

2011 Annual Report from the Ombuds Office

The University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz

**HIGHLIGHTING OUR OFFICE'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS,
RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SERVICES | JULY 2010 TO JUNE 2011**

Fall 2011



This report is fondly dedicated in memory of Roberta Steinhardt, the founding Ombudsperson at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. Roberta's wisdom, compassion, and integrity continue to guide the Ombuds Office today. It is an honor to follow in her footsteps.

2011 Annual Report from the Ombuds Office

The University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz

OVERVIEW

Included in this annual report is information related to the visitor and outreach program data for the 2010-2011 fiscal year. Each year, it is our intent to provide relevant statistics in a clear manner that will be useful to members of the University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz community. We welcome and encourage your feedback and any suggestions to improve this document. Please contact the Ombuds Office Director at Melissa.Connell@ucdenver.edu with your comments.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For the 13th year, the Ombuds Office wishes to acknowledge and thank the University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz community for their continued support. We are acutely aware that our success is due in large part to the individuals who voluntarily participate in efforts to address issues, resolve conflicts, and deal with change. Their trust in our office's abilities to confidentially assist in the management of conflict reflects the integrity of the University and its commitment to fairness, equity, and diversity.

MISSION

The primary goal of the Ombuds is to assist members of the UC Denver | Anschutz community in attaining fair process and access. The Ombuds Office is a resource available to all students, faculty, and staff & provides an alternative forum for prompt, impartial and confidential discussions for individuals to review options for informal resolutions of differences.

MEMBERS OF THE OFFICE

Director – Melissa Connell, JD
Associate Director – Mary Chavez Rudolph, PhD
Ombuds – Lisa Neale, MSS



PRINCIPLES OF THE OMBUDS OFFICE

The University of Colorado Denver Ombuds Office's ethical principles consist of the following: Independence, Neutrality & Impartiality, Confidentiality, and Informality. We adhere to the International Ombudsman Association's Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice as members of this association. For more information about our professional organization, please visit <http://www.ombudsassociation.org/>.

Independence: The Ombuds Office is independent in structure, function, and appearance to the highest degree within the organization. The Office reports directly to the Provost.

Neutrality & Impartiality: As a designated neutral, the Ombuds remains unaligned and impartial. The Ombuds does not engage in any situation which could create a conflict of interest.

Confidentiality: The Ombuds holds all communications with those seeking assistance in strict confidence, and does not disclose confidential communications unless given permission to do so. The only exception to this privilege of confidentiality is where there appears to be imminent risk of serious harm.

Informality: As an informal resource, the Ombuds does not participate in any formal adjudicative or administrative procedure related to concerns brought to his/her attention.



WHAT WE DO IN THE OMBUDS OFFICE/ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

The Ombuds Office is an independent resource, which will provide informal, confidential and neutral services to members of the University community in resolving conflicts, complaints, and disputes. Contacting the Ombuds Office is a voluntary process and neither the office nor any other entity or individual may compel a visitor to utilize its services. Alternatively, no member of the University can be forbidden from visiting the Ombuds Office.

The Ombuds Office may help by providing the following services:

- *Facilitating discussions*
- *Listening actively to concerns*
- *Mediating disputes when deemed appropriate*
- *Recommending & brainstorming options*
- *Coaching individuals involved in conflict*

Some examples of the type of concerns which may be brought to the Ombuds Office include, but are not limited to, the following:

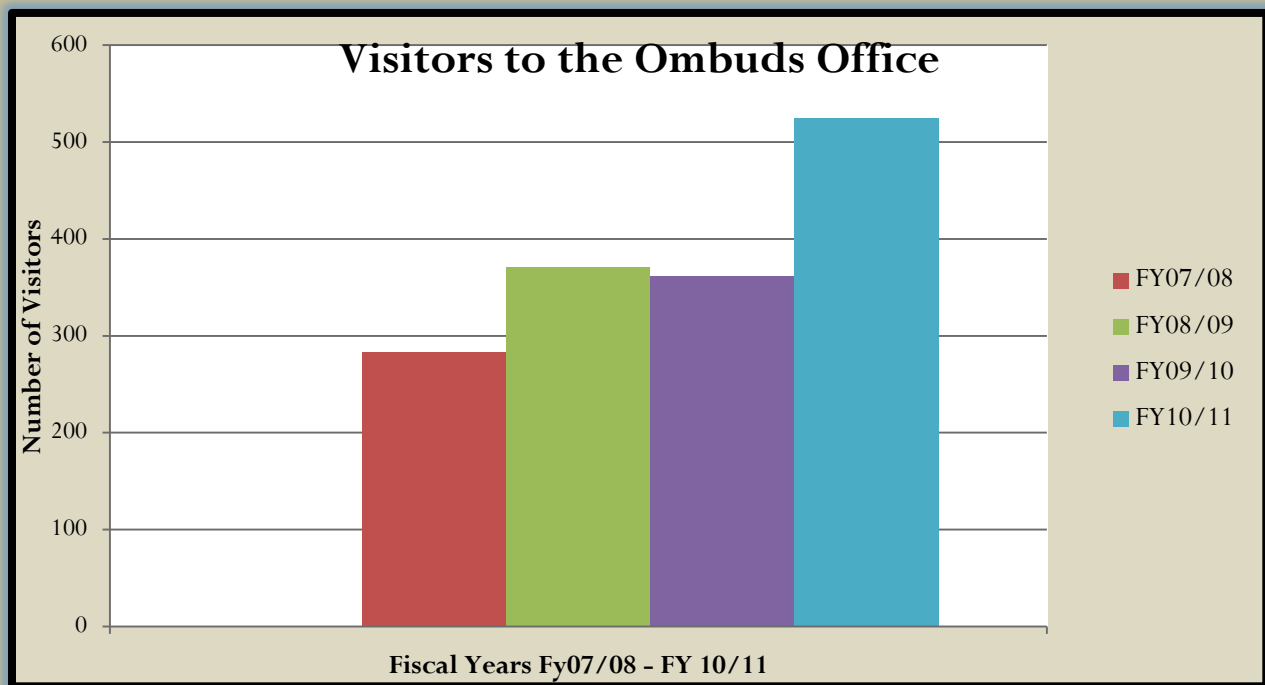
- *Working conditions*
- *Interpersonal conflicts*
- *Disciplinary actions*
- *Disagreement over grades*
- *Sexual harassment*
- *Discrimination issues*
- *Clarification of policies and procedures*
- *Conflict resolution training*

DATA FROM THE OMBUDS OFFICE

Maintaining confidentiality is a key component of the office and therefore, individual case studies are not presented. This report will summarize the types of issues presented to the Ombuds Office and the assistance provided. Contacts with the Ombuds Office are categorized into three distinct groups: complainant, focus of concern, and supplemental. “Complainants” are defined as those individuals bringing forth an issue to the Office. Should these

complainants have an issue with an individual or with a department, that unit or person is then considered as a “focus of concern”. With a complainant’s permission, we will contact the focus of concern to offer individual coaching, or surface an inconsistency in a policy or procedure. Lastly, a “supplemental” contact in our office is one in which we are gathering information or clarification regarding policies and/or procedures.

