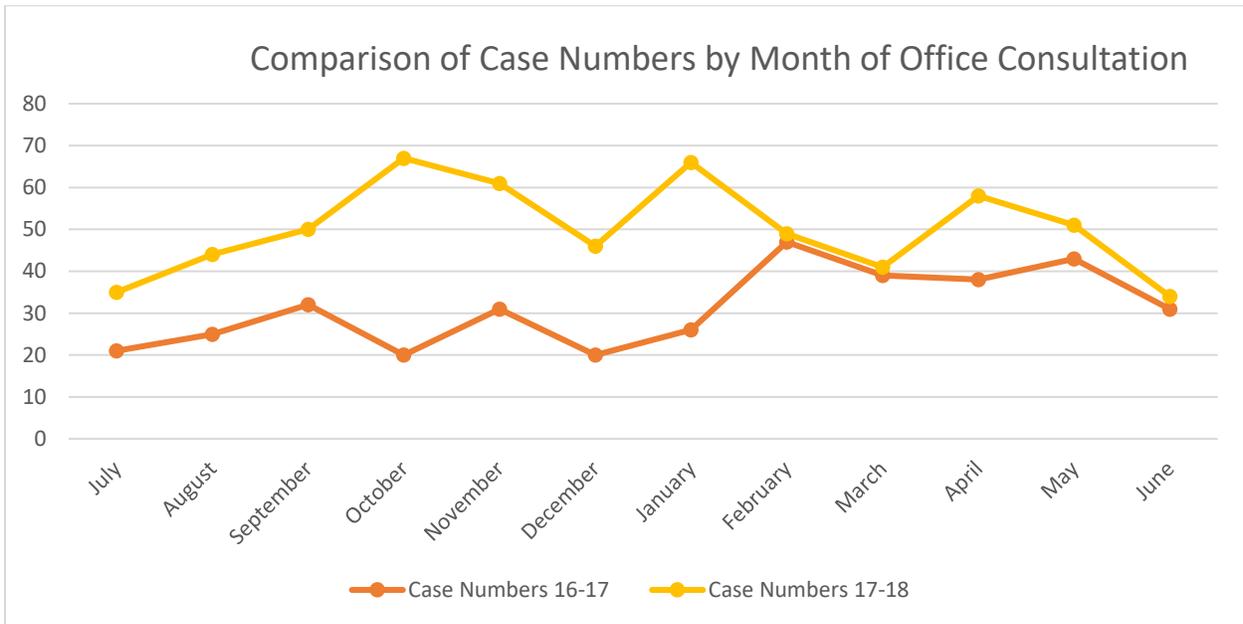
32.84%	Attrition or transfer
1.16%	High risk safety issue
18.57%	Litigation potential
37.31%	Loss of departmental productivity
12.60%	Negative publicity
18.57%	Potential internal or external grievances
17.74%	Violation of policy or code of conduct

Regardless of whether concerns are self-reported or assessed, the potential impact of these risks and concerns, if unaddressed, could be very great.

In our post-visit feedback survey, we also provide an opportunity for anonymous evaluation of our services. We receive consistently positive evaluations:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Answer
It was easy to contact the Ombuds Office	84%	15%	1%	0%	0%	0%
I would use the Ombuds again or would refer others to the Ombuds Office	85%	12%	2%	0%	0%	1%
I felt comfortable discussing my problem with the Ombuds and I felt I was treated with respect	89%	9%	1%	0%	1%	0%

I felt the physical space contributed to the sense of privacy / safety / confidentiality	76%	21%	2%	0%	1%	0%
I trust the Ombuds to maintain confidentiality	85%	14%	0%	0%	0%	1%
The Ombuds carefully listened to and understood my concerns	88%	11%	0%	0%	1%	0%
The Ombuds helped me identify and evaluate possible options	78%	20%	1%	0%	1%	0%



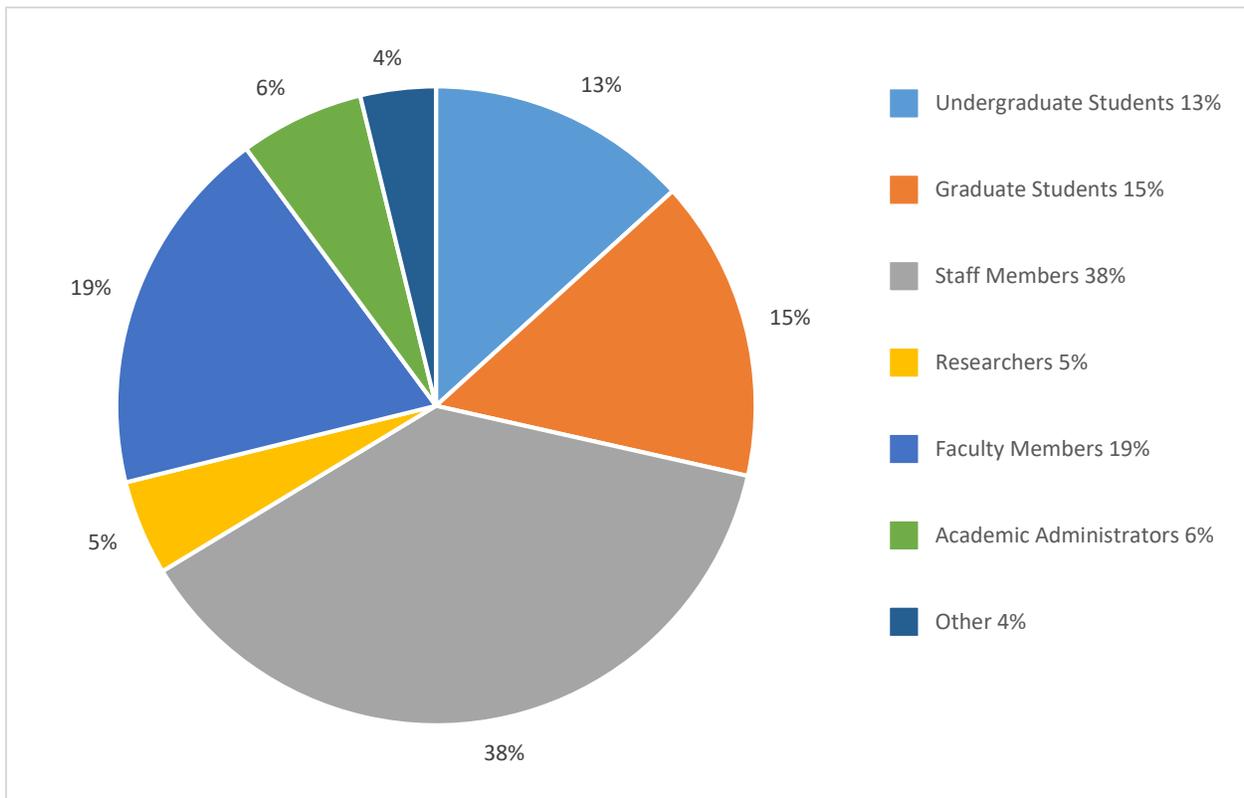
We handled 603 cases over the course of this year, which represents about a 62% increase over FY 2016-17.

We ask our visitors to fill out a demographic form indicating their connection to campus, race/ethnicity, gender, whether they are veterans, disabled, age (under or over 40) or a member of a historically marginalized sexual identity (LGBQ). We had a 93% response rate for this demographic survey. Of the people who answered our survey questions:

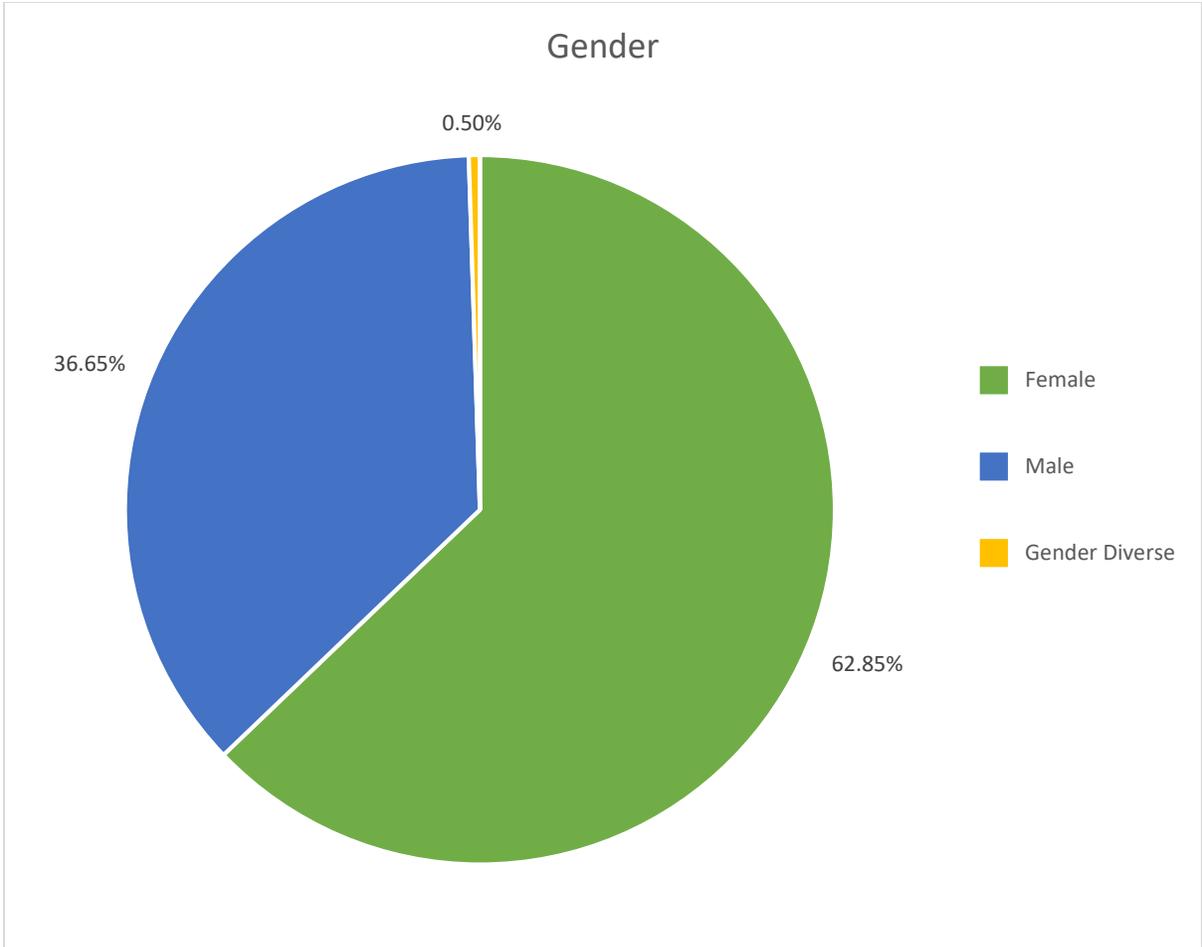
- 25% were people of color
- 7% were part of a historically marginalized sexual identity (LGBQ)
- 3% were disabled

