

Letter from the Ombudsperson

Dear Colleagues:

We are now approaching three years since we opened our office in January 2020 (right before the pandemic!). During that time, we have held nearly 1,200 sessions with almost 900 individual visitors. These visitors have brought a wide variety of concerns, from issues with management decisions to classroom difficulties and everything in between. It is immensely gratifying and humbling to have had so many people trust us to help them raise and address conflict constructively within their offices, classrooms, laboratories, and departments.

This year has shown continued and steady growth in utilization of our office. Since September 1, 2021, we have had 409 visits with 303 individual visitors—a 5.9% increase in visits compared to the previous academic year. Most of these visitors have come seeking coaching and guidance on policies, procedures, and how to engage in productive problem-solving approaches. Many have also sought mediation or facilitated conversations to help improve communication and find common ground. It says a great deal about our community that so many are proactive in finding ways to address concerns. We hope that you find our AY 2021-2022 Annual Report informative.

As always, if you have any kind of concern and are not sure where to turn, please reach out to our office—we are here to listen!

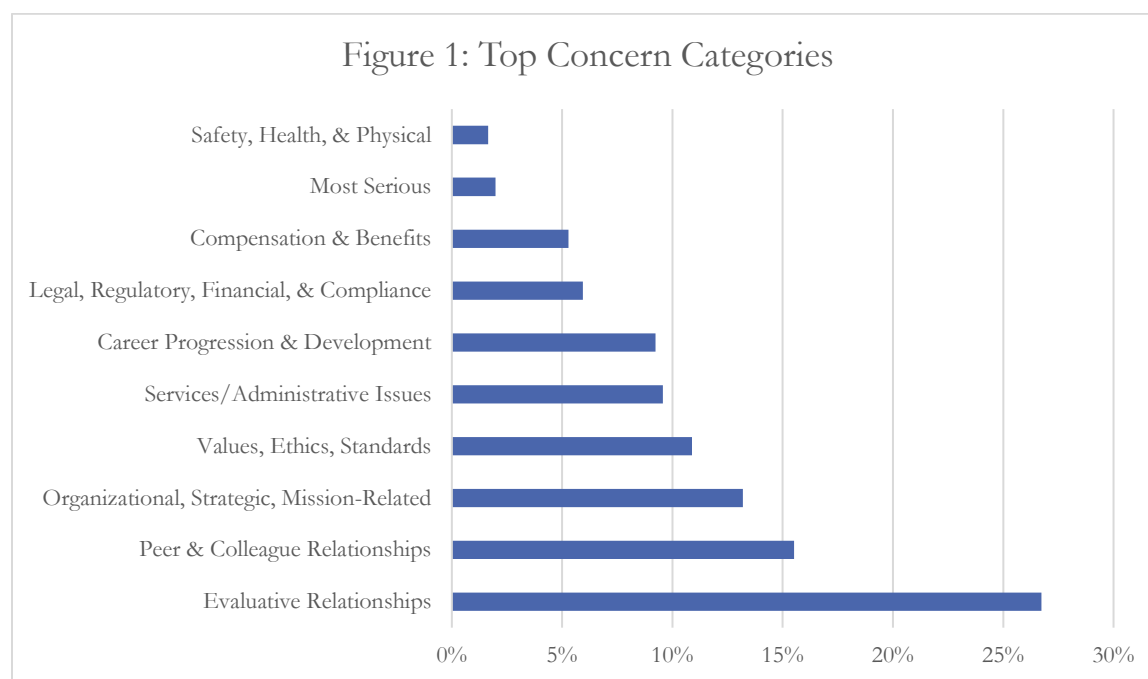
Best Regards,

Lynell Cadray

University Ombudsperson & Sr. Advisor to
the President

Visitors By the Numbers

In Academic Year 2021-2022 (September 1, 2021, and August 31, 2022), the Office of the Ombuds saw a total of 409 visits from 303 individual visitors—a 5.9% increase in overall visits and a 2% increase in unique visitors from AY 2020-2021. This rate of increase was lower than in previous years but may reflect the shift from a calendar year to an academic year tabulation. February and August saw the highest number of visitors (47 and 50 respectively), in keeping with previous years' pattern of peaking in early spring and late summer as academic semesters begin. As was the case in both 2020 and 2021, most visitors requested virtual visits; however, we saw significant more in-person visits than in previous years.