Between July of 2010 and the end of June of 2011, the office directly assisted 525 people. This number represents a 45% increase from last year. Due to an increase in the number of systemic issues brought to this office, many visitors required on-going Ombuds services rather than our standard one to three visits. Our numbers continue to increase as shown by the graph below:



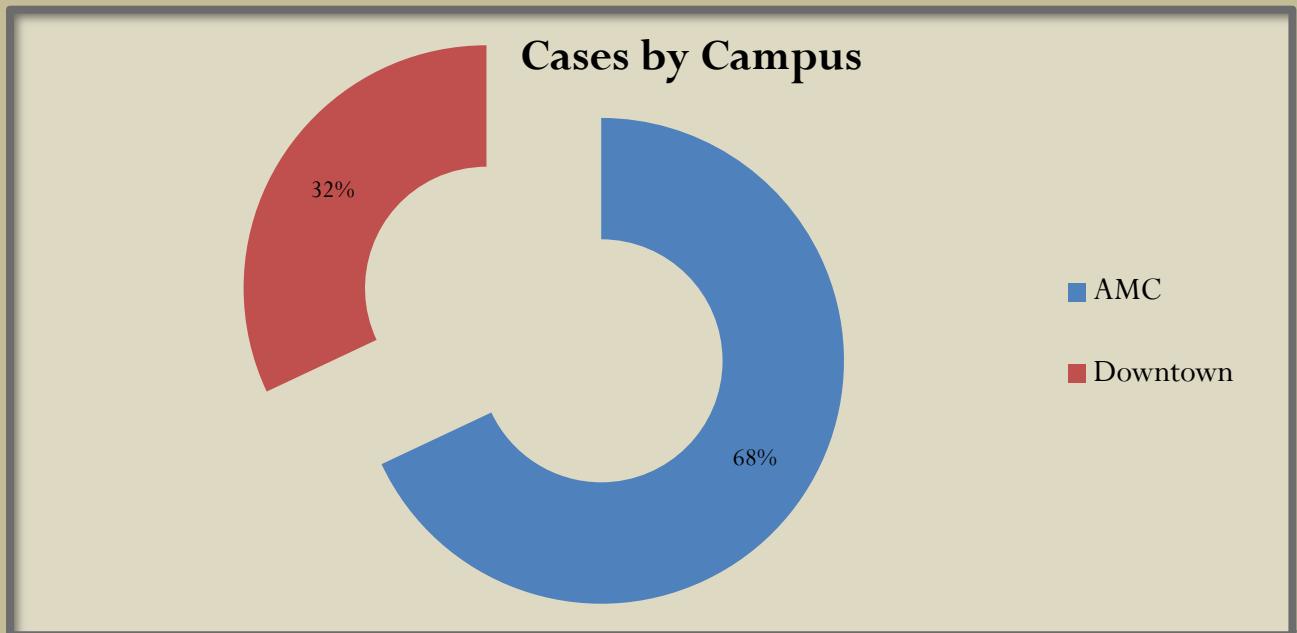
Workshops & Training

Approximately 1315 individuals received training, education, and/or conflict management information via workshops, seminars, new employee, new student, and new faculty orientation programs, and various campus organizational events.

Cases by Campus

Each case is initiated by an issue or complaint brought by an individual to the Ombuds Office. The case may be comprised of one individual or several and may include other parties in the conflict, as well as other University entities we contact to consult with and obtain information.

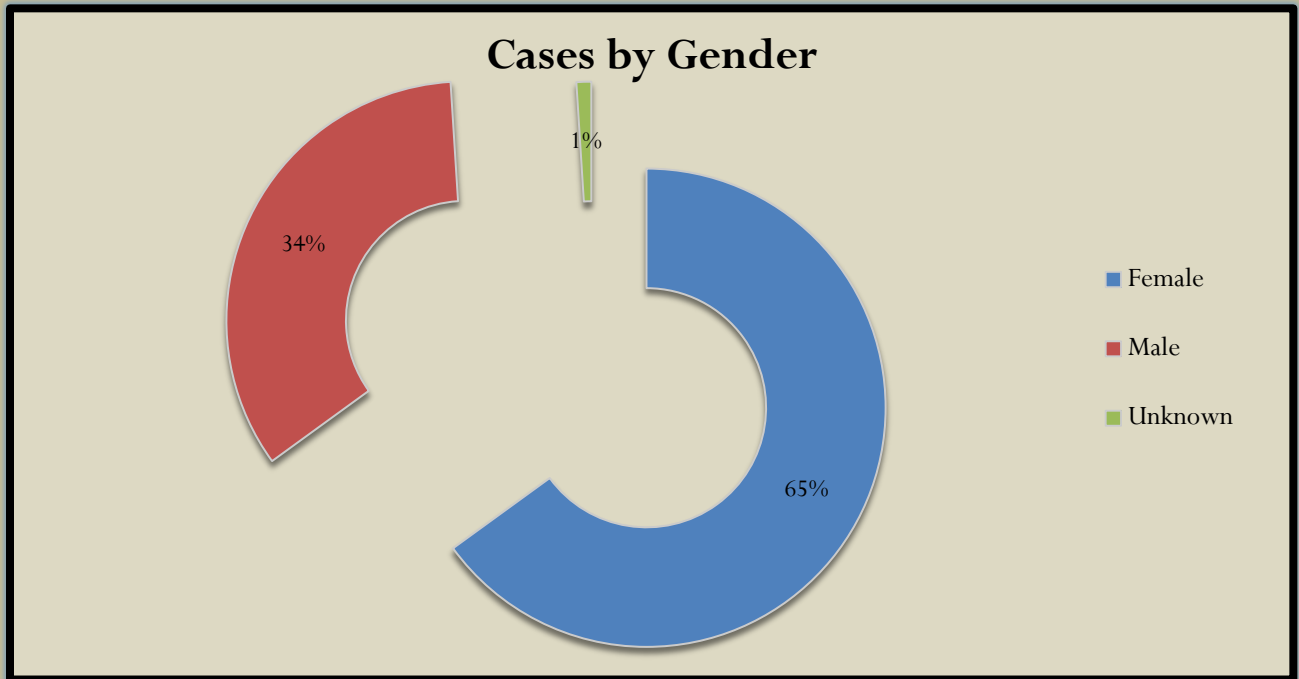
Cases for the twelve-month period were distributed as follows between the two Ombuds Offices:



