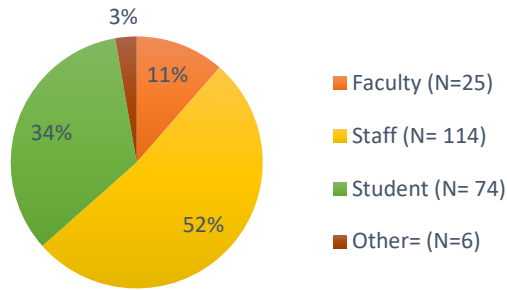




Ombuds Visitors (N=219)



- ❖ "Other" is defined as a non-UC Merced community member, vendor or family of UC Merced student.
- ❖ Post Docs, for the fiscal year 2017-18, are included in "faculty".

Office of the Ombuds defines cases as an intake where a "visitor" meets with an Ombuds to receive confidential services of consultation, coaching, referral/resources, mediation (two-party or group) or group facilitation regarding a conflict.

Services Provided

TYPE	Number	People
Individual Ombuds Consultation (new case)	219	219
Mediation and Group Facilitations	19	122
Trainings	11	320
Outreach Events	25	1400

- ❖ new case does not include revisits

Ombuds participate in an advisory or non-voting capacity on various campus committees, task forces or working groups (i.e. Chancellor's Advisory Committee on the Status of Women; Chancellor's Campus, Climate and Inclusion; Diversity Awareness Work Group; Police Advisory Board & Bias Incident Response Team etc.)

What We Do

Office of the Ombuds offers a safe and confidential space for visitors to discuss issues or concerns they may be facing with a colleague, classmate, supervisor or anyone else on campus.

We receive complaints, concerns or questions about alleged acts, omissions, improprieties, and/or broader systemic problems. The response of the Ombudsperson is tailored to the dynamics of the situation and the visitor's concerns.

We actively listen, make referrals, and mediate disputes as an informal, neutral and impartial third party. Our office supplements but does not replace existing resources available to the campus community.

Our Principles

Office the Ombuds operates under the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice of the International Ombuds Association (IOA).

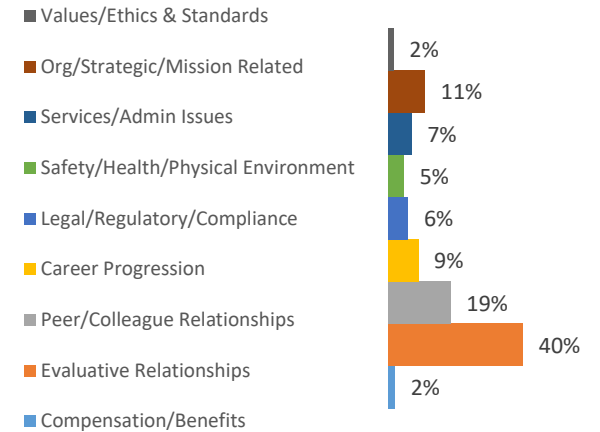
Confidential- The Ombudsperson holds all communications with those seeking assistance in strict confidence and takes all reasonable steps to safeguard confidentiality. The only exception is in rare cases of imminent risk of harm to self or to others.

Neutral/Impartial- We are neutral, impartial and unaligned in the handling of conflict or disputes. We advocate for fair process and have no personal stake in the outcome of a situation.

Informal- Our office will assist in handling a conflict at informal levels. We can refer visitors to formal grievance resources, but do not participate in any formal process. Use of our office is always voluntary.

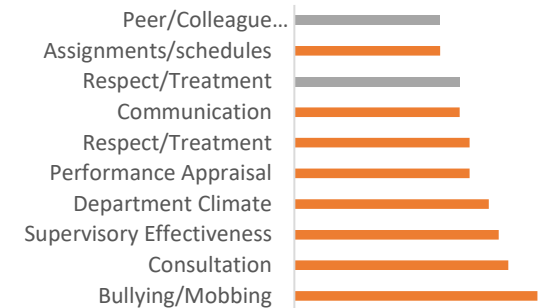
Independent- We are autonomous from other university entities or authorities.