Top Concerns

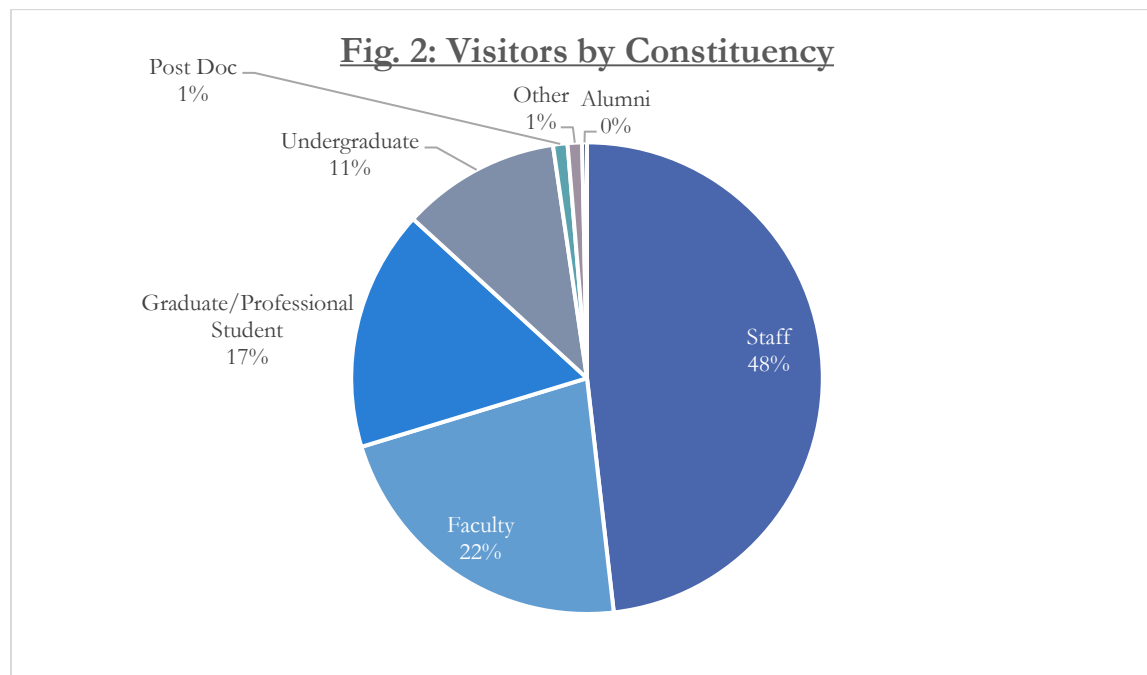
The Ombuds Office categorizes visitors' concerns according to the Uniform Reporting Categories promulgated by the International Ombuds Office (see Appendix). The URC's organize conflicts into general "types" to better identify trends in the concerns our office is seeing. In AY 2021-22, the two largest URC categories we saw both involved interpersonal relationships: **Evaluative Relationships** (that is, supervisor-supervisee or faculty-student) and **Peer & Colleague Relationships**. These were typically about interpersonal communication, misunderstandings, and unhealthy relational dynamics. Often, visitors wanted to discuss how to have a conversation about a sensitive subject, or to find a way to improve the relationship as much as possible. Though these concerns could weigh heavily on our visitors, most sought to engage in constructive efforts to improve their situations.

As in previous years, we also saw a high number **Organizational, Strategic, & Mission-Related concerns**. These concerns are more global in nature, involving disagreements about the general direction or environment of a department or unit. Visitors who brought these concerns were often

worried about changes to their unit or concerned about recent decisions regarding long-term strategy (including personnel decisions, priorities, and assignments). However, we saw fewer such concerns than in the last year of the pandemic. Data from future years will help us to understand if the extraordinary high number of Organizational concerns during that year was a peak, possibly one related to the workplace and classroom disruptions caused by COVID-19.

Visitor Profiles

Visitors to our office came from across the university and from all constituencies.

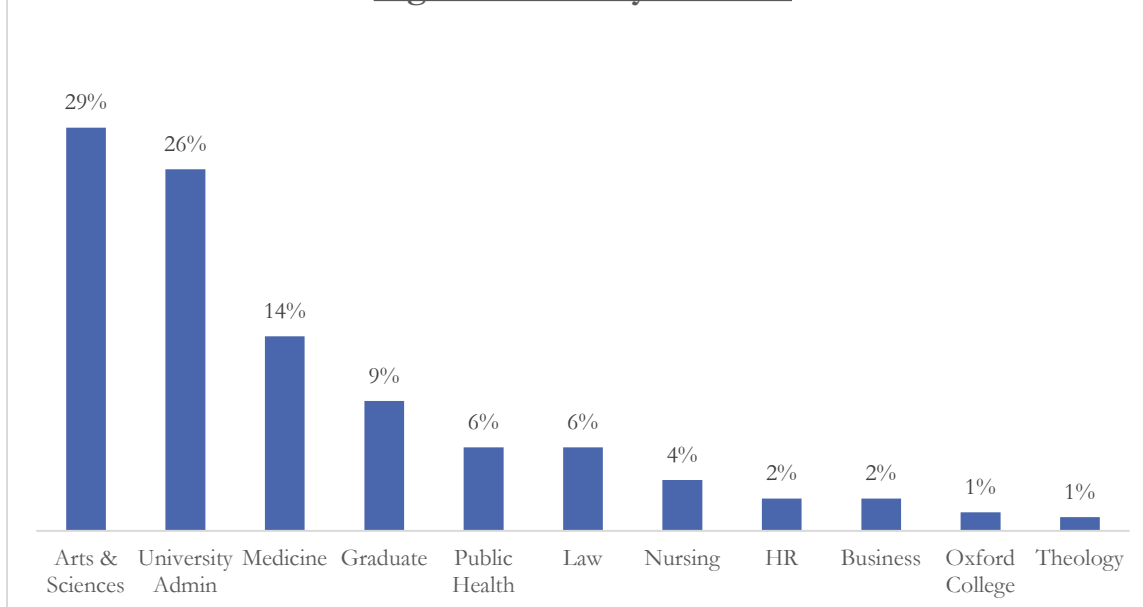


Constituency

48% of visitors to our office were staff, while 22% were faculty and 28% were students (17% graduate/ professional/post-doc and 11% undergraduate). These numbers reflect a significant increase in student visits compared to CY 2021, in which 23% of visitors were students. 33% of staff concerns involved **Evaluative Relationships**. Faculty also brought concerns about **Evaluative Relationships**, but in lower numbers (16%); faculty were generally more concerned about **Organizational, Strategic, & Mission-related** issues (22% of faculty concerns). Among graduate and professional students, the top concern was **Peer & Colleague Relationships** (34%), while among undergraduates the top concern was **Evaluative Relationships** (27%--although **Peer & Colleague Relationship** concerns were also significant, at 24%).