- 1.8% were veterans
- 0.5% were gender diverse

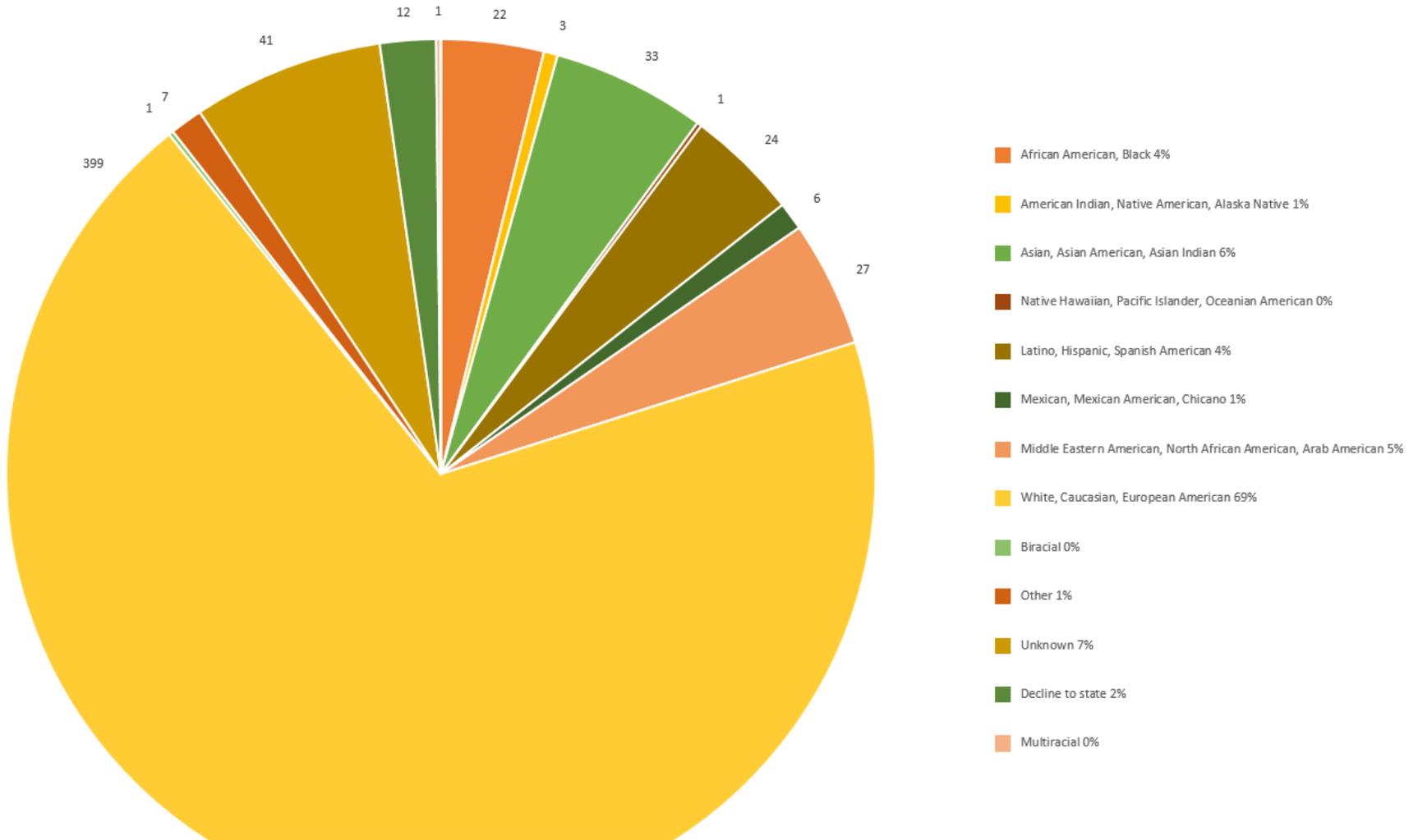
Staff comprised 38% of our caseload this year, the largest group seeking our services. This is a 3.55% decrease in percentage from last year. However, because of our overall growth in business, in raw numbers, there is actually an increase of 73 staff cases this year over last. Undergraduate students comprised 13% of the total cases with graduate students making up 15%. Faculty represented 19% of our cases, which is very similar to last year’s percent total. Academic administrators comprised 6% of our caseload, which represents a significant increase over last year. However, we changed our administrator category to include academic department chairs this year, and we believe this is the cause of the increase. Researchers represented 5% of our cases this year, also an increase in percent from last year. “Other” (which included parents, former students, concerned citizens, etc.) was 4% of our caseload.



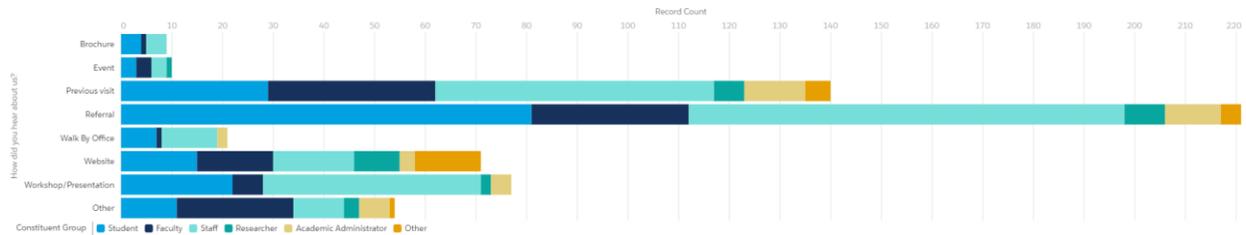
We collect demographic information from our visitors on a voluntary basis. Since adopting a form allowing people to define their own gender, we are pleased to see an increase in disclosures of gender diversity.



The following graph shows the breakdown of the racial and ethnic identity of our visitors.



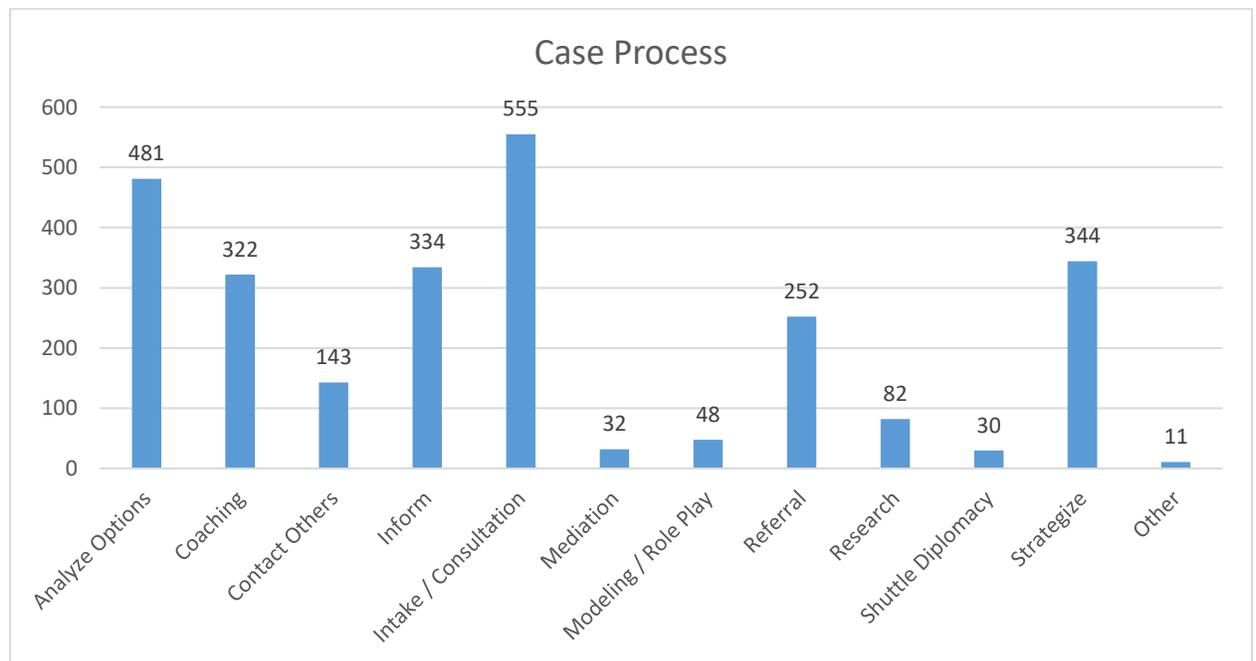
As the chart below indicates, the primary ways people heard about us were through referrals and subsequent returns to us after a visit. We believe that people returning to our office for a service or referring others is a sign of satisfaction with the consultations we provide.



There is a great range in terms of time spent on each case. Many cases take five hours or less, and some take months, resulting in well over 20 hours of Ombuds staff time.



In the course of working on a case, people receive a variety of services at the Ombuds Office.



In terms of outcomes, 63% of our cases were Resolved, and 26% were Partially Resolved. We find this to be a very positive outcome for our visitors.