Main Concerns: All Visitors (N= 219)



Forty percent of all identified concerns involve conflict arising in evaluative relationships (i.e. supervisor-employee, faculty-student.). Visitors, especially from those with little power, expressed repeated experiences in alleged bullying and abusive conduct. The other most frequent issues our office dealt with were peer/colleague relationships, negative department climate, lack of respect and treatment and supervisory effectiveness.

All Visitors Top Sub-issues (N=491)



- ❖ Orange represents visitor identified sub-issues related to evaluative relationships
- ❖ Gray represents visitor identified sub-issues related to peer/colleague relationships



Top Staff Sub-issues of Concern

Bullying, Mobbing
Consultation
Departmental-Organizational Climate
Supervisory Effectiveness
Respect/Treatment

Staff in nonsupervisory roles expressed concerns regarding bullying/mobbing by supervisors, department climates where peers lack respect for another and the inability of supervisors to address work place issues or provide structure for productive and positive work environments. Among visitors in supervisory roles, the most common request was for consultation within the theme of evaluative relationships. Consultation is defined by our office when a visitor requests help in dealing with issues between two or more individuals they supervise. Visitors report climates low in morale, emotional distress and strong feelings of loss of trust in the institution’s ability to manage conflict. Overall, staff are at risk for low productivity, loss of motivation and job departure.

“It was good to just feel heard and explore options for handling the situation in a healthy way.”- Anonymous Visitor

Contact Us

Telephone: 209-228-4410
 Office Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. M-F (other hours as requested)
 Office Location: Student Services Building (SSB) 211 & 213, 2nd floor
 Website: ombuds.ucmerced.edu

Abusive Conduct and Bullying

As a confidential and informal resource, Office of the Ombuds hears the unfiltered voices of the campus community. We are able to spot trends, listen to the narratives of our cases and recognize patterns of concern. The numbers among our cases show that alleged abusive conduct or bullying behaviors are happening in the workplace particularly by those in power. Perspectives shared by Ombuds visitors point to a culture that promotes high tolerance for intimidation, demeaning and disrespectful treatment.

Research reveals that workplace bullying occurs 57% more often in higher education settings than the private sector and that nearly 77% of targets of bullying leave their jobs. The cost of bullying on campus can result most notably in low productivity, higher staff turnover, increase in absences (medical leaves for stress, anxiety, etc.) and low morale. Bullying can take many forms including yelling, harsh memos, subject of gossip, isolation and harsh evaluative processes. When the behaviors are committed by two or more individuals Ombuds define that as mobbing (Hollis, L. 2012: Bully in the Ivory Tower and Workplace Bullying Institute National Survey 2014).

UC Merced is an institution committed to providing a hostile free work environment that is conducive to both working and learning. Our recommendations to leadership on campus include modeling the highest degree of ethical standards and values, promote awareness and trainings on abusive conduct/bullying and refine procedures for handling these cases including restorative relationship facilitations. We must all take responsibility for our own actions, become an active bystander and actualize the Principles of Community in our daily campus life and experiences.

For more information on UC Merced’s Prohibition of Abusive Conduct policy: policies.ucmerced.edu

Top Student Sub-issues of Concern

Performance/Appraisals
Respect/Treatment
Assignment/Schedules
Discipline
Communication

Undergraduate visitors share issues regarding academic integrity policies. They are unfamiliar with the processes and find professors are unwilling to work with them to resolve the incident informally. As a result, they express unfair disciplinary actions and lack of response/guidelines from academic leadership during formal processes. A common concern for graduate students is the evaluative relationship between themselves and their advisor. Graduate student visitors report absence of clear communication, transparency, and experience disrespect and unfair treatment. The lack of confidence between students and leadership can lead to risk in separation from a lab, program, or the university.

Top Faculty Sub-Issues

Insubordination
Consultation
Peer & Colleague Relationships
Communication
Respect/Treatment

Among our faculty visitors we identified sub-issues within the themes of evaluative and peer relationships. Faculty received consultations to address difficult student/advisor working relationships and insubordination of those they supervise in their research. Some faculty visitors state there is a lack of civil communication among colleagues and report experiencing prevalent behaviors and norms that promote a culture of disrespect.