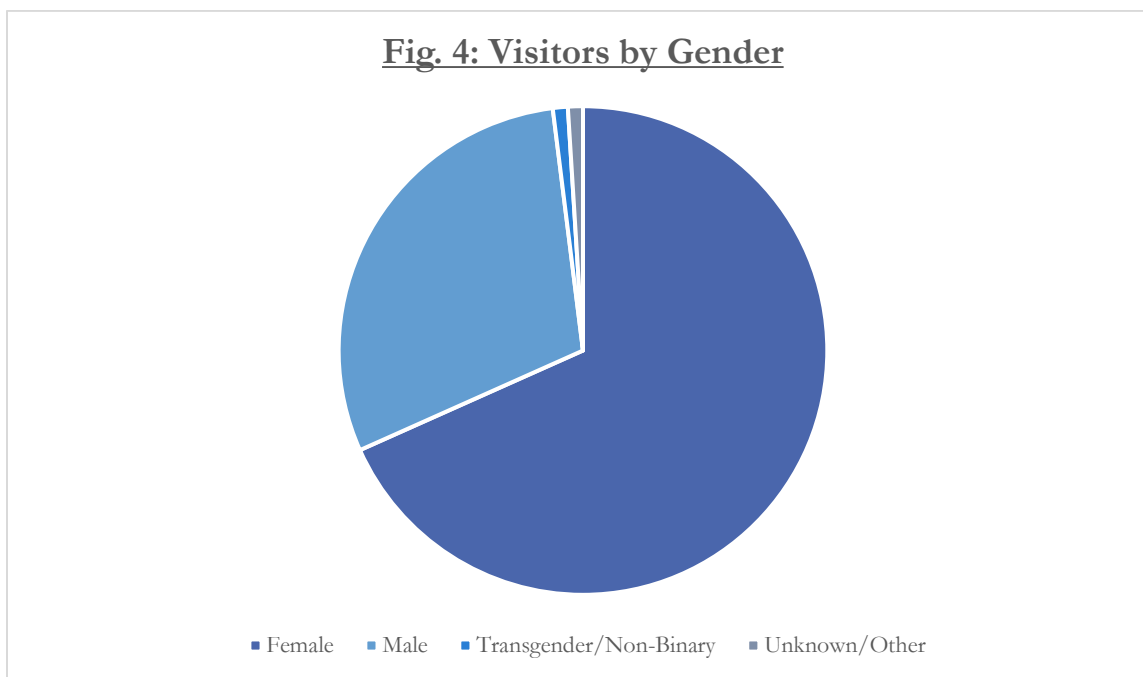
Administrative Units

Over 30% of all concerns involved **University Administrative Units** (non-academic departments serving the whole University). With respect to individual colleges, visitors most often raised issues involving the **College of Arts and Sciences** (23%). 22% of visitors raised concerns involving the **School of Medicine**. Constituents from these three administrative units constituted the vast majority of our 2021 visitors.

Fig. 3: Visitors by Division

Gender

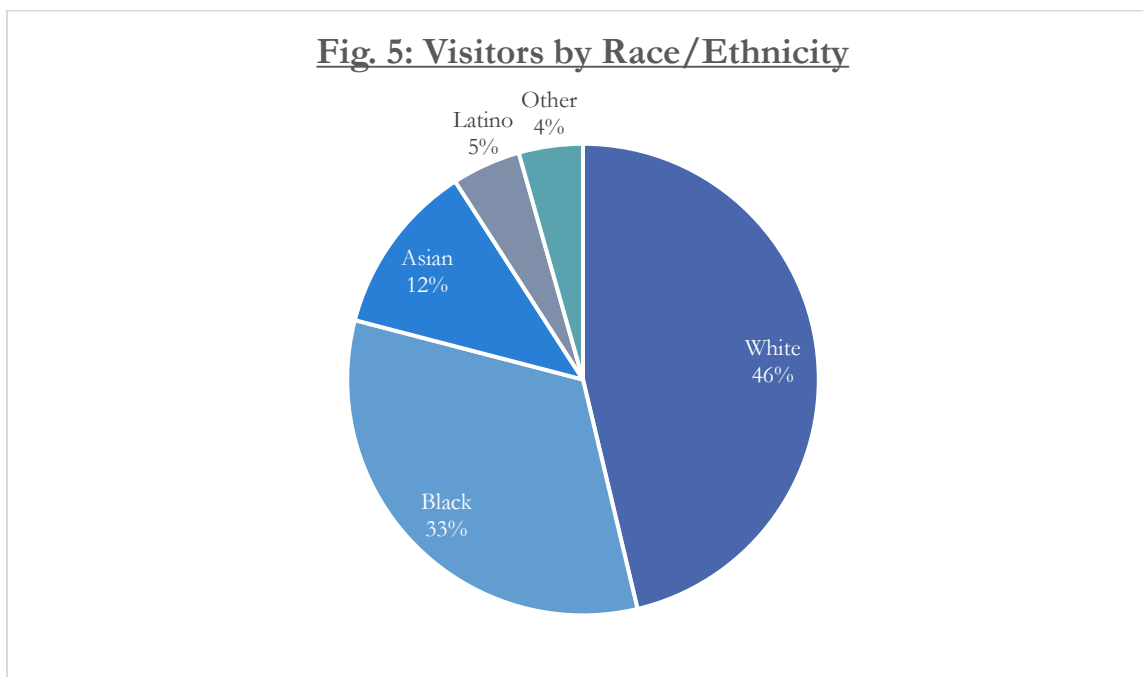
69% of visitors to our office identified as female, while 30% identified as male—A significant increase in male visitors over previous years. 1% of visitors to our office self-identified as transgender or non-binary.