"You were not only extremely helpful with the information and research you provided, but I really appreciated your honest comments and forward-thinking attitude."
Visitor to the Ombuds Office

Cases by Gender

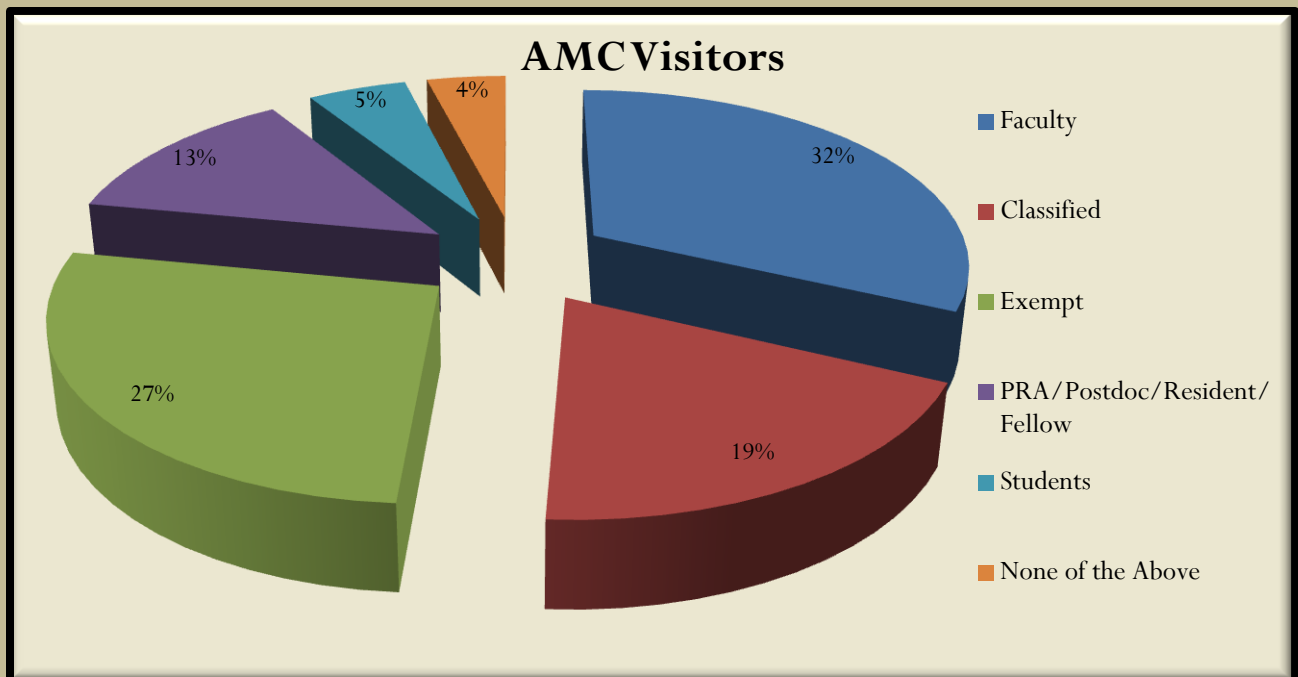
The breakdown for gender for all cases is as follows:



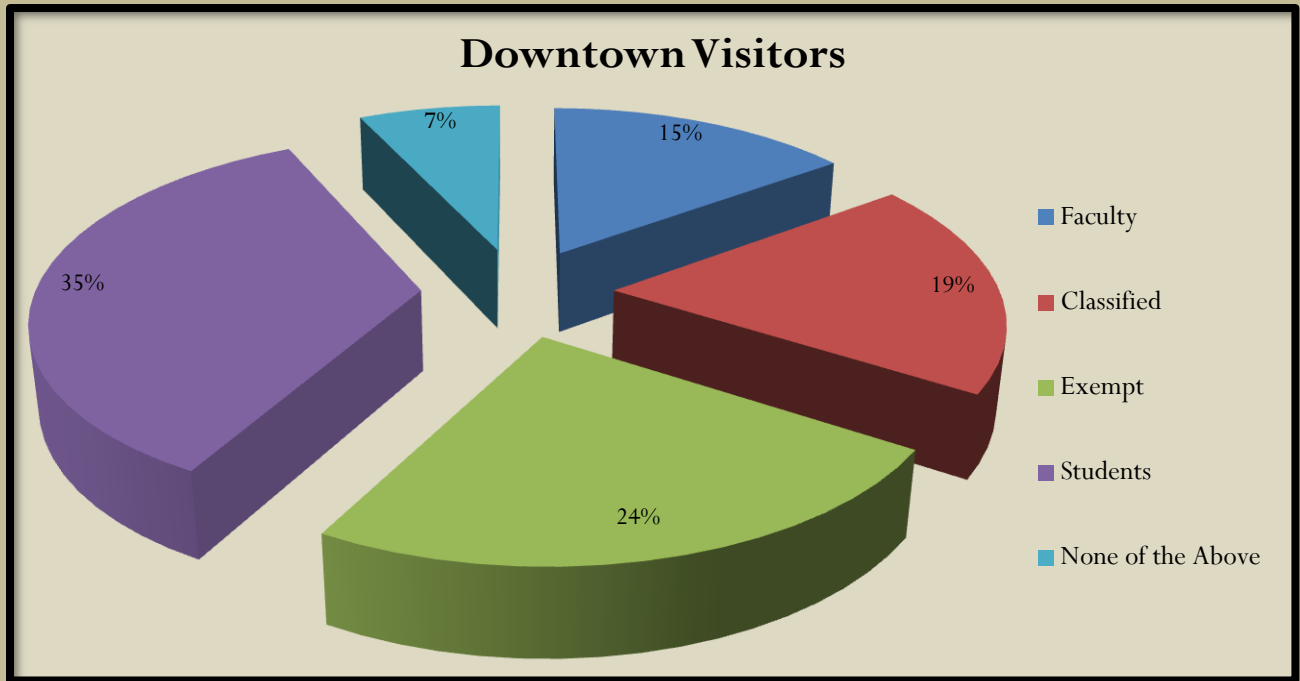
Groups & Individuals Visiting the Ombuds Office

The primary group utilizing the Ombuds Office varied by campus; for the Downtown office, students comprised the largest group. At our AMC office, faculty comprised the largest group.