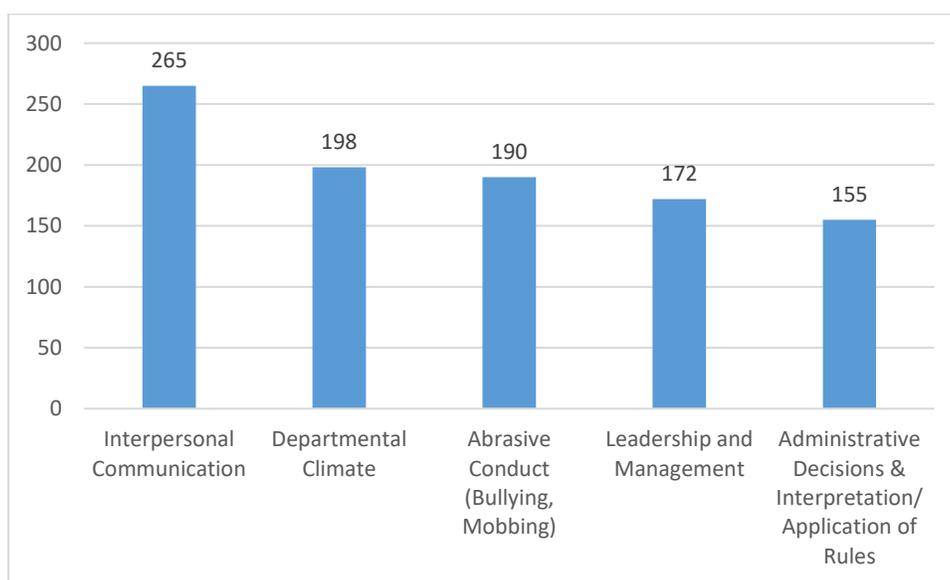
### Primary Case Concerns

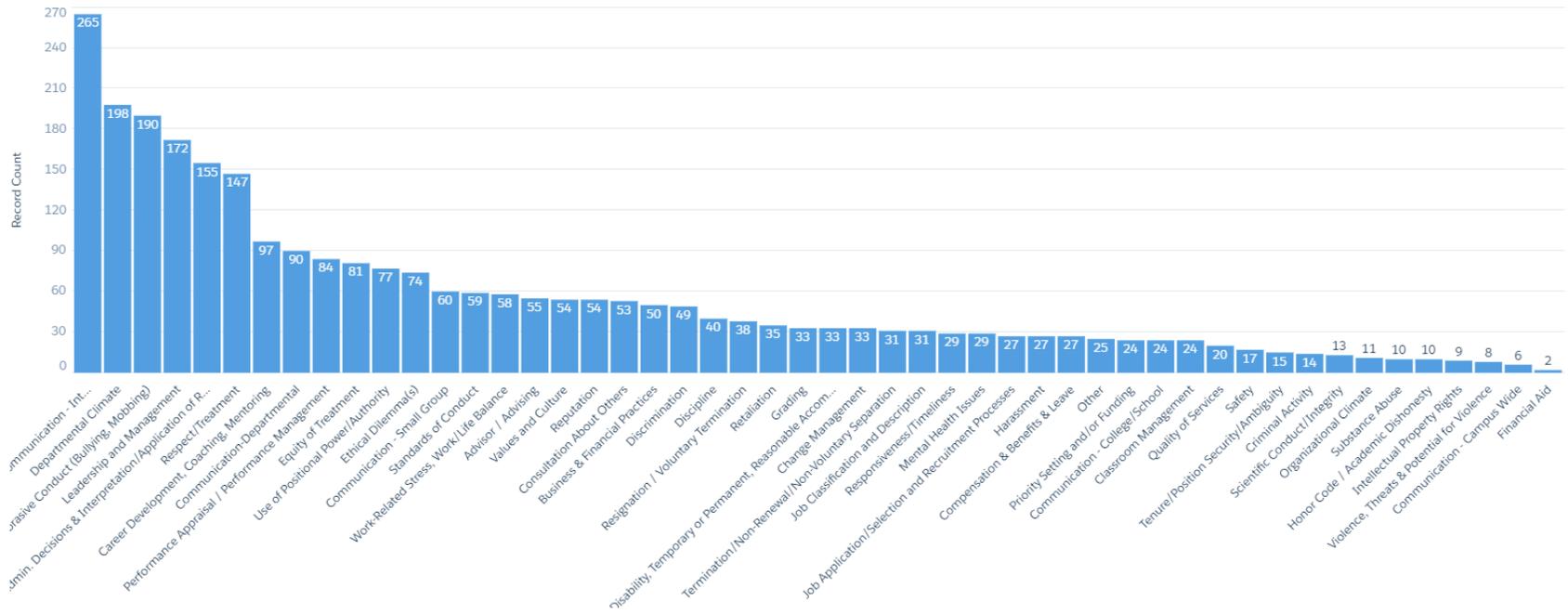
Most visitors to our office have a “presenting problem” (e.g. grade dispute, interpersonal conflict, administrative complication) and various underlying issues such as management effectiveness, faculty conduct, or a policy concern. Very often more than one case concern can be present in a single case.

The graph below presents the five most common concerns campus-wide during Fiscal Year 2017-18. Given that we experienced a 62% increase in cases this year, we are not surprised to see a 57% increase in the number of cases dealing with Administrative Decisions and Interpretation/Application of Rules. It is notable, however, that the number of cases dealing with Abrasive Conduct increased 92%, Departmental Climate 96%, and Leadership & Management 120%.

The single largest area of increase is communication at 159%. This year, we tracked communication in five distinct categories, and our cases were as follows:

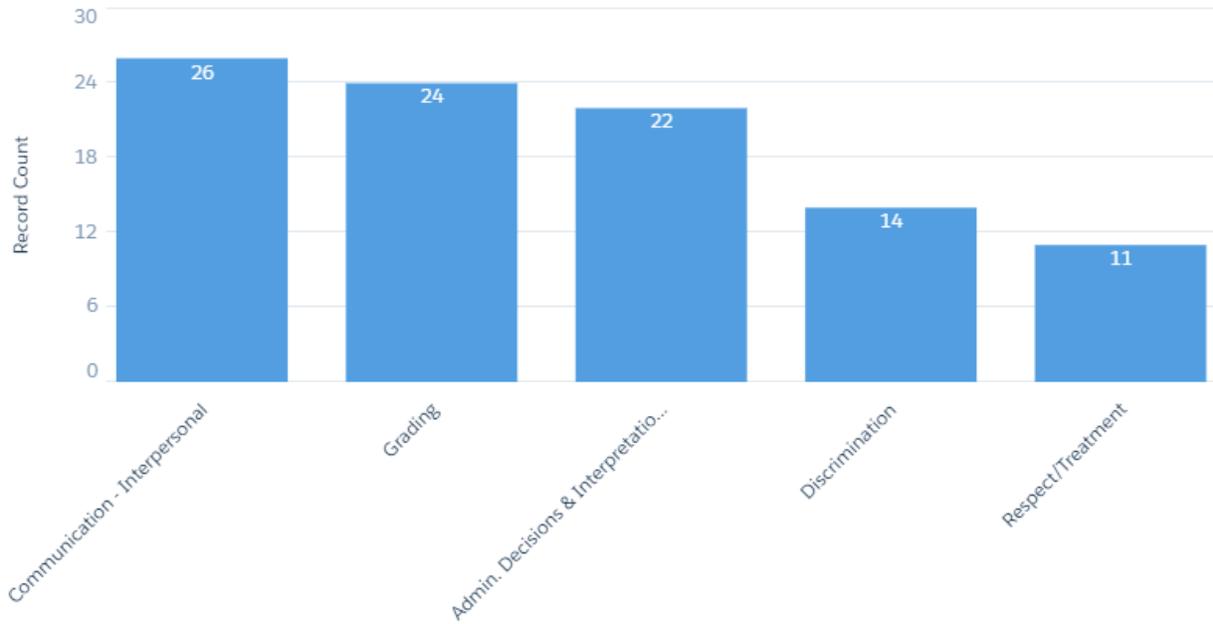
1. Interpersonal Communication – 265
2. Departmental Communication – 90
3. Small Group Communication – 60
4. College/School Communication – 24
5. Campus Wide Communication – 6

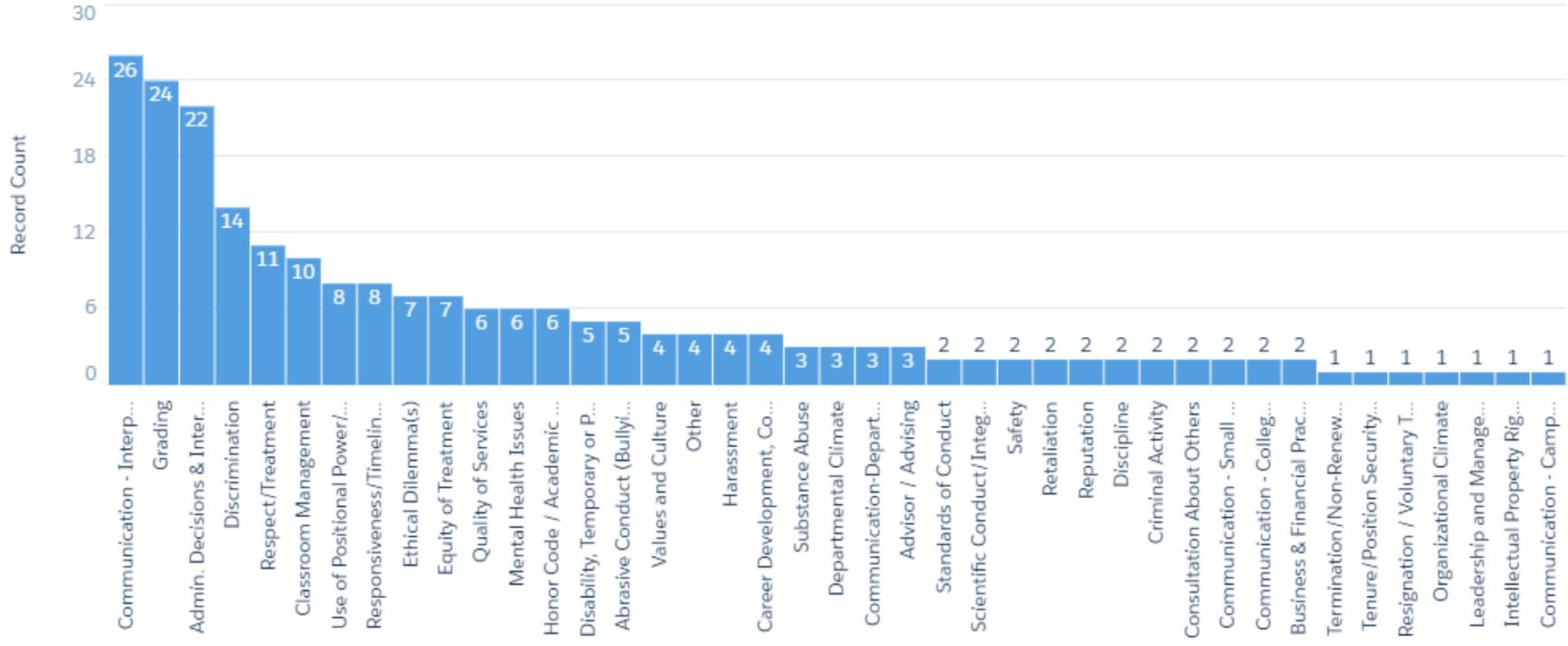




## UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

We see a shift in the top concerns for undergraduates compared to last year. Discrimination is now the fourth most common concern with 14 students asserting discrimination compared to 3 students last year.