Fig. 4: Visitors by Gender

Top concerns among women were **Evaluative Relationships** (32% of concerns brought by women); **Organizational, Strategic, & Mission-Related** (13%); and **Peer & Colleague Relationships** (13%). Male visitors most often brought **Peer & Colleague Relationships** (20%). Among men, **Evaluative Relationships** (17%) and **Values, Ethics, Standards** (17%) concerns were also prevalent. Transgender and non-binary visitors raised **Organizational, Strategic, & Mission-Related, Peer & Colleague Relationship, and Compensation & Benefits** concerns.

Race

The percentage of white/European descent visitors to our office fell to 45% in AY 2021-22 (compared to 51% in CY 2021). 32% identified as Black/African American, 12% as Asian/Pacific Islander, and 5% as Latinx. When broken down by constituency, a plurality of staff visitors (47%) were Black/African American, while 45% were white/European descent. 40% of our student visitors were white/European descent, while 29% were Asian/Pacific Islander. Student visitors who identified as Black/African American comprised 18% of our total student visitors—essentially unchanged from CY 2021. Among faculty, 54% of visitors were white/European descent, while 18% self-identified as Black/African American.

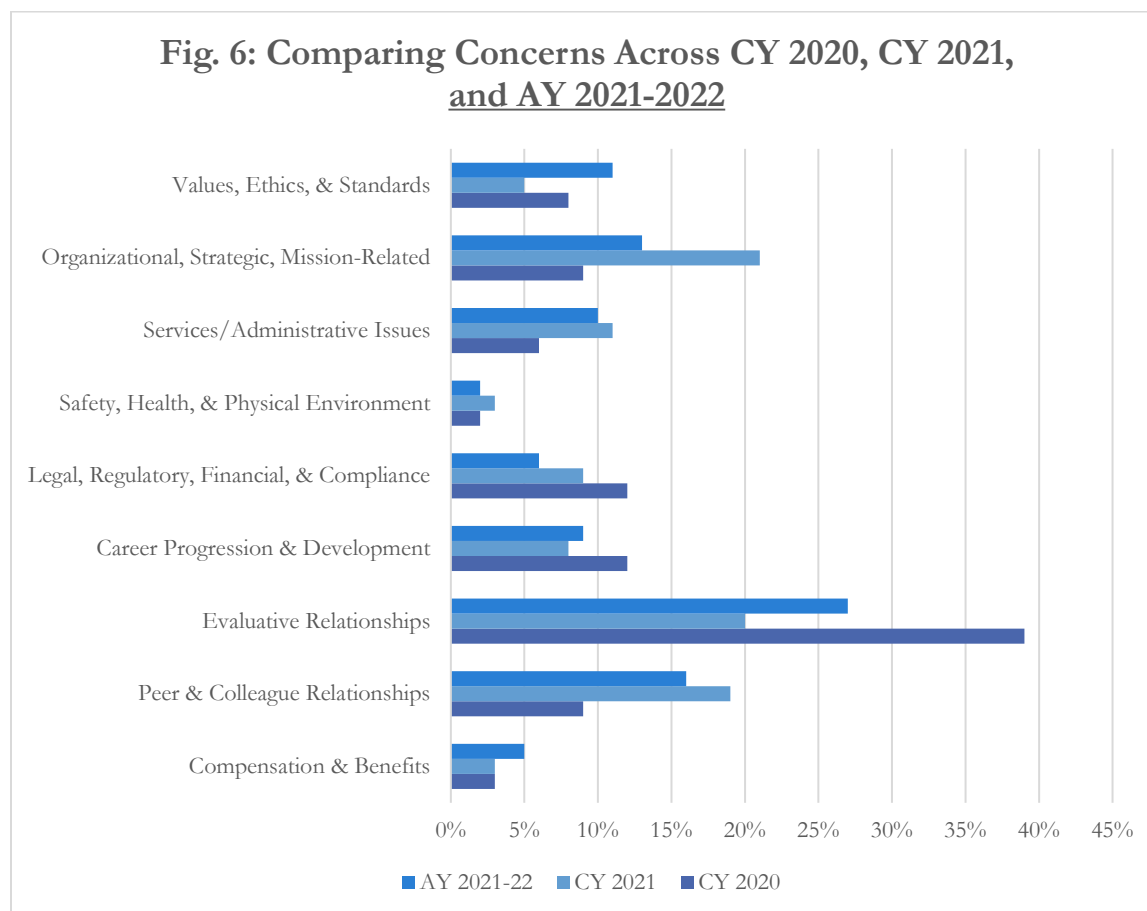


Among Black visitors, top concerns were **Organizational, Strategic, Mission-Related** (24% of concerns) or involved **Evaluative Relationships** (16%). **Evaluative Relationship** concerns were also prevalent among both Asian/Pacific Islander and Latinx visitors (28% and 30% respectively). White visitors' top concerns involved **Evaluative Relationships** (21%), **Organizational, Strategic, & Mission-Related** concerns (20%), and **Peer/Colleague Relationships** (20%).

Outcomes

In CY 2021 the Office of the Ombuds began tracking outcomes, which we continued to do in AY 2021-22. These outcomes include **coaching** (providing guidance about policies, procedures, or conflict approaches); **facilitated conversations** (guided discussions between individuals or groups); **shuttle diplomacy** (serving as an intermediary between individuals); **referrals** (providing information about or connecting visitors to on-campus resources, such as CAPS or OEI); and **support resources** (providing information about self-help). The majority of our 303 visitors (73%) received **coaching**. We held **facilitated conversations** with 20 visitors and engaged in **shuttle diplomacy** with an additional 12, for a total of 32 intermediated communication efforts (11% of our total outcomes).

