




The University of Georgia

Equal Opportunity Office

August 30, 2017

TO: President Jere Morehead
213 Administration Building

FROM: E. Janyce Dawkins, Director 
Equal Opportunity Office
119 Holmes-Hunter Academic Building

RE: 2016-2017 Ombudsperson Report

This report marks the eighth annual Ombudsperson Program report since the Ombudsperson Program began on October 1, 2008. This annual report is charged with discussing trends or patterns in the reporting of issues and concerns by students, faculty and staff and making recommendations for changes or improvements to existing policies and procedures.¹ The Program was initiated in 2008 to address concerns about the handling of sexual harassment complaints. Since that time the landscape of sexual harassment has exploded in public awareness, in regulatory oversight, and in institutional priorities.

Our Ombudsperson Program has appropriately and responsibly responded to this awareness and currently serve as a confidential resource for persons requiring information and support for alleged instances of sexual misconduct. Nonetheless sexual harassment issues have consistently been a very small percentage of the ombudspersons contacts.² However, the ombudsperson program has expanded well beyond that initial focus and serves the UGA Community in multiple areas.

Karen Saunders stepped down as the Student Ombudsperson on June 1, 2017. She was replaced by Charisse Harper who also serves in the Office of the Dean of Students. Dr. Cathy Jones continues as the Faculty Ombudsperson and Steve Gibson serves as the Staff Ombudsperson.

Though the primary roles of the individual ombudspersons have been delegated as faculty, staff or student respectively, individuals are advised to seek assistance from any designee regardless

¹ See Ombudsperson Program Website: <http://www.uga.edu/ombudsperson/>

² There were 0 reports of sexual harassment to ombudsperson in the 2016-2017 reporting period.

of their formal designation. This has worked well by accommodating absences and potential conflicts of interest. The ombudspersons continue to provide support to the entire University community in furthering fairness within the University community and serve as a source of information and referral. The Ombudspersons continue to serve as a Confidential Support Resource under UGA's Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) Protocol. The Program, in its organization and operation, serves as an additional resource to the University's existing policies and procedures for processing and resolving student, faculty and staff complaints and concerns.

The number of ombudspersons-reported concerns decreased this period going from 137 during 2015-2016 to 102³ during 2016-2017. For the first time, these concerns were pretty equally divided between staff, faculty and students with an increase of 64% in concerns from faculty. The concerns were concentrated into three areas: Employment Workplace Issues (35.29%); Faculty/Staff Conduct (21.56%); and Miscellaneous Concerns (20.58%). The items brought to the Ombuds in the Miscellaneous Concerns category were varied with Health Concerns presenting as the most frequent topic. Student Conduct Concerns, in the top three last year, reduced substantially this year going from 18.9% to 4.6% of the total concerns.

TOPIC FOR CONSIDERATION

Again this year there is a recurring concern stemming from supervisory decisions and management issues. Ineffective communications, unfair treatment, non-compliance with existing practices and procedures, and personality issues were all raised. These issues, whether perceived or actual, lead to conflicts in the working relationship. The inherent power differential in the supervisory relationship intensifies the conflicts and can create a sense of frustration and belief that the reporters have no voice. Continued and increased training opportunities are applauded to help supervisors and managers address workplace conflicts and resolve issues in a fair and objective manner consistent with policies and procedures already in place. One way to avoid potential conflicts is to require an annual review of departmental policies as well as evaluating the need to develop new policies. This effort would keep existing policies at the forefront of management operations as well as serve as an audit of efficiency and effectiveness of those operations.

SUMMARY

The foregoing paragraph was not changed from last year's report. While there are ongoing efforts to help provide the necessary tools for our supervisors, managers, and administrators to

³ Staff concerns = 34; Faculty concerns = 28; Students concerns = 36; Non-UGA concern = 4

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have the tools required to perform effectively, we still need to recognize that more needs to be done.

The Ombuds Program continues to serve as a place to the entire UGA community in a tangible way. It serves as a beacon of fairness, a source of information, and a place to go when there seems to be no place to go. The Program is a valued member of the UGA Community and helps conflict and problem resolution in a more productive, non-confrontational manner.