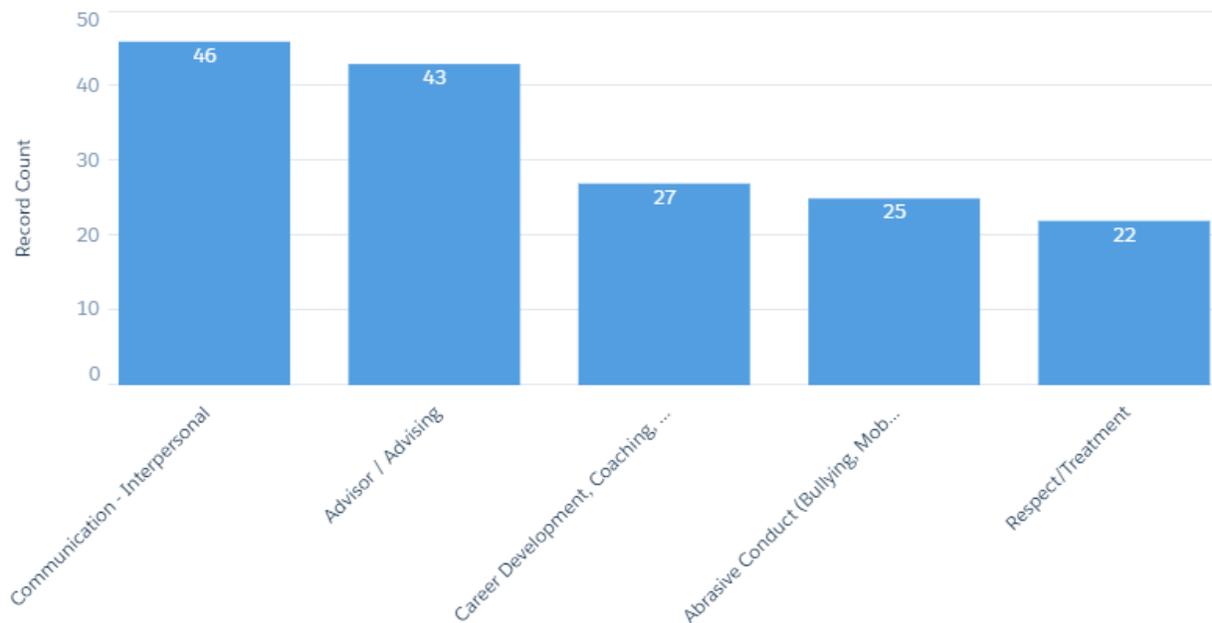


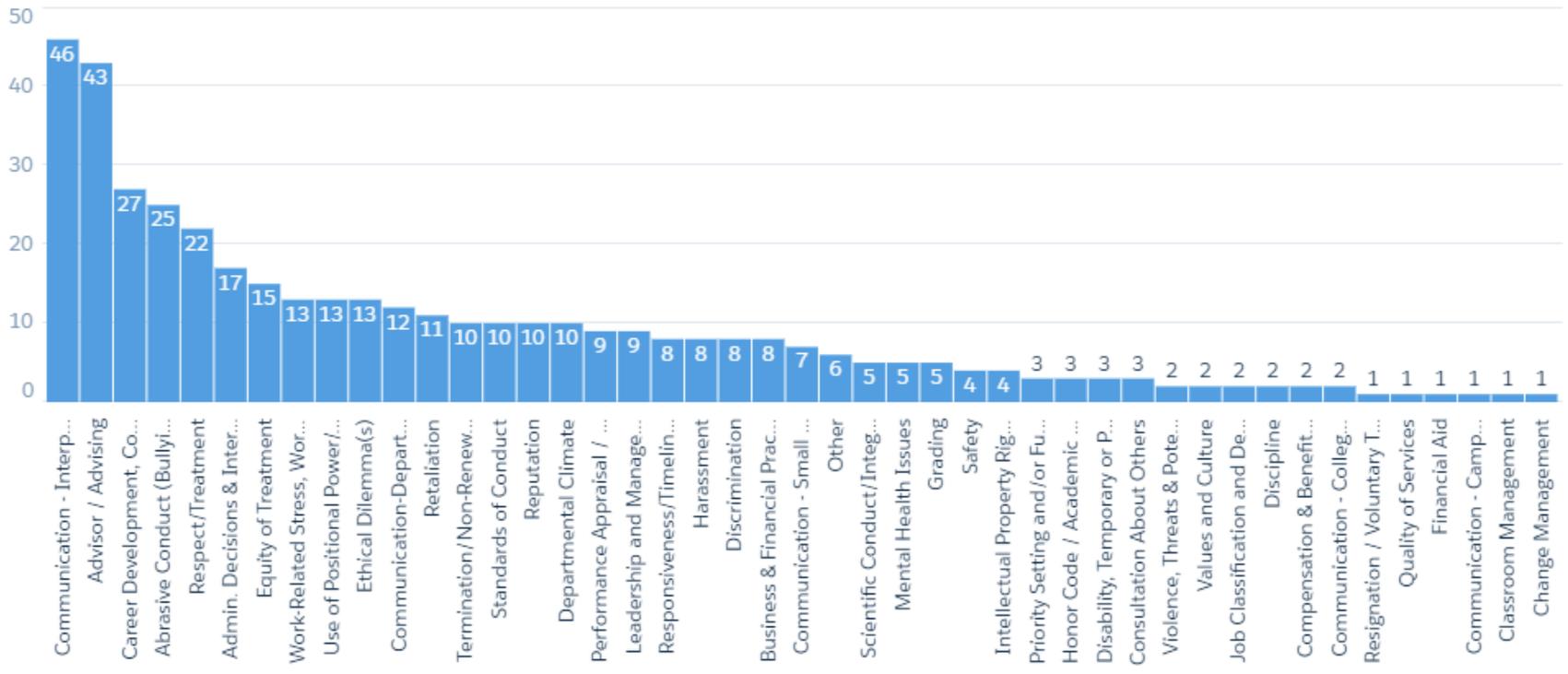
## GRADUATE STUDENTS

The Ombuds Office assisted 93 graduate students this year, which is a 63% increase over the year before. We continue to see communication as a top issue for graduate students, and issues with advisors is a close second. As a new category for us this year, we note that relationships with advisors is a very sensitive and high-stakes concern for graduate students. Forty-seven percent of graduate students who worked with our office discussed advisor related concerns.

We also want to highlight abrasive conduct. We saw a 79% increase in graduate students who expressed concerns about abrasive conduct. On a positive note, the number of graduate students concerned about Departmental Climate dropped from 14 to 10, and this concern is no longer one of the top five brought to our office.

Very significantly, 51% of the graduate students visiting the Ombuds Office identify as part of a historically underrepresented group (e.g., race, gender diverse, sexual orientation).





- The categories of concern were grouped into the following six clusters: Hostile Treatment: abrasive conduct (bullying), respect/treatment, reputation, retaliation, harassment, discrimination, and violence /threats.
- Leadership: administrative decisions/interpretation of rules, performance appraisal, leadership & management, use of positional power/authority, equity of treatment, discipline, involuntary resignation, responsiveness/timeliness of feedback, job classification/duties, priority setting, termination/non-renewal, and change management.
- Workplace Climate: departmental climate, departmental communication, small group communication, work-related stress, career development/mentoring, values and culture, job application/search, mental health, safety, disability, and tenure/position security.
- Instruction: classroom management, advising/advisees, and grading.
- Organizational Concerns: compensation and benefits, college communication, quality of services, organizational climate, consultation about others, and other (ad hoc concerns).
- Ethics: standards of conduct, ethical dilemmas, business and financial practices, criminal activity, scientific conduct/integrity, intellectual property rights, and honor code.

	Leadership (Grad Advisor)	Workplace Climate	Hostile Treatment	Ethics	Organizational Concerns	Student Evaluation
<b>N=</b> <b>407</b>	126	88	85	42	13	6
	30.96%	21.62%	20.88%	10.32%	3.1%	1.47%

When these concerns are looked at with greater specificity (please see next table), they show three groupings of concerns that account for 76.17% of all concerns raised. The vast majority of graduate student cases raise concerns about mentor-mentee relations. For this reason, we included interpersonal communication in our data tabulations, since this is, with a very few exceptions of student – students or student – staff, referencing communication with the student’s advisor.

By far the most prevalent cluster focuses on mentor-mentee relations, with 39.56% of all concerns raised falling into the grouping: communication, advisor, career development, abrasive communication, and disrespectful treatment. This grouping and its outsized representation of all concerns raised is consistent with past reports. They indicate that nearly half of the graduate student visitors express failures at communication with their advisor. These range from inability to make contact or receive a response to unsatisfactory exchanges of one sort or another. Often the concern expressed is a lack of clarity on assignments, unwillingness to provide guidance, or, with ABD students, serious confusion about intellectual property or negative responses to research results

that do not support in PIs hypotheses. A quarter of our graduate students also identify ineffective interpersonal communication when asserting abrasive conduct and disrespectful treatment.

Major Graduate Concerns	Mentions	% of N (N=407)
	<b>First Level of Concern</b>	
<b>Communication</b>	45	11.06%
<b>Advisor</b>	42	10.32%
<b>Career Development</b>	27	6.63%
<b>Abrasive Conduct</b>	25	6.14%
<b>Respect Treatment</b>	22	5.41%
<b>Total</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>39.56%</b>
	<b>Second Level of Concern</b>	
<b>Administrative Decisions</b>	17	4.18%
<b>Equity of Treatment</b>	14	3.44%
<b>Work Related Stress</b>	13	3.19%
<b>Use of Positional Power</b>	13	3.19%
<b>Ethical Dilemma(s)</b>	12	2.95%
<b>Communication—Dept.</b>	12	2.95%
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>19.90%</b>
	<b>Third Level of Concern</b>	
<b>Retaliation</b>	11	2.70%
<b>Standards of Conduct</b>	10	2.46%
<b>Reputation</b>	10	2.46%
<b>Departmental Climate</b>	10	2.46%
<b>Termination/Non-Renewal</b>	9	2.21%
<b>Performance Appraisal</b>	9	2.21%
<b>Leadership &amp; Management</b>	9	2.21%
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>16.71%</b>

## STAFF

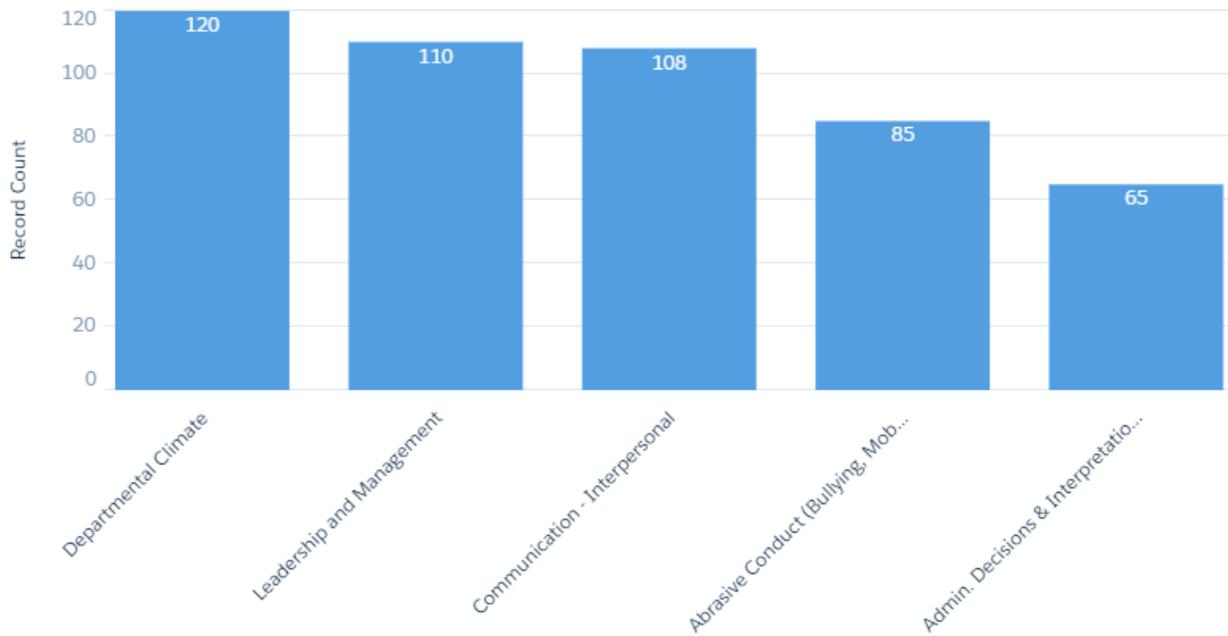
We assisted 230 staff; a 48% increase in staff accessing our office. The top five concerns are represented on the graph below. Of note is the increase in the percentage of staff with concerns in these four categories:

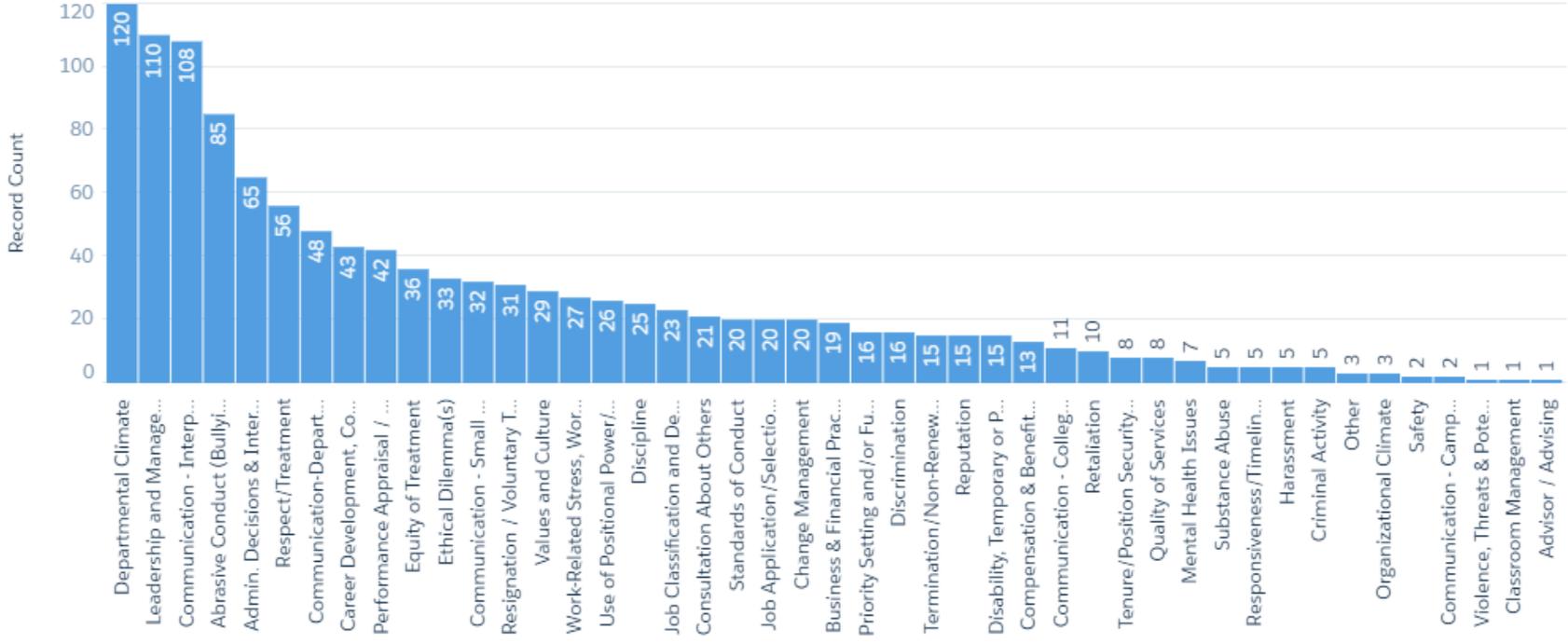
1. Departmental Climate – 122%

2. Abrasive Conduct – 118%
3. Leadership & Management – 104%
4. Administrative Decisions/Interpretation of Rules – 63%

The top eight categories for staff are potentially all areas related to supervisory skills or lack thereof as shown in the graph below.

We also want to note that 20% of the staff we saw identify as part of a historically underrepresented group (e.g., race, gender diverse, sexual orientation).



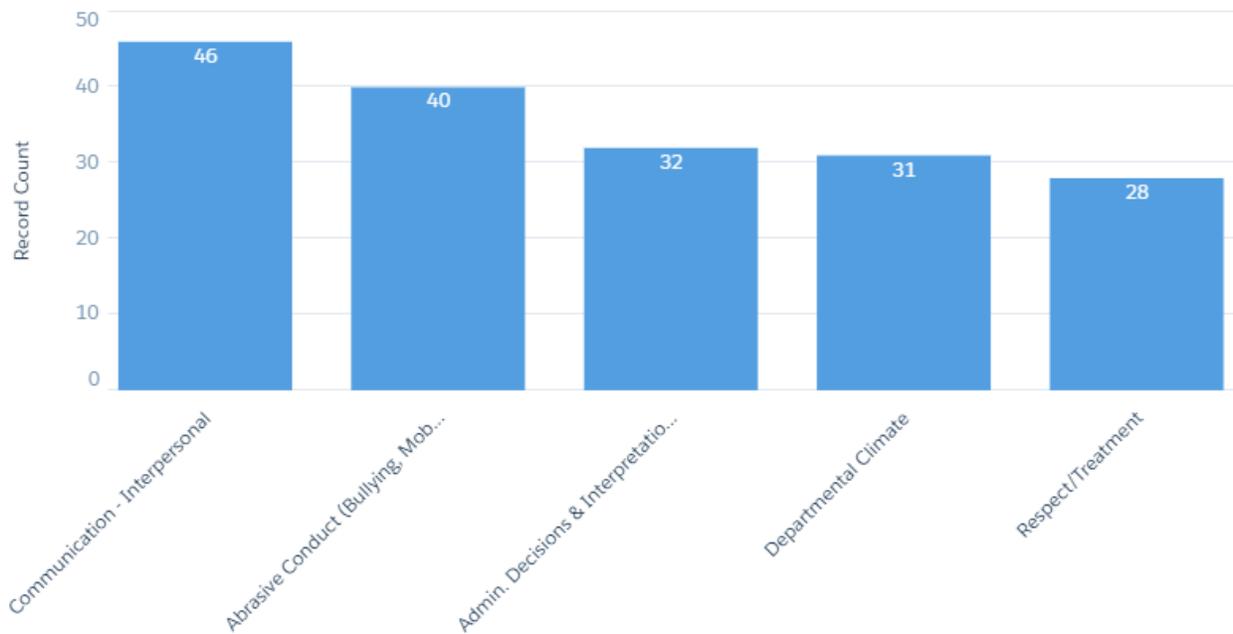


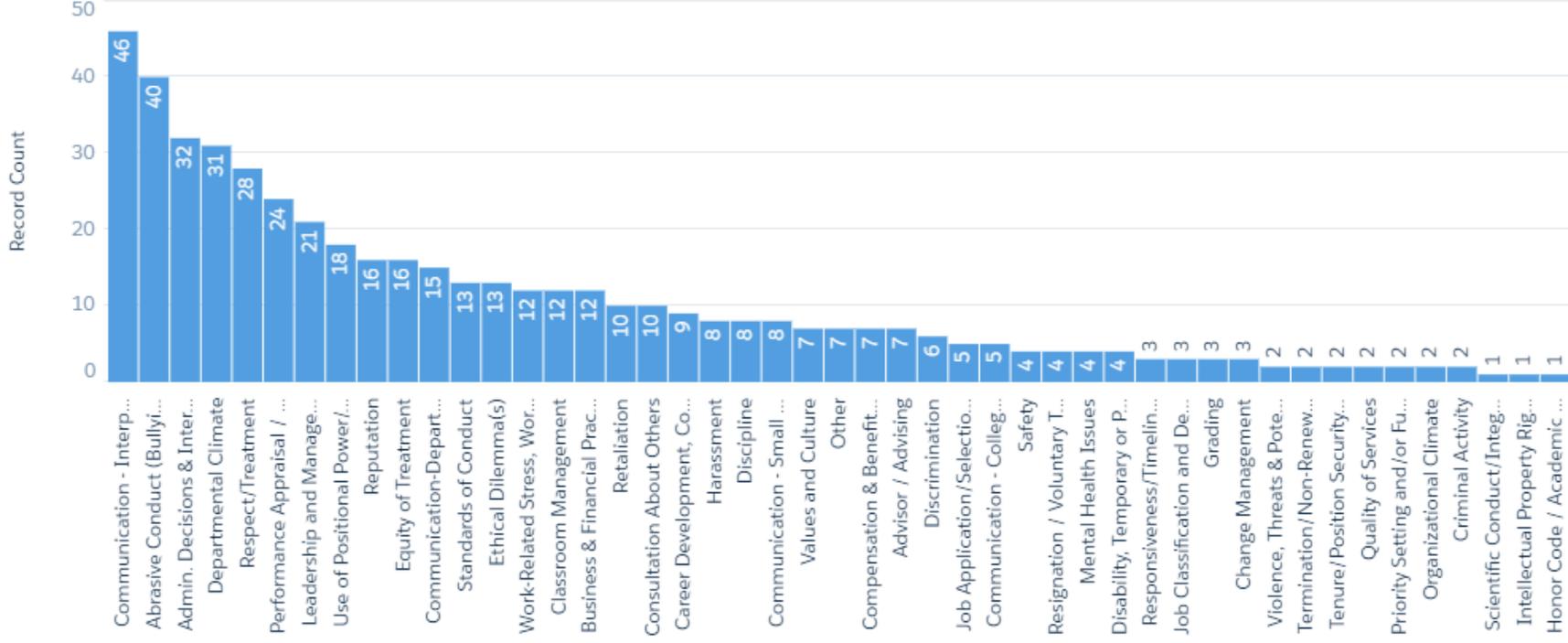
## FACULTY

Visitors to the ombuds office often have experienced a precipitating event that motivates them to seek our assistance. Although the precipitating event may identify a primary concern, a visitor often reveals several issues, which prompted the concern.

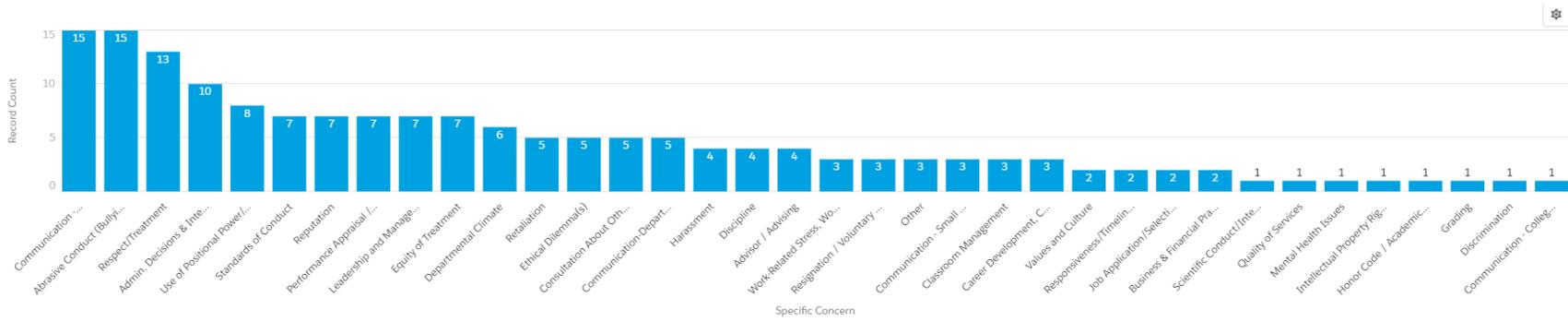
Accordingly, the total number of concerns analyzed in this report exceeds the total number of visitors. The concerns raised are featured on the graphs below. The first graph highlights the 5 most common concerns, and the second reports all concerns raised.