Comparison to CY2020 & CY2021



Over our first 32 months, the Office of the Ombuds has seen a total of 1,162 visits from 854 visitors. From the data we have collected over this time, certain patterns have begun to emerge. A significant majority of our visitors in all years have identified as female, averaging 72% of our visitors each year. Around a third of our visitors each year, between 31-33%, identify as Black/African American. Around 50% of our visitors each year are staff.

Top concern categories are also tending to follow certain patterns. **Evaluative Relationship** concerns are among the most numerous each year, with **Peer & Colleague Relationships** and **Organizational, Strategic, & Mission-Related Concerns** also reported often.

In our third year, we saw both similarities to and differences from patterns that emerged during our first and years One significant change was in the top category of concern. In 2020, the largest single category of concerns (39%) involved **Evaluative Relationships**; no other category was close. In 2021, **Evaluative Relationships** were still significant, but the top category was instead **Organizational, Strategic, & Mission-Related**. This category of concern emerged most significantly among Black/African American visitors and staff, though it was a significant concern among faculty as well. Finally, in AY2021-2022, **Evaluative Relationships** was again the top concern category across all groups, while Organizational, Strategic, & Mission-Related concerns fell to third.

**Fig.7: Comparison of Self-Identified Gender Among Visitors
Across CY 2020, CY 2021, and AY 2021-22**

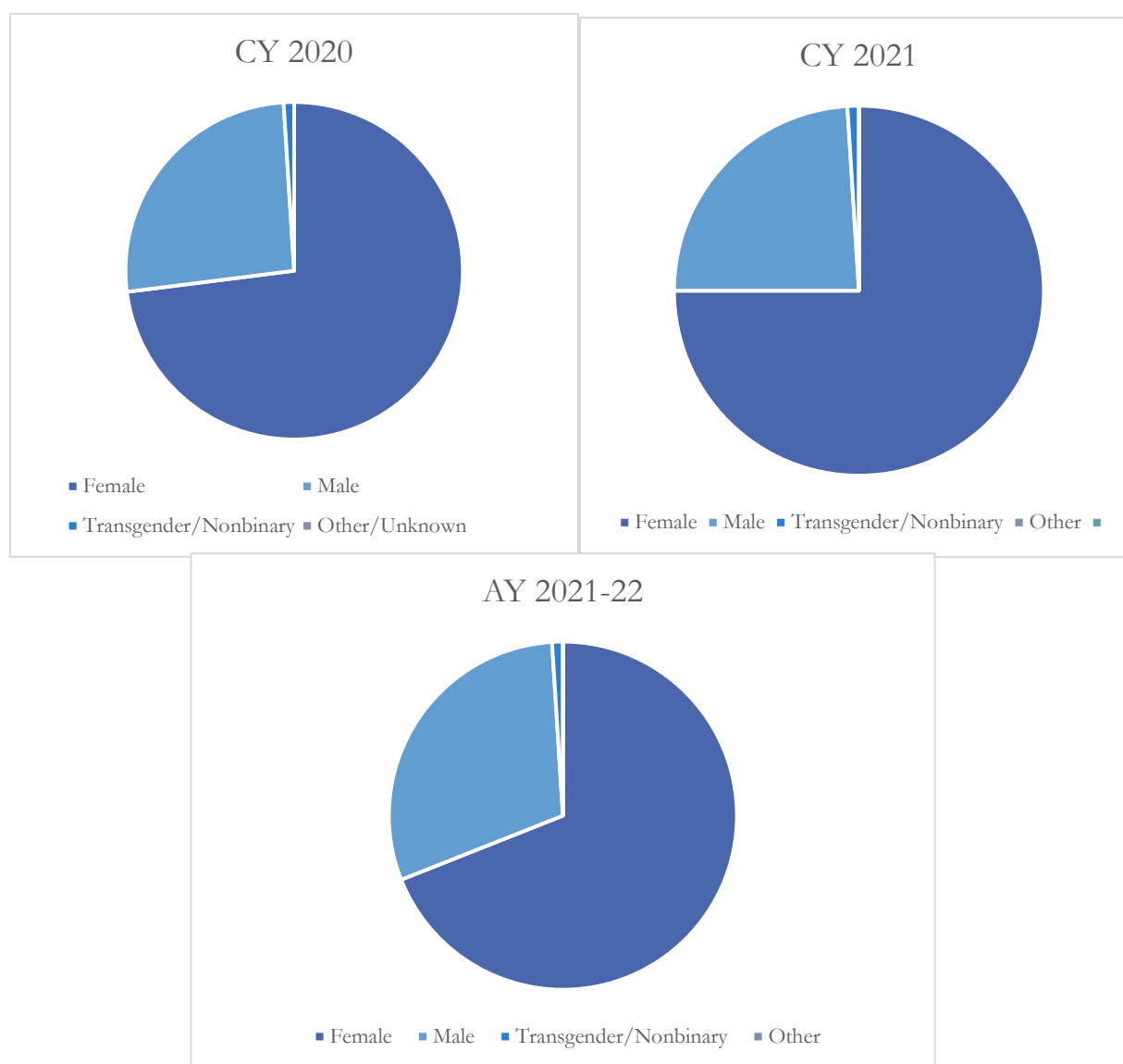


Fig. 8: Visitors by Race Across CY 2020, CY 2021, and AY 2021-22

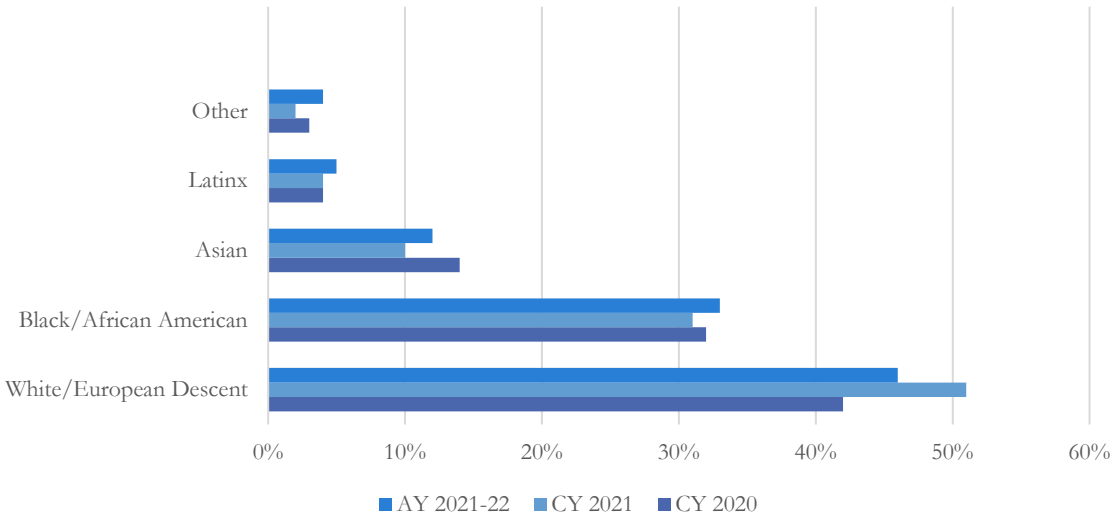
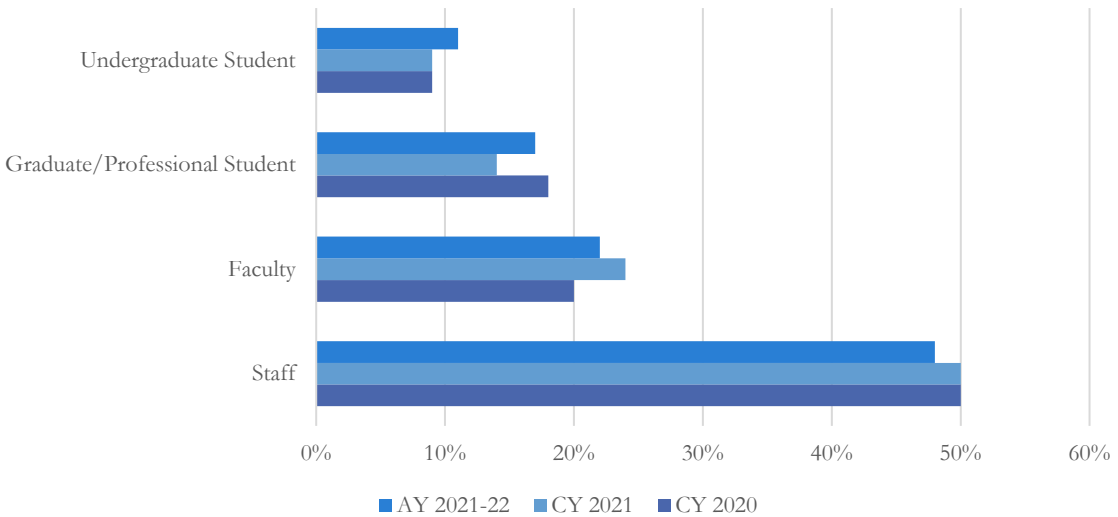
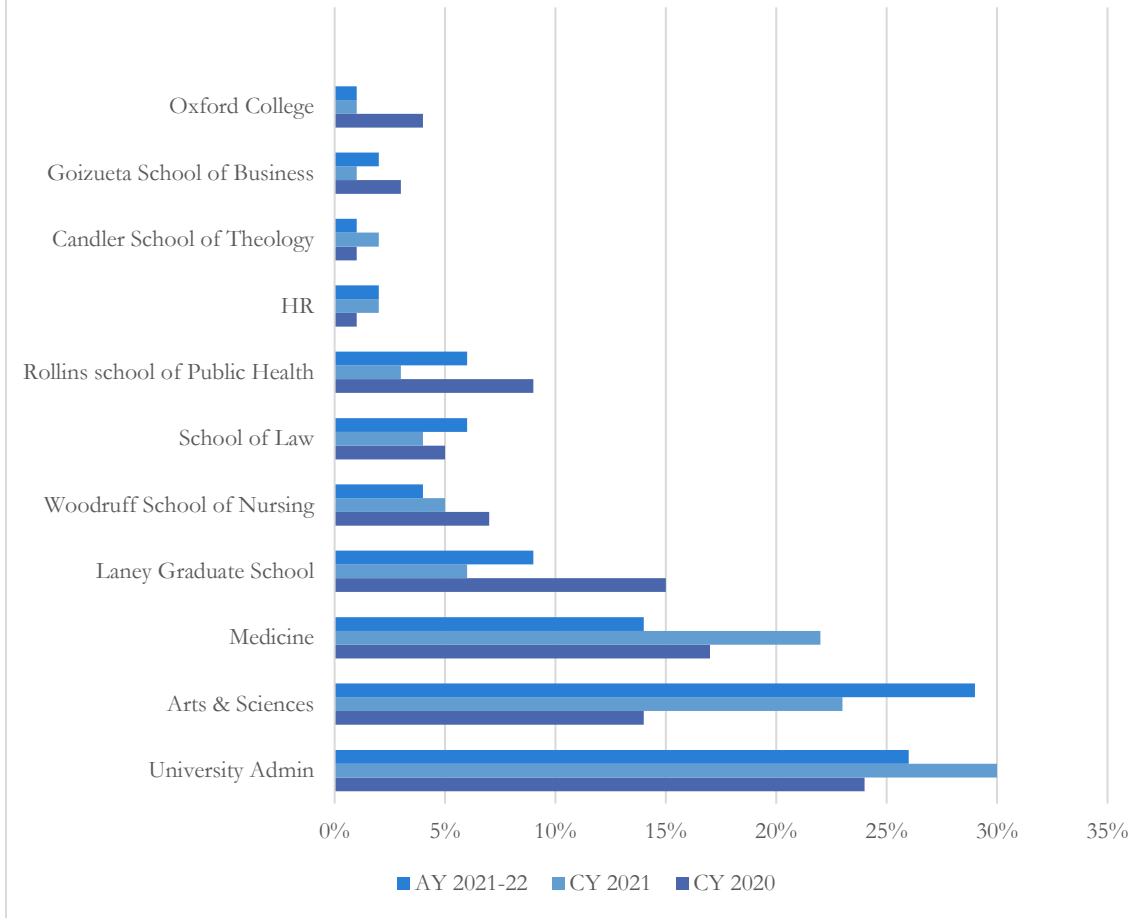