The breakdown for the Anschutz Medical Campus consisted of the following groups:



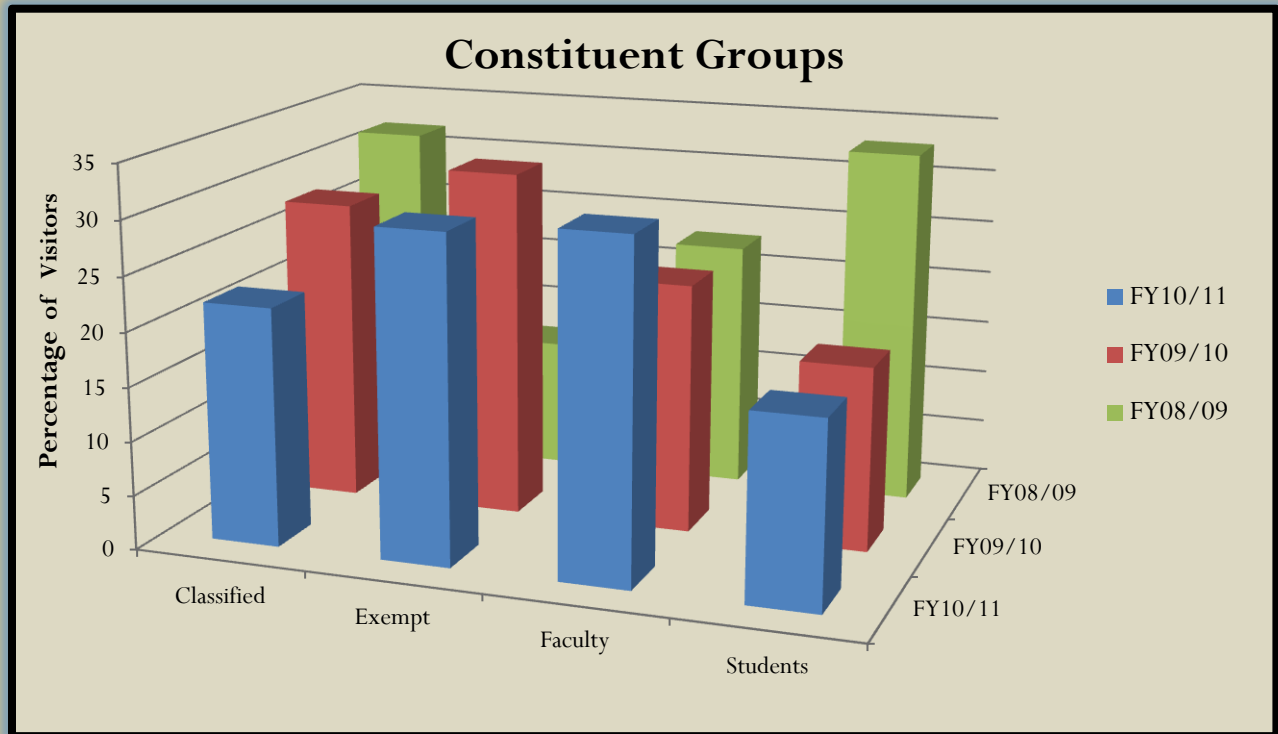
The breakdown for the Downtown Campus consisted of the following groups:



“I am thinking I probably won't be a stranger to your office, but I find a lot of comfort in knowing you all are there as a resource to help me work through this employment situation. Thank you, very much.”

