




# The University of Georgia®

Equal Opportunity Office

September 1, 2016

TO: President Jere Morehead  
213 Administration Building

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

RE: 2015-2016 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> However, the ombudsperson program has expanded well beyond that initial focus and serves the UGA Community in multiple areas.

Karen Saunders serves as the Student Ombudsperson, 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

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

<sup>2</sup> There were 2 reports of sexual harassment to ombudsperson in the 2015-2016 reporting period.

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 increased this period going from 96 during 2014-2015 to 137<sup>3</sup> during 2015-2016. The concerns were concentrated into three areas: Employment Workplace Issues (37.2%); Faculty/Staff Conduct (18.2%); and Student Conduct (18.9%).

#### 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: 2015-2016 Ombudspersons Data Report

cc: Provost Pam Whitten  
Janet Frick

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<sup>3</sup> Staff concerns = 71; Faculty concerns = 10; Students concerns = 51; Non-UGA concern = 5

**OMBUDSPERSONS REPORT**

**2015-2016**

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	25	18		43	8	3	17		4	11
Faculty	8	6		14		2	11	1		
Staff	24	12		36	6	8	20	2		
Non-UGA	1	1		2			2			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>

Table 2

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

Types of concerns	Students	Faculty	Staff	Non-UGA	TOTAL
Financial Concerns	4	0	0	0	4
Student Academic	7	0	0	0	7
Student Conduct	25	0	0	1	26
Classroom Instruction	5	2	0	1	8
Faculty/Staff Performance	2	1	1	2	6
Employment/Workplace Issues	0	7	44	0	51
Faculty/Staff Conduct	4	0	21	0	25
Misc. Concerns	4	0	5	1	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>137</b>

Table 3

<b>Financial Concerns</b> Contracts, emergency loans, encumbrances, fees, financial aid, fines, independent status, insurance, leases, paycheck, refunds, tuition, tuition waiver, graduate assistantships, other.
<b>Academic</b> 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.
<b>Student Conduct</b> Academic misconduct, alcohol, classroom disruption, due process, harassment, hazing, intimidation, judicial system, residence hall misconduct, roommate disputes, sanctions, sexual harassment, theft, other.
<b>Classroom Instruction</b> 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.
<b>Faculty/Staff Performance</b> Inaccurate advising, inattentiveness, incompetence, retention of test/papers, availability, tardiness, attendance, completion of tasks.
<b>Employment/Workplace Issues</b> 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
<b>Faculty/Staff Conduct</b> Deceitfulness, derogatory comments, discrimination, favoritism, harassment, intimidation, retaliation, rudeness, sexual harassment, theft, intoxication/under influence, insubordination, job abandonment, workplace violence, arrest/conviction, garnishment, other.
<b>Miscellaneous</b> 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).
<b>*These data only represent allegations that were brought to the Ombudspersons and should not be interpreted as confirmed incidents.</b>

Table 4

Karen-Ombudspersons Presentations/Meetings 9-1-14 to 8-31-15		
Date	Topic	Organization/Group
8/6/15	Move in /EEO website	SART
11/2-4/15	Ombuds Training	International Ombuds Association
1/14/16	RSVP	SART
2/4/16	Escalation Film	SART
2/17/16	Islamophobia on Campus Webinar	International Student Life
6/2/16	monthly meeting	SART
Steve-Ombudspersons Presentations/Meetings 9-1-14 to 8-31-15		
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 9-1-14 to 8-31-15		
9/29/16	Meet with President Morehead	Ombudspersons, Janyce Dawkins
1/15/16	Sexual Misconduct and Policy	SART
2/4/16	Relationship Violence	SART
4/7/16	Sexual Misconduct and Policy	SART
7/7/16	Protocol: Sexual Misconduct	SART