




# The University of Georgia®

Equal Opportunity Office

September 1, 2015

TO: President Jere Morehead  
213 Administration Building

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

RE: 2014-2015 Ombudsperson Report

This report marks the seventh 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.<sup>1</sup> The Program continues to be well-received by the University Community and continues to be an effective neutral resource.

Linda Edge retired from the University of Georgia earlier this year and Karen Saunders was appointed as an Administrative Specialist in Student Support Services and as the new Student Ombudsperson in May 2015. Karen served in the University Health Center business office before joining Student Support Services. 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 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 also 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.

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

The number of ombudspersons-reported concerns remained essentially level going from 92 during 2013-2014 to 96<sup>2</sup> during 2014-2015. The concerns were concentrated into three areas: Employment Workplace Issues (30.2%); Faculty/Staff Conduct (20.8%); and Miscellaneous (24.0%).

The Miscellaneous category experienced a 39% increase in concerns over last year; however, the increase is not representative of a particular category of concern but represents a wide variety of issues with 65% of the issues in this category brought by students.

#### 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 Program continues to serve 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: 2014-2015 Ombudspersons Data Report

cc: Provost Pam Whitten  
David Shipley

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<sup>2</sup> Staff concerns = 33; Faculty concerns = 20; Students concerns = 42; Non-UGA concern = 1

**OMBUDSPERSONS REPORT**

**2014-2015**

**Table 1**

**All Ombudsperson Visitors**

**Status, Gender and Ethnicity of Contacts in 2012-2013**

<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	21	15		36	4	1	13	1	1	15
Faculty	12	7		19		5	9		1	4
Staff	10	9		19	2		16			1
Non-UGA	1	1		2		1	1			1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>21</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	7	0	0	0	7
Student Academic	8	0	0	0	8
Student Conduct	2	1	0	1	4
Classroom Instruction	3	0	0	0	3
Faculty/Staff Performance	2	0	0	0	2
Employment/Workplace Issues	1	7	21	0	29
Faculty/Staff Conduct	4	8	8	0	20
Misc. Concerns	15	4	4	0	23
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>96</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).

**Table 4**

**Ombudspersons Presentations/Meetings 8-1-14 to 7-31-15**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Organization/Group</b>
June 10, 2015	New Ombuds information and advice	Met with Cathy Jones-Karen
June 11, 2015	New EOO Bill of Rights, Title IX	SART Meeting-Karen
March 1, 2015	Ombudsing as a Profession	Matie Dann-Steve
Sep-14	Ombudsman services for UGA staff employees	UGA Staff Council-Steve
Sept. 14	Meeting with Pres. Morehead	Ombudspersons / EOO /President's Office-Cathy, Linda, Steve
Oct. 29	Open Forum on Sexual Assault	EOO/RSVP et al.-Cathy
Aug. 7	SART meeting	Sexual Assault Response Team-Cathy
Feb. 5	SART meeting	Sexual Assault Response Team-Cathy
3/2/2015	Open Dialogue on Consent	EOO/RSVP et al.-Cathy
4/2/2015	SART meeting	Sexual Assault Response Team-Cathy
5/11/2015	Meeting with Sarah Covert	Faculty Affairs-Cathy