Encls: 2016-2017 Ombudspersons Data Report

cc: Provost Pam Whitten

Scott Pegan

OMBUDSPERSONS REPORT

2016-2017

Table 1

All Ombudsperson Visitors

Status, Gender and Ethnicity of Contacts in 2015-2016

Status of Contact	Female	Male	Not Known	TOTAL	African-American	Asian	Caucasian	Latino	Other	Not Known
Student	14	10	1	25	4	3	14	0	1	3
Faculty	13	13		26	0	0	19	1	1	4
Staff	13	3		16	0	0	16	0	0	1
Non-UGA	2	0		2	0	0	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	42	26	1	69	4	3	50	1	2	9

Table 2

Types of Primary Issues Presented by Campus Constituencies

Types of concerns	Students	Faculty	Staff	Non-UGA	TOTAL
Financial Concerns	3	0	0	0	3
Student Academic	5	0	0	0	5
Student Conduct	3	1	0	1	5
Classroom Instruction	3	0	0	1	4
Faculty/Staff Performance	2	4	0	0	6
Employment/Workplace Issues	0	18	18	0	36
Faculty/Staff Conduct	13	2	7	0	22
Misc. Concerns	7	3	9	2	21
TOTAL	36	28	34	4	102

Table 3

Financial Concerns

Contracts, emergency loans, encumbrances, fees, financial aid, fines, independent status, insurance, leases, paycheck, refunds, tuition, tuition waiver, graduate assistantships, other.

Academic

Academic probation/dismissal, add/drop, admission, certification, clinical/student teaching course, closed classes, comprehensive exams, credit transfer, incompletes, transfer, incompletes, degree/graduation requirements, medical withdrawals, other.

Student Conduct

Academic misconduct, alcohol, classroom disruption, due process, harassment, hazing, intimidation, judicial system, residence hall misconduct, roommate disputes, sanctions, sexual harassment, theft, other.

Classroom Instruction

Attendance, course syllabus, discriminatory grading, faculty absences, final exams, grade appeals, grade change, grading standards, make-up work, personality conflicts, quality of instruction, teacher fluency, other.

Faculty/Staff Performance

Inaccurate advising, inattentiveness, incompetence, retention of test/papers, availability, tardiness, attendance, completion of tasks.

Employment/Workplace Issues

Training, supervision, performance evaluation, pay, benefits, retirement, promotion/tenure, job classification/duties, work schedule/setting, hiring, discharge, unfit for duty, interpersonal conflict, disability issues (ADA/FMLA), conflict of interest, nepotism

Faculty/Staff Conduct

Deceitfulness, derogatory comments, discrimination, favoritism, harassment, intimidation, retaliation, rudeness, sexual harassment, theft, intoxication/under influence, insubordination, job abandonment, workplace violence, arrest/conviction, garnishment, other.

Miscellaneous

Policy Issues and Development, privacy issues, disability accommodations, parking, on-campus housing, legal issues, health concerns, ethical considerations, off-campus housing, immigration issues, off-campus problems, safety issues, career advising, not otherwise categorized (NOC).

***These data only represent allegations that were brought to the Ombudspersons and should not be interpreted as confirmed incidents.**

Table 4

Ombudspersons Presentations/Meetings 9-1-16 to 8-31-17

Date	Topic	Organization/Group
9/1/16	Back to School	SART
9-26-16	Meeting with President Morehead	
10/6/16		SART
3/2/17		SART
4/21-4/23-2017	Ombuds Training	Charisse
Steve-Ombudspersons Presentations/Meetings 9-1-16 to 8-31-17		
Monthly Meeting	Sexual Assault Prevention	UGA Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)
9/15/16	The Role of an Ombudsperson	Multicultural Faculty and Staff Reception
12/10/15	The Role of UGA Ombudspersons	University of South Carolina Employee Relations Coordinator
1/29/16 & 2/11/16	Alcohol-Facilitated Sexual Assault Webinar	Equitas
7/22/16	The Role of UGA Ombudspersons	CERT/MRC Training and Cookout - UGA Health Sciences Campus
Cathy-Ombudspersons Presentations/Meetings 9-1-16 to 8-31-17		
9/26/16	Ombuds Issues 2015-16	President Morehead with Kathy Phar; Ombudspersons and Janyce Dawkins
2/2/17	Sexual Misconduct	SARS Meeting
2/21/17	Crisis Management	Teaching Academy Fellows; panel discussions