Significantly 30% of the faculty we saw identify as part of a historically underrepresented group (e.g., race, gender diverse, sexual orientation).

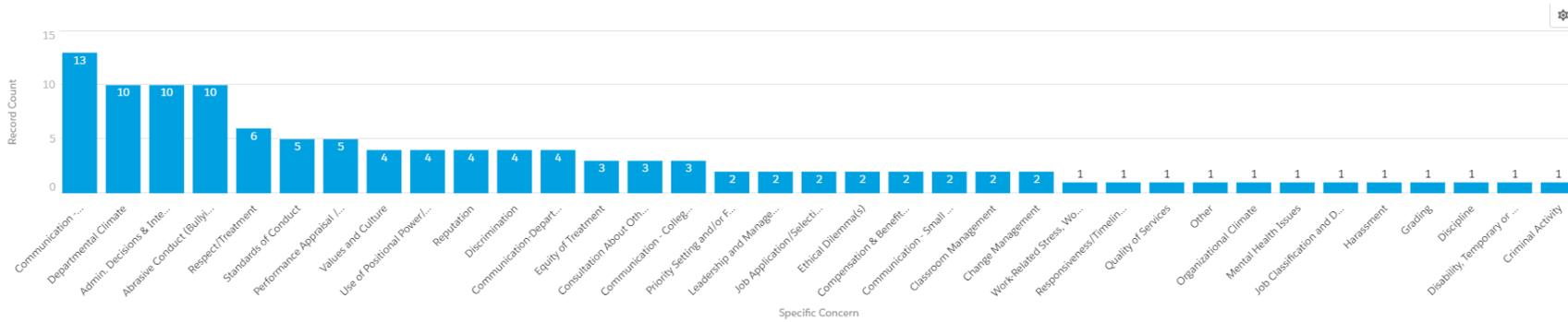




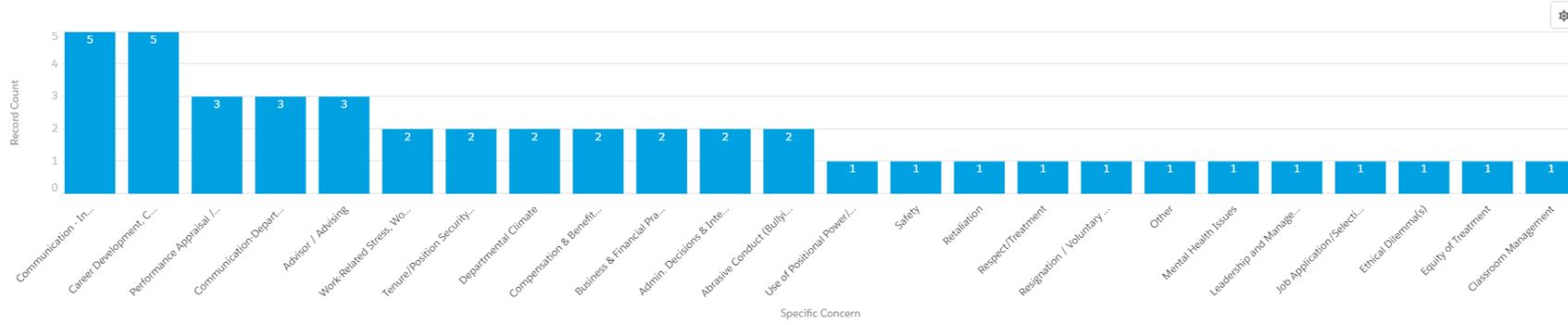
## Professor: 47



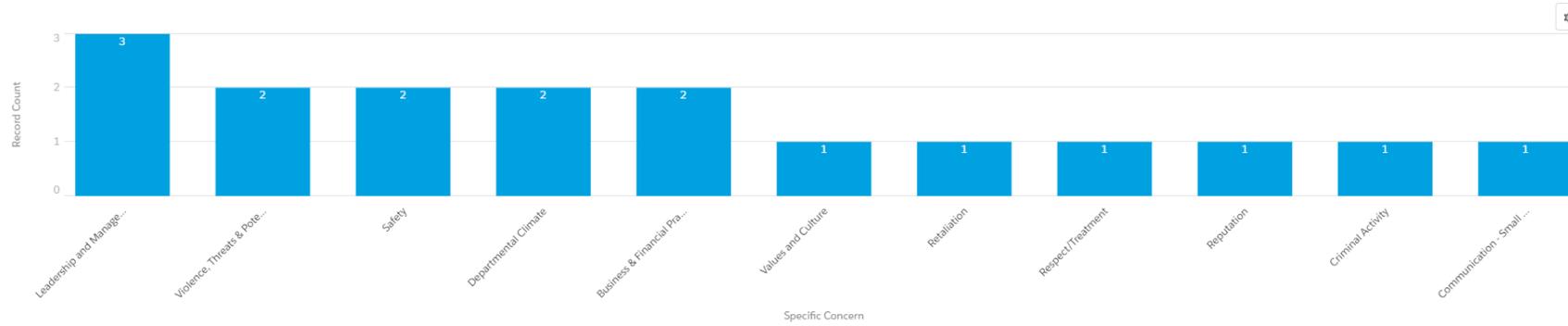
## Associate Professor: 27



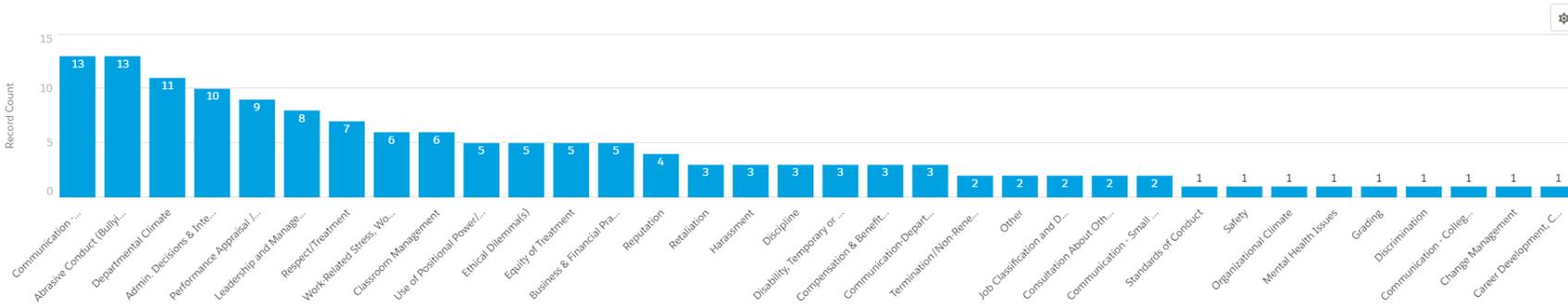
## Assistant Professor: 9



## Research Faculty: 3



## Instructors & Lecturers: 26



These response groupings provide a gross indication of the concerns that seem to weigh most heavily on faculty who are experiencing workplace conflict or other forms of stress and dissatisfaction. However, they are difficult to interpret without more refined aggregation into meaningful groups. To accomplish that, we assigned similar or related concerns to groups and then tallied the responses from the entire set within each area of concern. In doing so, we did not include the interpersonal communication concerns in any of the subsets, since they are difficult to interpret out of context. Not all interpersonal communication concerns, for example, are about untoward exchanges.

With this caveat in mind, the categories of concern were grouped into the following six clusters:

- Hostile Treatment: abrasive conduct (bullying), respect/treatment, reputation, retaliation, harassment, discrimination, and violence /threats.
- Leadership: administrative decisions/interpretation of rules, performance appraisal, leadership & management, use of positional power/authority, equity of treatment, discipline, involuntary resignation, responsiveness/timeliness of feedback, job classification/duties, priority setting, termination/non-renewal, and change management.
- Workplace Climate: departmental climate, communication—department, communication—small group, work-related stress, career development/mentoring, values and culture, job application/search, mental health, safety, disability, and tenure/position security.
- Instruction: classroom management, advising/advisees, and grading.
- Organizational Concerns: compensation and benefits, communication-college, quality of services, organizational climate, consultation about others, and other (ad hoc concerns).
- Ethics: standards of conduct, ethical dilemmas, business and financial practices, criminal activity, scientific conduct/integrity, intellectual property rights, and honor code.

As Table 1 shows, the vast majority of concerns were hostile treatment, leadership, and workplace climate, accounting for more than 75% of all concerns expressed.

Hostile Treatment	22.00%
Leadership	33.60%
Workplace Climate	21.16%
Instruction	4.48%
Organizational Concerns	6.72%
Ethics	8.76%

**Table 1** N.B. The percentages do not add to 100% because interpersonal communication was not included in the categories.

Examining the most mentioned concern clusters more deeply (tables 2-4), the data shows abrasive communication, respect/treatment, and reputation account for 83.33% of the concerns about hostile treatment. Within the leadership cluster, administrative decisions/interpretations of rules, performance appraisal, leadership and management, use of positional power/authority, and equity of treatment comprised 67.27% of concerns raised. Although the workplace climate issues were more dispersed, 58.59% of the concerns were with departmental climate, communication within the department, and work-related stress.

Concern about Hostile Treatment

Abrasive Conduct	46
Respect/Treatment	28
Reputation	16
Retaliation	10
Harassment	8
Discrimination	6
Violence, Threats	2
Total	108
Percentage	22.00%

**Table 2**

Concern about Leadership	
Administrative Decision / Interpretation of Rules	32
Performance Appraisal	24
Leadership & Management	21
Use of Positional Power/Authority	18
Equity of Treatment	16
Discipline	8
Resignation (involuntary)	4
Responsiveness/Timeliness of Feedback	3
Job Classification/Duties	3
Priority Setting	2
Termination/Non-Renewal	2
Change Management	2
Total	165
Percentage	33.60%

**Table 3**

Workplace Climate	
Departmental Climate	31
Communication--Department	15
Work Related Stress	12
Career Development/Mentoring	9
Values and Culture	7
Communication--Small Group	7
Job Application/Search	5
Mental Health Issues	4
Safety	4
Disability	3
Tenure/Position Security	2
Total	99
Percentage	20.16%

**Table 4**

These clusters and the acts that constitute the majority of concerns brought to the ombuds office are, in themselves not surprising. It is worth noting, however, that these 11 most frequently mentioned concerns make up more than half of all concerns (n = 47 categories) raised by faculty members, accounting for 52.75% of the total (n = 491) concerns expressed by faculty visitors to the ombuds office.

When the above data are delineated by rank (table 5), they show variability related to career stage, job security, and positional power. Professors show greatest concern over leadership, with the next most reported concern over hostile treatment. These may

be indicative that professors have a sense of their position and reputation within the department, college, university, and the discipline and are likely to be in leadership roles.