Ombuds Office Visitor

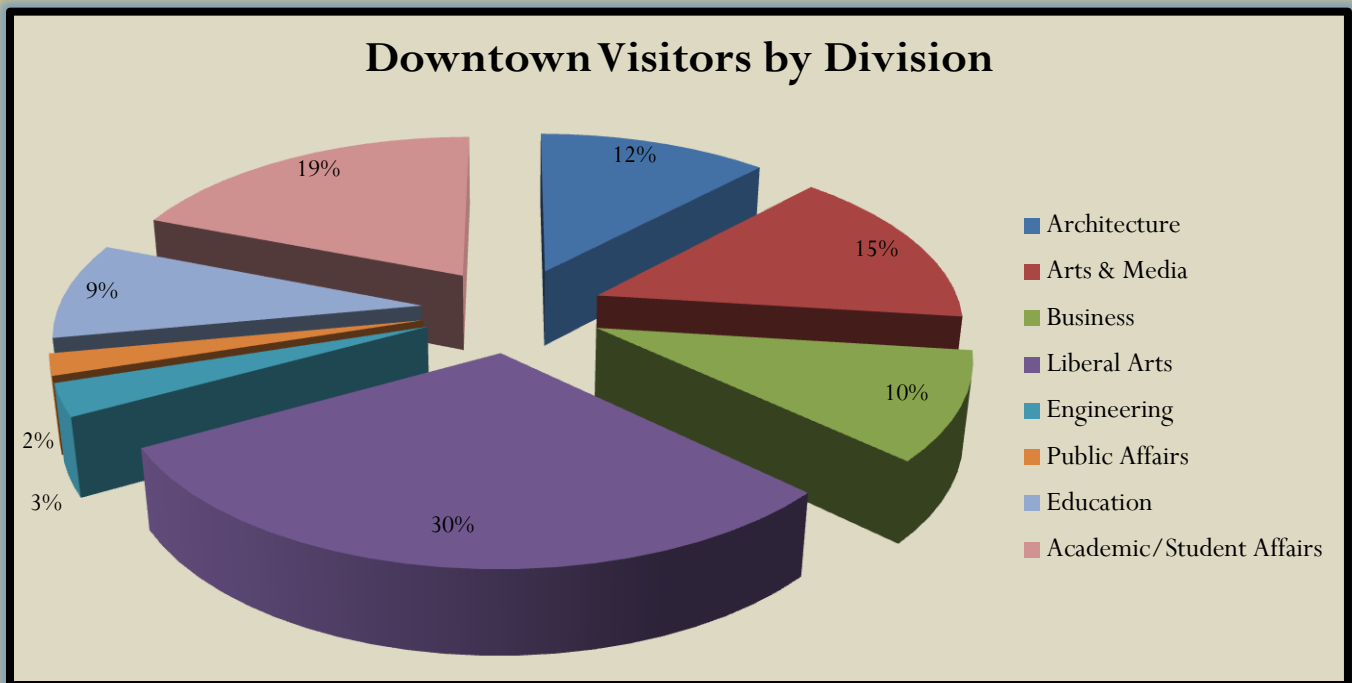
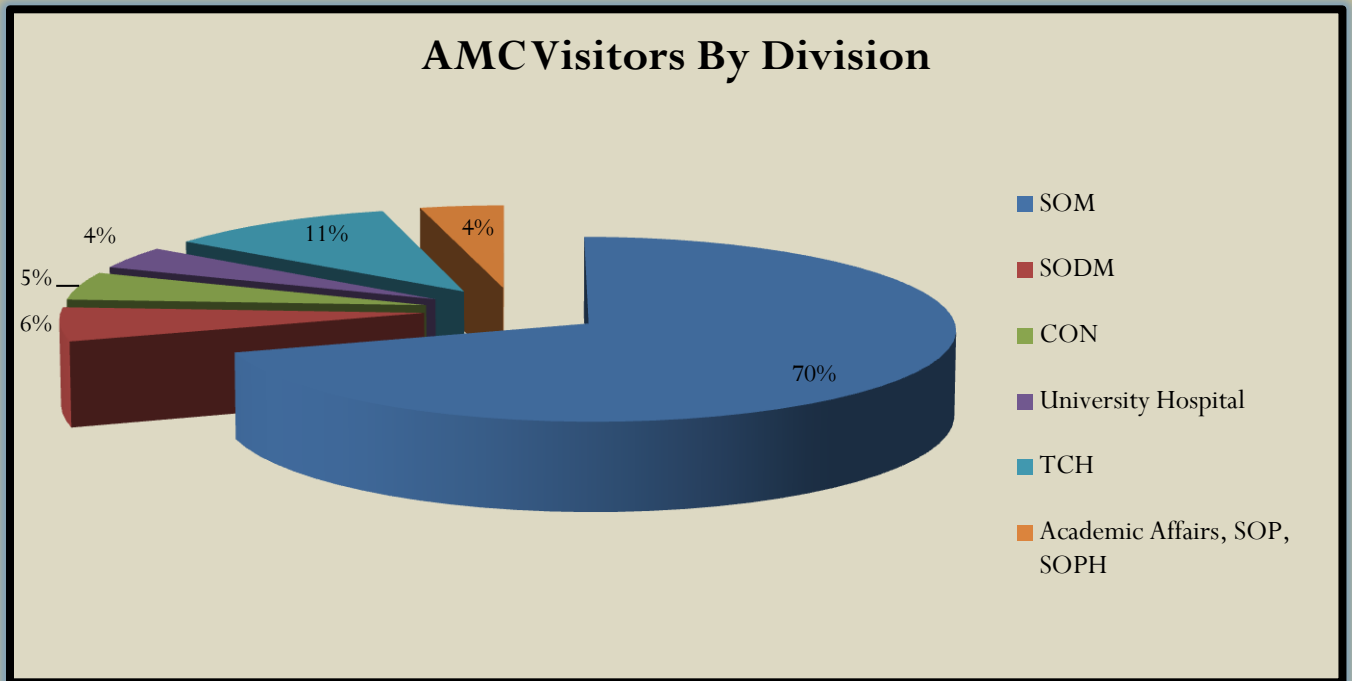
Over the last three years, representation of these categories has remained relatively the same:



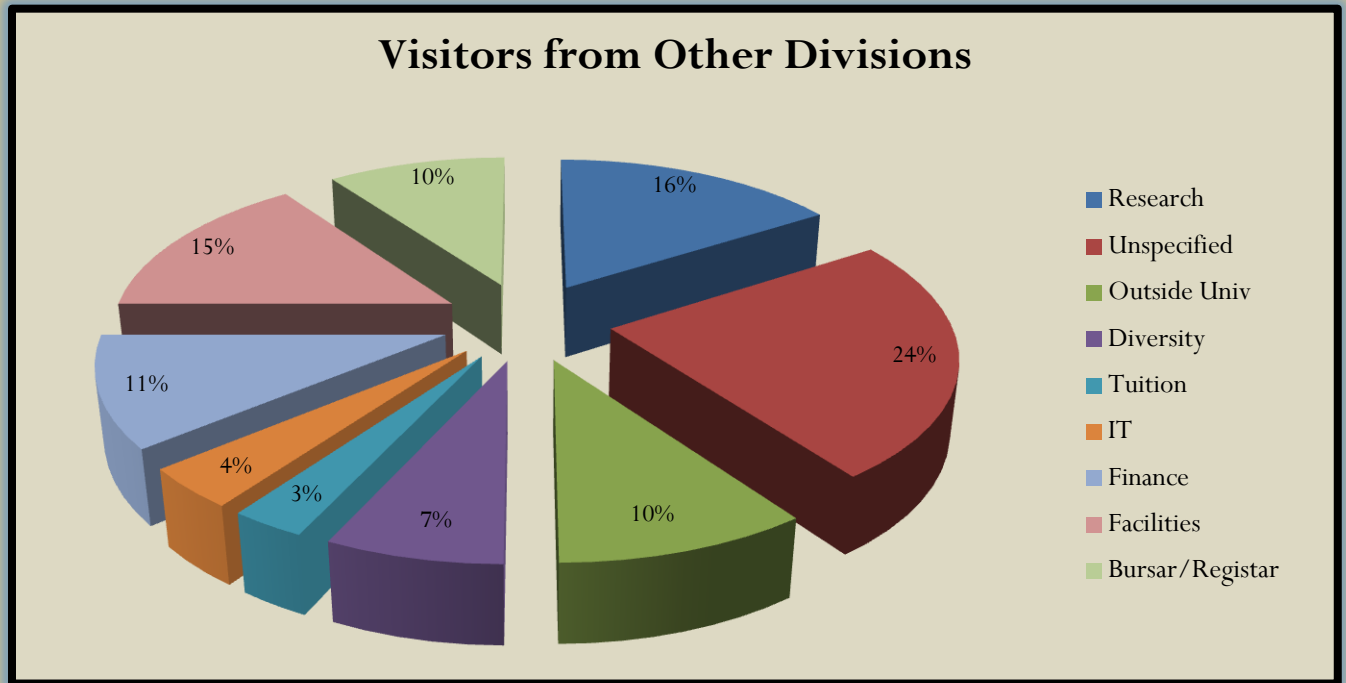
Schools, Colleges, & Departments Visiting the Ombuds Office

