In the Ombuds Office, we are transparent and consistent in our practices as we provide conflict prevention, management, and resolution to the University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus communities. In calendar year 2021, we’ve utilized our personal skills and expertise to go beyond the basic Ombuds offerings and provided additional support to individuals, groups, leaders, and the institution. We continue to adhere to the International Ombuds Association’s Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice.

2021 saw many of the same challenges as we saw in the first year of the pandemic, with new moving pieces as vaccines became readily available. As always, we were grateful for our collaborative relationships with many important entities on our campuses that helped us impart accurate information to our constituents.

- Increased number of post-doctoral students leaving academia, citing unsupportive research training environments.
- New Colorado legislation regarding pay equity brought many inquiries to our office to anonymously gather information regarding rights and options.
- Continued COVID related issues including: continued remote work requests, perceived inequity related to who is required to return to campus/who is not, vaccine mandates, exceptions and appeal processes, mental health issues, Zoom fatigue, and continued challenges with working from home.
- Concerns in labs related to disregarding COVID and University protocols, as well as increased abrasive behaviors.
- Working from home and possible transitions back to campus caused concern, from rigid rules for some, not for others, lack of consistency in expectations as well as perceived lack of confidence and trust in some employees.
Above and Beyond in 2021

In 2021, we went above and beyond with our services to help support the University and grow professionally.

- Continued our Lunch & Learn series providing both campuses with tangible skills in digestible amounts.

- Increased assistance with groups, teams and departments by adding organizational development elements to assistance as well as standard benefits such as climate surveys and facilitations.

- Increased contributions to Ombuzz blog, offering timely and relevant tools to help faculty, staff, and students navigate their current environment.

- Continued to facilitate and play an integral role in supporting an intercampus working group to explore the need for a restorative justice program for the institution.

- Engaged in local, national, and international Ombuds professional associations by planning conferences, mentoring, and providing consistent practice expertise and hosting weekly regional ombuds case studies.

- Lisa Neale and Teresa Ralicki became certified in Social Justice Mediation in order to assist the university with potential cases involving racial/social injustice.