Comparison Across Ranks of Reported Concerns

Concerns	Ranks			
	Professor	Assoc. Prof.	Assist. Prof.	Instructor
Hostile Treatment	26.79%	21.55%	11.11%	22.46%
Leadership	30.30%	26.72%	20.00%	32.61%
Workplace Climate	14.88%	21.55%	37.78%	20.21%

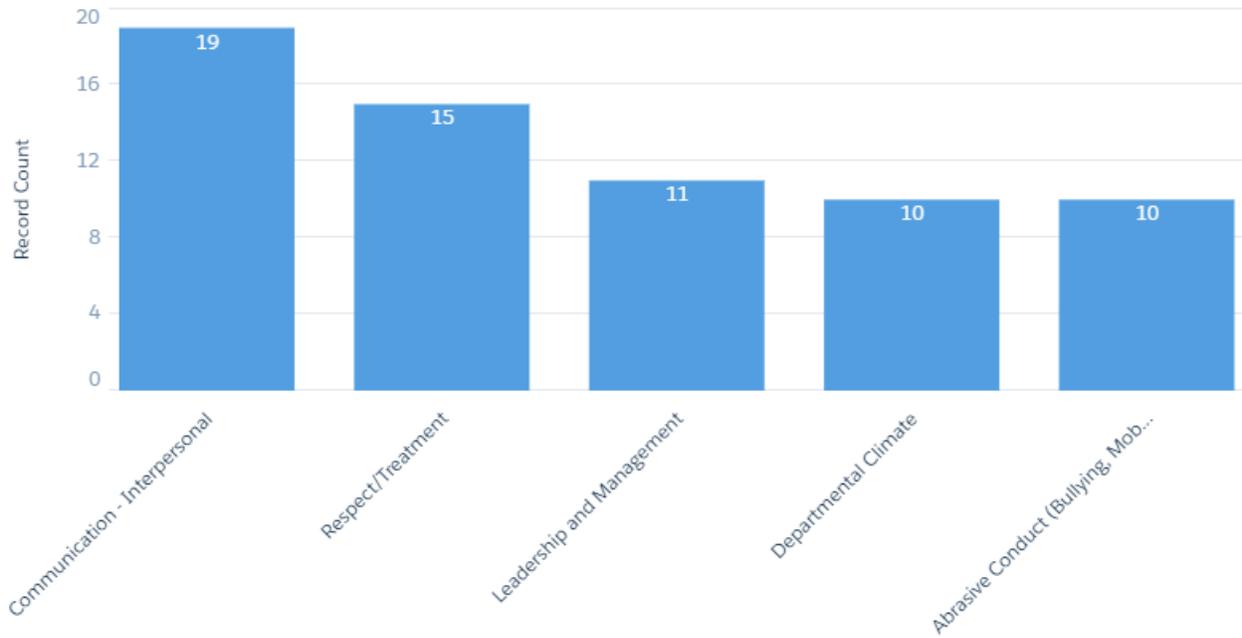
**Table 5**

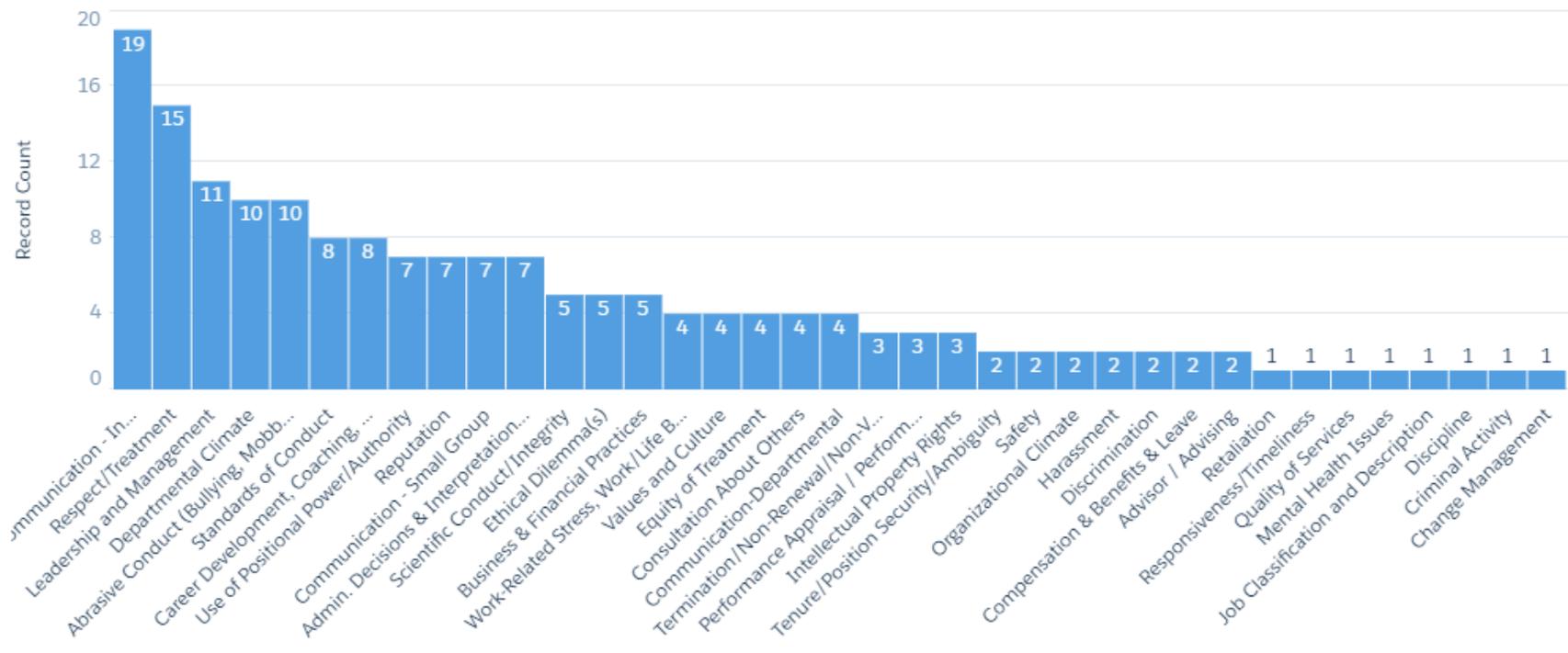
Their position and status create opportunities for problematic interactions when a chair's decisions may conflict with the professor's interests and with colleagues who are abrasive, act in ways that may be construed as disrespectful and diminishing of their reputations. Professors, on the other hand, show a comparatively low level of concern over workplace climate. Instructors also share concerns about leadership and hostile treatment, which may reflect the sense among newer instructors that their appointments are immediately dependent on the chair's appointing authority and among more veteran instructors, who have greater job security, that they have little power or receive little respect for the important service they provide in meeting the unit's instructional mission.

By contrast, assistant professors reflect little concern over hostile treatment. This shift may reflect the protective bubble departments often construct around assistant professors while they are seeking tenure, which results in diminished opportunities to be in challenging contexts where acrimonious exchanges may originate. However, assistant professors express considerable concern over workplace climate, which may reflect their reactions to faculty interactions that a) they were not privy to as graduate students or post docs, and b) that have a history of animus of which they are unaware. That said, it also bears mention that newcomers looking at a department's climate with fresh eyes may be offering a signal that what are taken for normal interactions are menacing and contribute to a climate of fear and distrust.

## Researcher

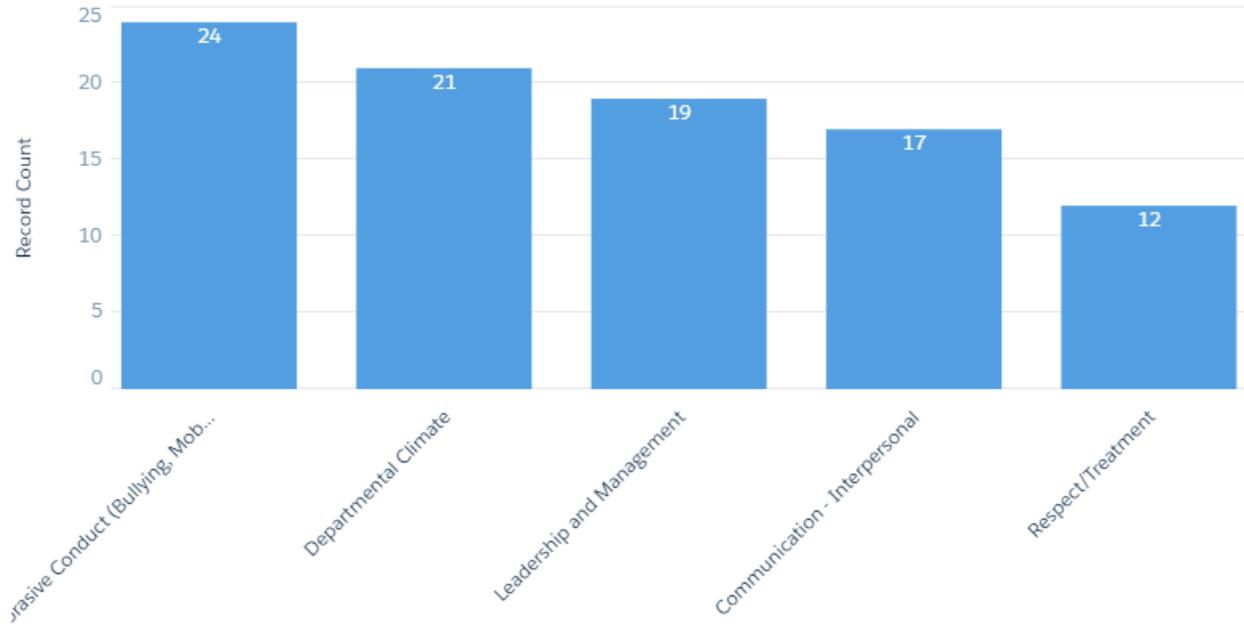
This year we have separated the researcher category from the overall faculty category, as we felt the roles on our campus are different enough to warrant their own grouping. The graph below shows the five most common concerns for researchers, and the following graph details all of the reported issues.