During the time period of July 2010 to June of 2011, the School of Medicine and the Academic schools on the Downtown Campus comprised the largest number of visitors. In order to avoid revealing any identifying factors, the totals for the Schools of Public Health, Pharmacy, and Academic Affairs have been combined. The category “Other” includes unknown affiliations of constituents. The Children’s Hospital Colorado, School of Dental Medicine and School of Medicine represent the three largest increases in representation to the Ombuds Office. Visits from The Children’s Hospital Colorado increased by over 1000%, the School of Dental Medicine experienced a 50% increase, and representation from the School of Medicine increased by 25% (Note: The Ombuds Office is no longer accepting TCH visitors unless their issues are

completely related to University policies & procedures). The breakdown for all of AMC is as follows:



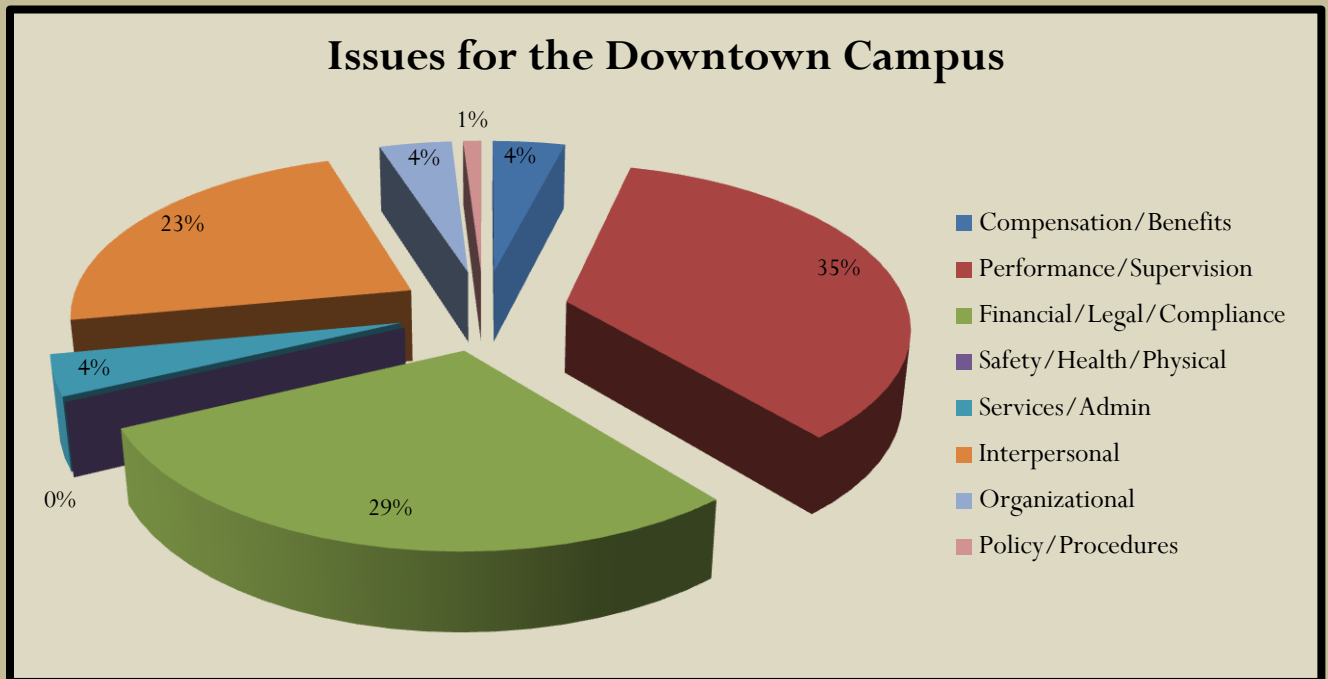
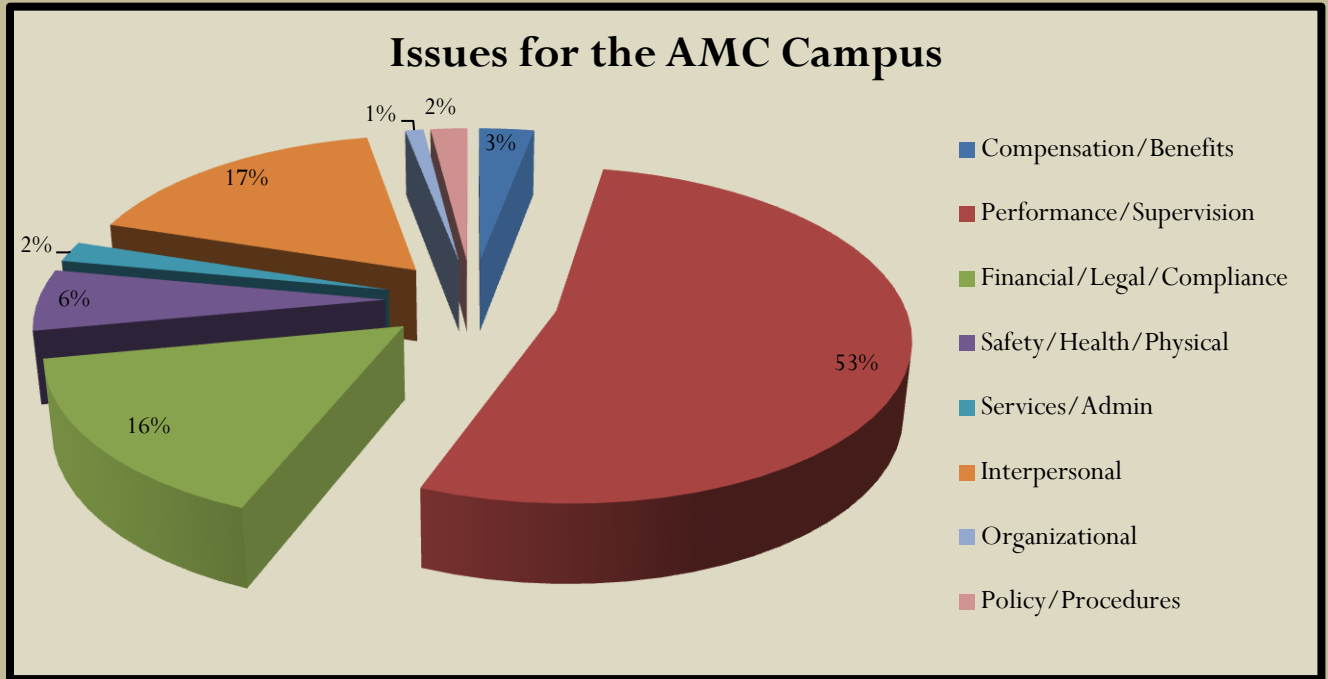
Whether specifically located Downtown or at Anschutz, the following departments sought assistance from the Ombuds Office. No supplemental contacts were included in this graph:



Issues Brought to the Ombuds Office

Supervisory and performance issues continued to be the highest ranking concern on both campuses – this category includes grade concerns brought forward by students as well as performance evaluations and supervisory effectiveness related to staff and faculty. Because supervisory and performance issues have remained a significant workplace issue, we strongly encourage continued management and supervisory trainings. Assistance provided included coaching faculty, staff and students of their options and resources as it pertained to their goals and gathering information from relevant entities such as Human Resources, University Counsel, Faculty Affairs, Risk Management and Tuition Classification. We also saw a noteworthy increase in financial, legal and compliance issues such as alleged sexual harassment & discrimination and concerns around FMLA and unemployment. In these instances we were able to work closely with the Employment Rights

Compliance and Investigations Officer, the Bursar and Registrar's Offices, University Counsel and Human Resources.



Supplemental Contacts

Partnering with University entities to obtain information about policies, procedures and practices is an integral component of our work. During FY10/11, our office had numerous contacts with a variety of departments including but not limited to Human Resources, the Registrar's Office, University Counsel, Student Services, University Police, and Faculty Affairs. We are grateful for their services and willingness to allow us to pose hypothetical situations in order to informally and confidentially gather information for visitors.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR FY 10/11

IOA Activities and Committees

We continue to be active in our professional organization, The International Ombudsman Association (IOA). All members of the Ombuds Office participate in committee work, including mentoring new Ombuds, developing educational opportunities such as Webinars, and creating programs for our national conference in Houston in 2012.

Cal Caucus Conference & Journal

In addition to our national committee work, contributions in the academic ombudsing arena continue to be a focus for us. Last year, Mary Chavez and Lisa Neale presented at the Cal Caucus Conference. Their workshop "Train the Trainer: Improve your College or University's Ecology (Environment) through Training – Conflict Management for Supervisors" gave Ombuds the tools to train constituents on their campuses in conflict management. The Cal Caucus Journal originates from the Caucus's beginnings in the late 1980s, however, this year, the Journal will take electronic form and will take on additional features yet to be determined at this year's conference. Lisa Neale is the co-editor of The Journal.

GLBT Training for Facilities in Conjunction with Diversity

With recent concerns related to sensitivity around sexual orientation and identity, the Ombuds Office, Office of Diversity, and AVC for Facilities Operations Dave Turnquist collaborated to present training related to Gay,

Lesbian, Bi-Sexual, and Transgender issues for Facilities Operations. Hope Wisneski, the Deputy Executive Director of GLBT Colorado, conducted several trainings related to sexual orientation and identity and creating a safe and respectful workplace. Her presentation was filmed and shown to those in Facilities unable to attend her actual training. Both directors of Diversity (Dominic Martinez) and the Ombuds Office (Melissa Connell) were videotaped, both describing their offices and the importance of creating a respectful workplace. The video can be seen on the Ombuds website at www.ucdenver.edu/ombuds/tipsandskills.

Crucial Conversations Trainings

As one of the most popular books and trainings to emerge in the last few years, *Crucial Conversations* has become a regular request by visitors for the Ombuds Office to offer to the campuses. This spring, all members of the Ombuds Office participated in the training through the Colorado Department of Personnel & Administration. Because this workshop is considered to be a highly effective training in the management of conflict, both Mary Chavez and Lisa Neale will become trained in this program to offer this to both the Anschutz and Denver campuses by November of 2011.

Faculty Professionalism Task Force Committee

Per the request of several faculty members at the Anschutz Medical Campus, both Melissa Connell and Lisa Neale served as consultants for the development of a faculty professionalism code for the School of Medicine. Center to our work, Lisa and Melissa provided feedback regarding methods for reporting unprofessional conduct in the most confidential and anonymous setting.

Proposal to The Children's Hospital Colorado

Due to over a 1000% increase in visitors to the Ombuds Office from The Children's Hospital Colorado this last fiscal year, the Ombuds Office formally proposed teaming with the Hospital to assist faculty and staff who are experiencing conflict.

Climate Surveys

Often times during transitions and/or highly stressful periods, it is valuable to gather information and insight regarding the overall “health” of a unit. In last year’s annual report, the Ombuds Office cited the need for a measurement tool to gauge both the positive and negative elements a department may be facing.

Types of questions found in a climate survey can include:

- Do employees feel valued?
- Are the necessary resources available?
- How does management respond to problems?

The Ombuds Office assisted in the development of an informal climate survey for use in any department that managers and supervisors might use for this purpose. To date, the survey has been distributed to at least four departments. The Ombuds Office offers a variety of questions and resources to create the appropriate type of survey depending on what type of information is being gathered. We offer our office as a safe, confidential location for returning surveys and are available to brainstorm options with supervisors once the data has been compiled and analyzed by the individual units.

