




September 7, 2021

TO: Jere W Morehead, President  
213 Administration Building

FROM: Qiana N Wilson, Director   
Equal Opportunity Office  
278 Brooks Hall

RE: 2020-2021 Ombudsperson Report

This report marks the twelfth annual Ombudsperson Program report since the Ombudsperson Program (“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.<sup>1</sup> The Program was initiated in 2008 to address concerns about the handling of sexual harassment complaints. Though the landscape of sexual harassment has exploded in public awareness, in regulatory oversight, and in institutional priorities, the Program has grown to respond to concerns and complaints that exist outside of the sexual harassment realm as well.

The Program has appropriately and responsibly responded to this awareness and currently serves 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 ombudsperson’s contacts.<sup>2</sup> The current number of sexual harassment reports sent to ombudspersons for 2020-2021 was 1, which is down from last year’s reports of 6.

The 3 current ombudspersons are: Dr. Jenny Gaver a Professor in the J.M. Tull School of Accounting as the Faculty Ombuds, Charisse Harper from the Office of the Dean of Students continues as the Student Ombuds, and Steve Gibson from the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, the longest serving Ombuds, continues as the Staff Ombuds.

---

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

<sup>2</sup> There was 1 report of sexual harassment to the Ombuds in the 2020-2021 reporting period. This represents 0.75% of the total concerns addressed during this period.

This has been an exceptional year for many reasons, most significantly due to operations amid a global pandemic. With respect to contacts reported, there is a consistent observation that some contacts are more complex and time-consuming than others. Fortunately, the Ombuds have not reported that this has prevented them from performing their primary job responsibilities.

## **2020 – 2021 CONCERNS**

The Ombuds addressed 134 concerns during the 2020-2021 reporting period. The number of contacts from students was higher than the contacts from faculty and staff, which may be attributed to many factors. There was an increase in student conduct issues reported across all ombudspersons – 4 reports by students, 3 reports by faculty, and 0 reports by staff, which is up from 2 total reports during the last period. Workplace issues represented 52 contacts as opposed to the 40 contacts noted during the previous period, with the 27 faculty reports accounting for over half of the employment/workplace issue reports. ***Fifteen (29%) of the contacts reported for employment/workplace issues were for interpersonal conflict, which is 5 times the number of reports received during the 2019-2020 reporting year.*** Of those 15 reports, 14 reports were made to the faculty ombudsperson. Previously, student concerns were concentrated around off-campus and safety issues with 11 contacts. During this period, student concerns centered around on-campus housing and academic issues with 15 contacts for housing and 10 contacts for academic issues compared to the 0 contacts for housing and 5 contacts for academic issues during the previous period.

## **TOPICS FOR CONSIDERATION**

Workplace issues, particularly interpersonal conflict and supervision concerns continue to be the most prevalent matters addressed by the faculty and staff ombudspersons. Work schedule/setting is up to 6 reports from 2 reports during the last reporting cycle. Higher than average student concerns surrounding housing, health, and accommodations are expected considering the necessary adjustment to operations over the last 18 months. Despite limited, physical campus presence necessitated by COVID, the ombudspersons saw a 19.6% increase to the total number of matters. This increase was mostly attributed to the almost 30% rise in student contacts with the student ombudsperson, who noted the increase in graduate student concerns and reports.

## **SUMMARY**

The Program continues to serve as a resource for the entire UGA community in a tangible way. It provides an opportunity for UGA Community members to speak candidly about concerns and discuss those concerns in a safe environment. The opportunity to speak with ombudspersons in other USG institutions provide networking and learning opportunities that will help our ombudspersons grow in their roles and become more effective. This upcoming year, there will

Ombudsperson Report  
September 7, 2021  
Page 3

be renewed focus on areas of concern, meetings with key stakeholders as the Program continues to grow, and intentional communication with the campus community to ensure knowledge and understanding of the Program, to include an updated website.

Thank you for your continued support.

Encls: 2020-2021 Ombudspersons Data Report

cc: Provost Jack Hu  
David Shipley

**OMBUDSPERSONS REPORT (includes breakdown of category totals)**

**2020-2021**

**Table 1**

**All Ombudsperson Visitors**

**Status, Gender, and Ethnicity of Contacts in 2020-2021**

<b>Status of Contact</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Not Known</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>African-American</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Caucasian</b>	<b>Latino</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Not Known</b>
Student	27	22		49	2	4	6			39
Faculty	25	19		44	4	2	37	1		
Staff	23	15		38	13	2	21	2		
Non-UGA	2	1		3			1			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>39</b>