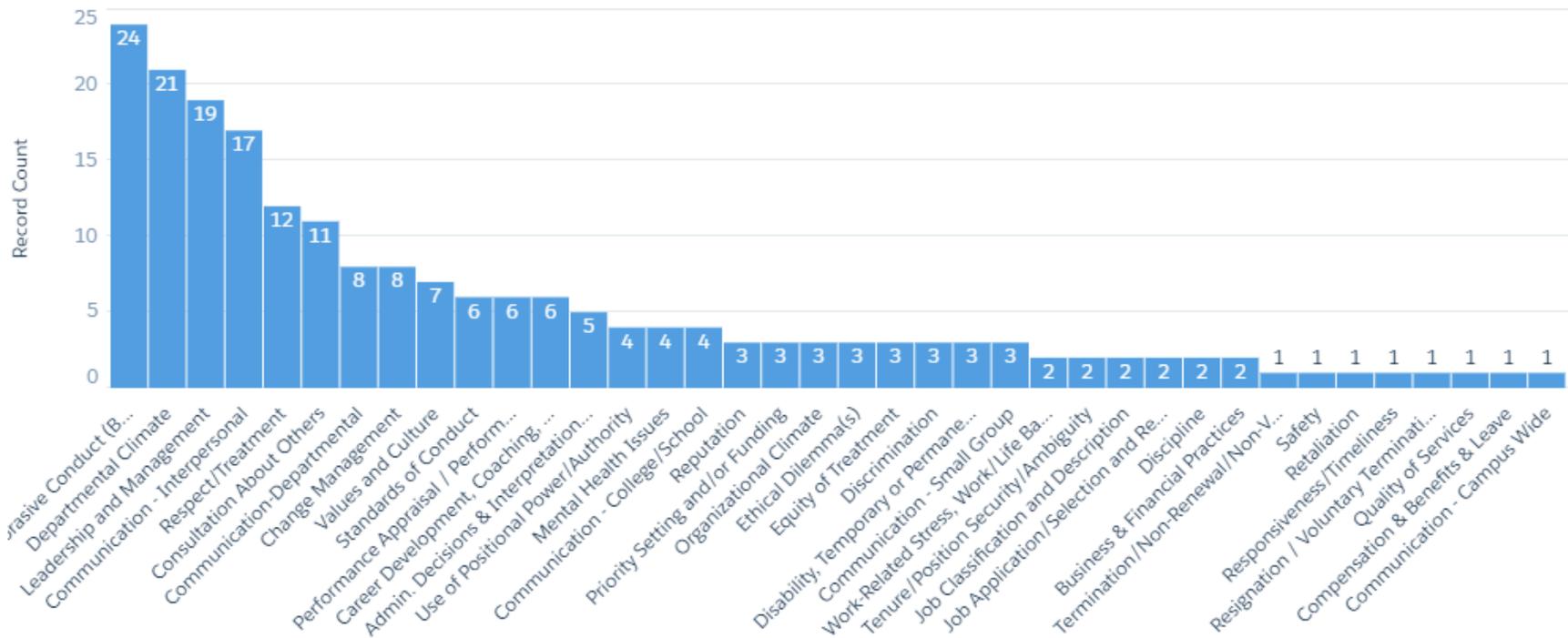




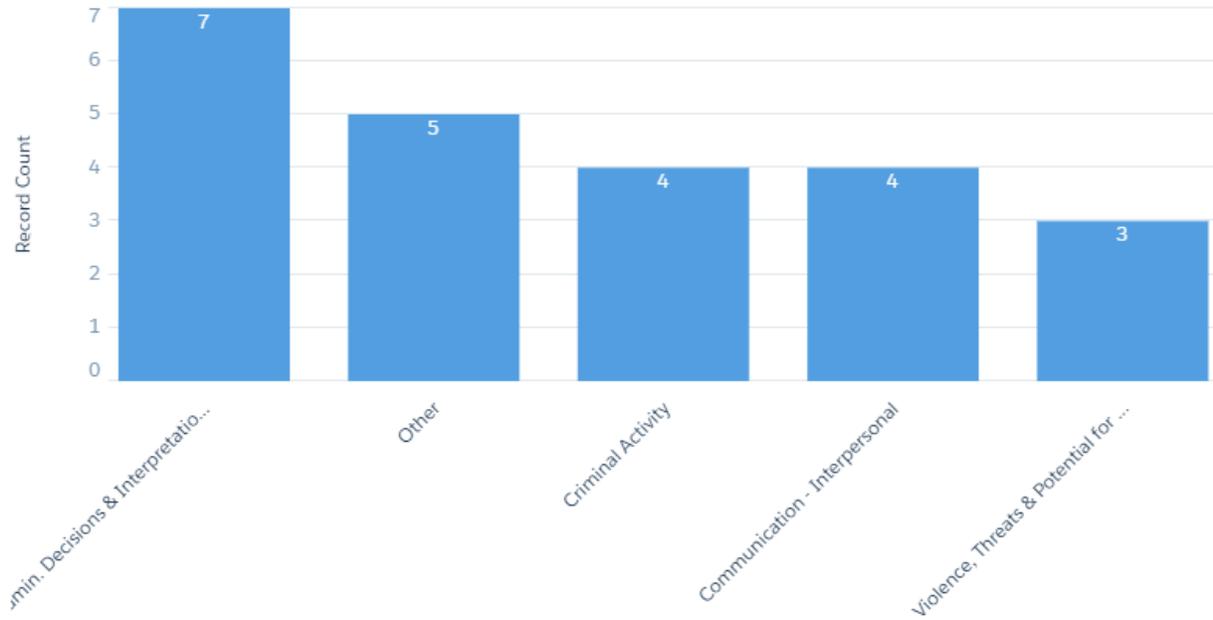
## ADMINISTRATORS

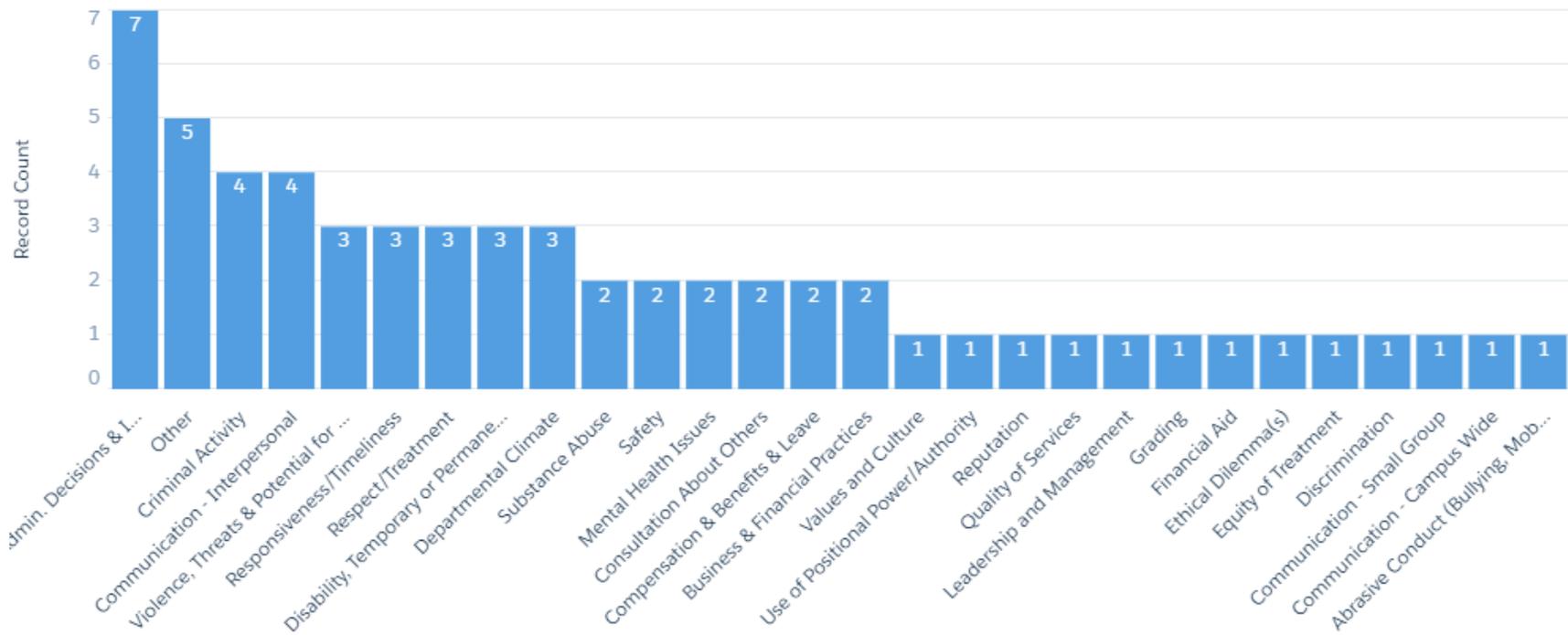
This year, we have included department chairs in the administrator category, as it more accurately follows their function. Abrasive conduct is the leading concern.





Our “Other” category encompasses a diverse group – e.g., parents, former & prospective students, prospective donors, concerned citizens. The top five concerns for Other were, in order of frequency: Administrative Decisions/Interpretation/Application of Rules, Other, Criminal Activity, Interpersonal Communication and Violence/Threats of Violence & Potential for violence.





## **Observations and Interpretations**

In our case consultations, we observed the following trends this year:

- ❖ Climate concerns regarding race and LGBTQIA discrimination are ongoing.
- ❖ Decentralization of administrative functions, and the resulting inconsistencies and lack of coordination seem to drive conflict and dissatisfaction in many ways.
- ❖ Continued difficulty across all constituent groups in holding crucial conversations.

## **Outreach**

This year we saw a 62% increase in cases, building on a 60% increase in cases last year. We are very pleased that community members are finding our office helpful.

This year, we did find it necessary to curb our outreach efforts in order to devote time to our incoming cases. We continued with our collaborative educational efforts with various campus departments (e.g. Faculty Relations, Human Resources, Graduate School, Leeds Business School and Law School). We also continued to focus on community groups who have been identified as vulnerable either through campus surveys or through our casework (e.g. graduate students, people of color, members of a historically marginalized sexual identity, those who are gender diverse, veterans, and people with disabilities.)

We continued some of our one-on-one meetings with campus leaders, focusing on leaders new to campus or new to their roles.

## **Priorities for FY 2018-2019**

- ❖ Ombuds will continue to focus on requests and needs of individual visitors as the top priority for the year.
- ❖ We hope to deepen our understanding of issues and concerns recurrently voiced by visitors and others with whom we have consulted.
- ❖ We will continue to be as transparent about our work as possible and partner with university departments to the extent confidentiality allows.
- ❖ The Ombuds will work, as requested and within resource constraints, to support all campus initiatives to sustain, strengthen, and extend respect and productivity within our academic community.
  - This year we will be focusing on working with programs such as the Academic Leaders Institute and Highly Effective Managers.
  - We will also be working closely with campus change initiatives such as the revision of the Professional Rights and Duties policy, IDEA, Academic Futures, and Title IX revisions.
- ❖ We will continue to work with the Provost's Office to find more office and consultation space.

"I felt I had no options. I was depending on you guys for help and you came through. Thank you."

-Undergraduate Student Visitor

"Consultation provided information which clarified which options I might take, as there were multiple options for dealing with my issue."

-Faculty Visitor

"Thank you so much for your assistance! This was very valuable."

-Visitor

"Informative and Useful."

-Faculty Visitor

"This office treated me with respect and really helped me to refine my communication skills. They helped me phrase my thoughts in a meaningful way and to identify my options for handling conflict."

-Researcher Visitor

"I felt listened to and confident your office can help me through this situation. Thank you CU for this service."

-Graduate Student Visitor

"I'm leaving the office with good strategies to help me in my situation, a better understanding of the issue from an outside perspective, and goals. I'm all-in to make this work."

-Staff Visitor

"The session was immensely helpful and validating. Thank you so very much for the important work you do."

-Visitor