Provost’s Faculty Leadership Academy

Another recommendation from the Ombuds Office’s Annual Report of FY09/10 suggested training for supervisors in the area of managing conflict. Sponsored by Provost Nairn and the Center for Faculty Development, this leadership training forum took place in August of 2010. Faculty learned about legal issues, human resources concerns, especially those related to sexual harassment, and conflict management tools. The Ombuds Office presented a conflict management and supervisor workshop to approximately 80 faculty members. Mary Chavez and Melissa Connell also served on the committee which developed this program.



OMBUDS OFFICE OUTREACH

Outreach remains one of the Ombuds Office's most effective marketing tools, not only for information about the office, but also serves as a proactive method to introduce the University community to conflict management skills. The following categories highlight our work in this arena. While we are being asked for our materials to be included in student guidebooks, websites, and informational packets, we are being asked less to physically present to groups and more to provide brochures and handouts with our information.

Presentations

Approximately 1315 University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz constituents obtained information about the office. The Ombuds Office regularly participates in new employee, new student, and new faculty orientations. New employees to the institution are introduced weekly to the services offered at University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz and the Ombuds Office regularly participates in these employee orientations.

Trainings

In addition to those receiving information about the Ombuds Office, approximately 300 individuals received conflict management training through our office. We have recently added a new addition “Dealing with Difficult People & Complaint Handling” and will have “Crucial Conversations” as an addition in late November. Mary Chavez and Lisa Neale regularly conduct these workshops, which seek to improve basic conflict resolution skills of the participants. Our workshops include:

- *Conflict Management for Supervisors*
- *DiSC Personality Assessments*
- *Teams: Utilizing Conflict Constructively*
- *Applying Principled Negotiation to Workplace Conflicts*
- *Utilizing Mediation Skills in the Workplace*
- *Using Conflict Styles Wisely*
- *Bullying in the Workplace*
- *Dealing with Difficult People & Complaint Handling*
- *Crucial Conversations (Coming late November, 2011)*

“Thank you for an excellent presentation on conflict resolution. I know that as a team we will all be utilizing the skills you presented. For me, it was a valuable insight into the dynamics of our team.”

Resource Library

Our resource library continues to grow and includes training videos and books related to conflict resolution and management techniques, which employees may borrow. Our current library hosts approximately 70 books and video resources available at each Ombuds Office. We will continue to expand our library as our budget permits.

Marketing

The Ombuds Office continues to advertise its services to the University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz community. Referrals to our office have increased and are an effective marketing tool, in addition to our more traditional approaches, (i.e., brochures, New Employee Orientations, and promotional items).

GOALS/FUTURE PLANS FOR FY 11/12

Crucial Conversations Trainings

In October, Mary Chavez and Lisa Neale will become certified trainers in *Crucial Conversations*. This will allow us to bring the training to both campuses at a significant reduction in price for those who would be trained through other institutions. We consider this training an invaluable tool in creating a safe and productive workplace.

Faculty Ombuds

For several years, Faculty Assembly has voiced the need for an Ombuds devoted exclusively to their needs, issues, and concerns at the University. With the approval of the Chancellor, two faculty Ombuds will be hired on a part-time basis. Both will be retired from the University, with extensive understanding of how the University works. Additionally, both faculty Ombuds will receive Ombuds training and certification in order to effectively assist their constituents. While many details still have yet to be determined, we are excited for this addition to our department.

Executive Coaching Training

The need for professional coaching continues to be a relevant topic. The Ombuds Office engages in a considerable amount of coaching now, offering visitors options and resources and helping them determine their best course of action. In May, Melissa Connell will become trained as an “executive coach”, further eliminating the need for outside and costly consulting.

Brown Bag Workshops

In an attempt to address the need for conflict management in a busy workplace and honor Conflict Resolution Month, the Ombuds Office is offering our first brown bag workshop this October on both campuses at lunch time. The topic will speak to bullying and incivility in the workplace and will offer suggestions for addressing and mitigating these unproductive, costly, and negative behaviors. We hope to broaden the idea of brown bags in the spring, to include more topics as well as different departments speaking on relevant issues for our campuses.

Conferences

With only two professional development opportunities per year for Ombuds, our staff attempts to take advantage of improving our practice when we are able. This November, both Lisa Neale and Melissa Connell will attend Cal Caucus in Monterrey, CA. The theme “A New Day -21st Century Cultural & Social Realities” will address challenges and opportunities Ombuds face in our media-driven world. Lisa Neale will also be presenting a workshop “Train-the Trainer: DiSC Personality Profile” to participants in a pre-conference session. In April, Mary Chavez Rudolph will attend our national IOA Conference in Houston, Texas.

CHALLENGES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Management Training

Based on the 500+ visitors we met with this year, the Ombuds Office encourages management training at all levels within the University to assist with communication, leadership, and team building skills. Appreciating that managing others is not an easy task, the development and mastery of this skill is an essential component to our growth and success as an institution. The State of Colorado Personnel & Administration Division offers a variety of courses designed specifically for supervisors throughout the year including,

Building a Retention Culture, Crucial Conversations, & Strength Based Management.

Civility Code

It is important to recognize that it is rare for visitors to come to our office to share good news with us. Occasionally, one might stop by to update us on their successes but, again, it does not happen very often. With that being said, we understand that the information we receive is one visitor's perspective. However, perspectives shared with us often relate to some form of incivility which has affected the visitor strongly enough to take time to visit an Ombuds. Examples include: abrasive e-mails, raised voices, inappropriate/unprofessional language, and intentional professional misconduct towards a co-worker, veiled threats, and unethical choices. Uncivil behaviors are important to recognize, as they can often cascade into more pervasive behaviors, such as bullying. We have noticed an increase in bullying behaviors throughout both campuses. While there is no law against bullying, it is our hope that as a University we can become a leader in establishing codes of behavior that speak to civility and professionalism for all members of the University community.

The Ombuds Office therefore recommends that the administration initiate discussions and consider developing a university-wide civility code which clearly lays out specific expectations of mutual civility and respect for all members of the University community.

Faculty Professionalism Code for the University as a Whole

We recently worked with the School of Medicine in the development of a professionalism code and a confidential reporting tool to identify unprofessional behaviors. Just as students from both campuses are held to specific behavioral expectations and codes of conduct, we are happy to see the faculty professionalism code implemented in the School of Medicine. It is our hope that the entire faculty of both campuses may consider adopting such a code.



Respectfully Submitted to the University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz Community,

Melissa Connell, Director of the Ombuds Office