**Table 2**

**Types of Primary Issues Presented by Campus Constituencies**

<b>Types of concerns</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Non-UGA</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Financial Concerns	4	1	2		7
Student Academic	10	1			11
Student Conduct	4	3			7
Classroom Instruction	6	2			8
Faculty/Staff Performance	2	2			4
Employment/Workplace Issues	6	27	19		52
Faculty/Staff Conduct	3	6	12		21
Misc. Concerns	17	1	4	2	24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>134</b>

**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.**

<b>Financial concerns</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Non-UGA</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Contracts		1			1
Emergency Loans					0
Encumbrances					0
Fees					0
Financial Aid					0
Fines					0
Independent Status					0
Insurance					0
Leases					0
Paycheck					0
Refunds					0
Tuition	2				2
Tuition Waiver					0
Graduate Assistantships	2		1		3
Other			1		1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>

<b>Academic concerns</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Non-UGA</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Academic probation/dismissal	2				2

Add/Drop					0
Admission	1				1
Certification					0
Clinical/student teaching course		1			1
Closed Classes					0
Comprehensive Exams	2				2
Credit Transfer					0
Incompletes					0
Degree/Graduation Requirements					0
Medical Withdrawals	2				2
Other	3				3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>

<u>Student Conduct</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Faculty</u>	<u>Staff</u>	<u>Non-UGA</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Academic Misconduct	3				3
Alcohol					0
Classroom Disruption					0
Due Process					0
Harassment		2			2
Hazing					0
Intimidation					0
Judicial System					0
Residence Hall Misconduct		1			1
Roommate Disputes					0
Sanctions					0
Sexual Harassment					0
Theft					0
Other	1				1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>

<u>Classroom Instruction</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Faculty</u>	<u>Staff</u>	<u>Non-UGA</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Attendance		1			1
Course Syllabus					0
Discriminatory Grading					0
Faculty Absences					0
Final Exams					0
Grade Appeals	1				1
Grade Change					0
Grading Standards	2				2
Make-Up Work	1				1
Personality Conflicts	2	1			3
Quality of Instruction					0
Teacher Fluency					0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>

<u>Faculty/Staff Performance</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Faculty</u>	<u>Staff</u>	<u>Non-UGA</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Inaccurate Advising					0
Inattentiveness		1			1
Incompetence					0
Retention of test/papers	1				1
Availability					0
Tardiness					0
Attendance					0
Completion of Tasks	1	1			2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>

<u>Employment/Workplace Issues</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Faculty</u>	<u>Staff</u>	<u>Non-UGA</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Training			1		1
Supervision	2	2	9		13
Performance Evaluation			1		1
Pay			1		1
Benefits					0
Retirement					0
Promotion/Tenure		1	1		2
Job Classification/Duties		4	1		5
Work Schedule/Setting	2	5	1		8
Hiring					0
Discharge			2		2
Unfit for Duty		1			1
Interpersonal Conflict		14	1		15
Disability Issues (ADA/FMLA)			1		1

Conflict of Interest			1		1
Nepotism					0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Faculty/Staff Conduct</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Non-UGA</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Deceitfulness					0
Derogatory Comments	1				1
Discrimination	1	2	6		9
Favoritism					0
Harassment		1	1		2
Intimidation		2	2		4
Retaliation		1	1		2
Rudeness			1		1
Sexual Harassment			1		1
Theft					0
Intoxification/Under Influence					0
Insubordination					0
Job Abandonment					0
Workplace Violence					0
Arrest/Conviction			1		1
Garnishment					0
Other					0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>

<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Non-UGA</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Policy Issues and Development	1				1
Privacy Issues			1		1
Disability Accommodations	1		1		2
Parking					0
On-Campus Housing	15			2	17
Legal Issues		1			1
Health Concerns			1		1
Ethical Considerations					0
Off-Campus Housing					0
Immigration Issues					0
Off-Campus Problems					0
Safety Issues			1		1
Career Advising					0
Not Otherwise Categorized (NOC)					0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>24</b>

Table 4

Ombudspersons Presentations/Meetings 9-1-20 to 7-23-21

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Organization/Group</u>
12/2/2020	Staff Ombuds Services-Steve	Email went out to UGA Staff Council explaining role
11/4/2020	Employee awareness of available resources-Steve	UGA Staff Council - Needs and Concerns Committee
12/10/2020	Mental Health First Aid At Work-Steve	National Council for Behavioral Health
9/14/2020	Meeting with President Morehead-Jenny	Ombuds Report
4/9/2021	OMBUDS Meeting-Charisse	
9/14/2020	Meeting with President Morehead-Charisse	
10/1/2020	SART Meeting-Charisse	
11-2-2020, 11-4-2020, 11-9-2020	EOO Director Interview-Charisse	