Fig. 9: Visitors by Constituency Across CY 2020, CY 2021, and AY 2021-22



**Fig. 10: Visitors by Administrative Division across
CY 2020, CY 2021, and AY 2021-22**



Common Themes and Patterns

Back to (The New) Normal

As noted above, we observed a decrease in the overall number of Organizational, Strategic, & Mission-Related concerns relative to CY 2021. While these numbers are not generalizable to the University as a whole, it is striking that this category of concerns increased so substantially from 2020 to 2021 (from the first impact of COVID) and then decreased. The timing coincides with a period of re-entry back to the classroom and office in-person after having been largely remote for over a year. While not all the Organizational concerns we observed were directly related to COVID-19, it may be that the pandemic prompted an increase in “big-picture” thinking across all divisions—a hypothesis that also seems consistent with larger societal trends, including the “great resignation”. These numbers may indicate an increase in the overall number of individuals who were evaluating their place within the organization. Time will tell if these concerns reached their peak in 2021.

The decrease also coincides with changes to the communication strategy regarding big decisions. Rather than relying primarily on weekly communications, administrators have moved toward engaging in multiple media avenues to convey decision-making rationale. The resulting increase in communication and transparency may be having an effect of decreasing “concerns” about organizational decisions, as individuals feel more informed about what decisions are being made.

Conflict Literacy

We continue to meet with a high number of visitors who need clarity on how formal processes (such as complaint procedures or committee adjudications) work, including what standards are applied and what “rights” (if any) apply to individuals within those processes. Many visitors hope that by filing a grievance they can receive an adjudication in their favor by someone with the power to enforce that decision. However, such visitors may be less clear that grievance procedures, like complaints, are not typically concerned with questions of general “fairness,” but with policy violations. In other words, while procedures exist to adjudicate specific allegations of policy or legal breaches (such as with student conduct or Equity & Compliance), there is typically no procedure to question whether a particular action by a decision-making authority is “fair” or “correct.” Such questions are best addressed through informal means where an attempt can be made to persuade or negotiate, by developing alternative options, or by obtaining support. The Office of the Ombuds is working with our partners to develop trainings and tools to help visitors identify the narrow range of situations in which formal processes are most likely to be effective and to build confidence and experience in using more informal options.

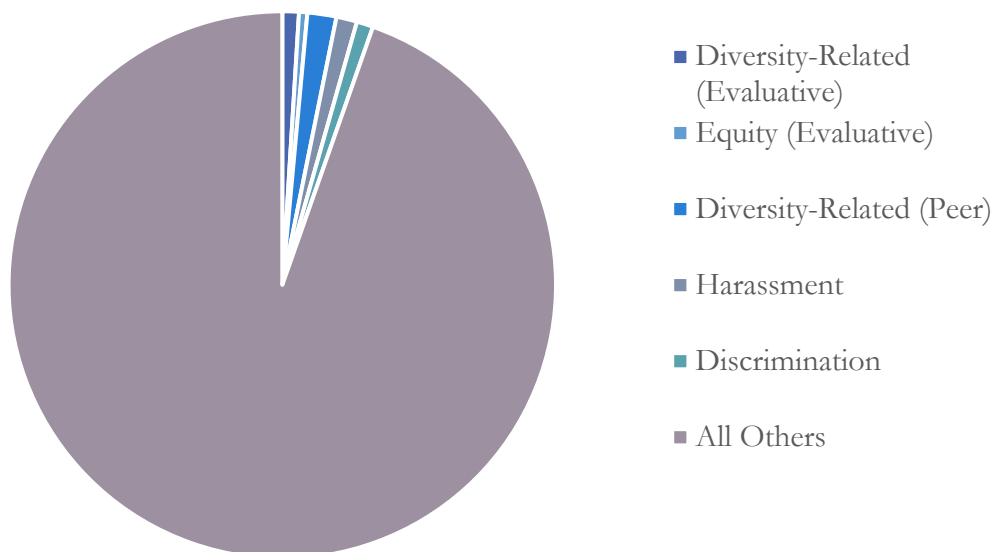


Diversity Concerns

Within the larger URC Categories, five sub-categories capture “Diversity-Related” concerns:

1. **Diversity-Related** concerns within **Evaluative Relationships**
2. **Equity of Treatment** concerns within **Evaluative Relationships**
3. **Diversity-Related** concerns within **Peer & Colleague Relationships**
4. **Harassment** concerns falling under **Legal, Regulatory, & Compliance**
5. **Discrimination** concerns falling under **Legal, Regulatory, & Compliance**

Fig. 11: Diversity-Related Concerns



In AY 2021-22, 5% of total concerns fell within one of these five categories. This number is a significant decrease from CY 2021, in which 11% of our total concerns were diversity-related—A 55% decrease overall. This year, 77% of those bringing concerns under these five categories were women, while 18% were men and 5% were transgender or nonbinary. 27% were white, 45% were Black, 5% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 5% were Latinx. 45% of these concerns were brought by staff.

Overall, we saw a 55% decrease in the number of diversity concerns relative to 2021.

Appendix: International Ombuds Association Uniform Reporting Categories (URCs)



INTERNATIONAL OMBUDSMAN ASSOCIATION Uniform Reporting Categories

VERSION 2
October 2007

1. Compensation & Benefits

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about the equity, appropriateness and competitiveness of employee compensation, benefits and other benefit programs.

- 1.a **Compensation** (rate of pay, salary amount, job salary classification/level)
- 1.b **Payroll** (administration of pay, check wrong or delayed)
- 1.c **Benefits** (decisions related to medical, dental, life, vacation/sick leave, education, worker's compensation insurance, etc.)
- 1.d **Retirement, Pension** (eligibility, calculation of amount, retirement pension benefits)
- 1.e **Other** (any other employee compensation or benefit not described by the above sub-categories)

2. Evaluative Relationships

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries arising between people in evaluative relationships (i.e. supervisor-employee, faculty-student.)

- 2.a **Priorities, Values, Beliefs** (differences about what should be considered important – or most important – often rooted in ethical or moral beliefs)
- 2.b **Respect/Treatment** (demonstrations of inappropriate regard for people, not listening, rudeness, crudeness, etc.)
- 2.c **Trust/Integrity** (suspicion that others are not being honest, whether or to what extent one wishes to be honest, etc.)
- 2.d **Reputation** (possible impact of rumors and/or gossip about professional or personal matters)
- 2.e **Communication** (quality and/or quantity of communication)
- 2.f **Bullying, Mobbing** (abusive, threatening, and/or coercive behaviors)
- 2.g **Diversity-Related** (comments or behaviors perceived to be insensitive, offensive, or intolerant on the basis of an identity-related difference such as race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation)
- 2.h **Retaliation** (punitive behaviors for previous actions or comments, whistleblower)
- 2.i **Physical Violence** (actual or threats of bodily harm to another)
- 2.j **Assignments/Schedules** (appropriateness or fairness of tasks, expected volume of work)
- 2.k **Feedback** (feedback or recognition given, or responses to feedback received)
- 2.l **Consultation** (requests for help in dealing with issues between two or more individuals they supervise/teach or with other unusual situations in evaluative relationships)

2.m Performance Appraisal/Grading

(job/academic performance in formal or informal evaluation)

- 2.n **Departmental Climate** (prevailing behaviors, norms, or attitudes within a department for which supervisors or faculty have responsibility.)
- 2.o **Supervisory Effectiveness** (management of department or classroom, failure to address issues)
- 2.p **Insubordination** (refusal to do what is asked)
- 2.q **Discipline** (appropriateness, timeliness, requirements, alternatives, or options for responding)
- 2.r **Equity of Treatment** (favoritism, one or more individuals receive preferential treatment)
- 2.s **Other** (any other evaluative relationship not described by the above sub-categories)

3. Peer and Colleague Relationships

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries involving peers or colleagues who do not have a supervisory-employee or student-professor relationship (e.g., two staff members within the same department or conflict involving members of a student organization.)

- 3.a **Priorities, Values, Beliefs** (differences about what should be considered important – or most important – often rooted in ethical or moral beliefs)
- 3.b **Respect/Treatment** (demonstrations of inappropriate regard for people, not listening, rudeness, crudeness, etc.)
- 3.c **Trust/Integrity** (suspicion that others are not being honest, whether or to what extent one wishes to be honest, etc.)
- 3.d **Reputation** (possible impact of rumors and/or gossip about professional or personal matters)
- 3.e **Communication** (quality and/or quantity of communication)
- 3.f **Bullying, Mobbing** (abusive, threatening, and/or coercive behaviors)
- 3.g **Diversity-Related** (comments or behaviors perceived to be insensitive, offensive, or intolerant on the basis of an identity-related difference such as race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation)
- 3.h **Retaliation** (punitive behaviors for previous actions or comments, whistleblower)
- 3.i **Physical Violence** (actual or threats of bodily harm to another)
- 3.j **Other** (any peer or colleague relationship not described by the above sub-categories)

4. Career Progression and Development

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about administrative processes and decisions regarding entering and leaving a job, what it entails, (i.e., recruitment, nature and place of assignment, job security, and separation.)

- 4.a **Job Application/Selection and Recruitment Processes** (recruitment and selection processes, facilitation of job applications, short-listing and criteria for selection, disputed decisions linked to recruitment and selection)
- 4.b **Job Classification and Description** (changes or disagreements over requirements of assignment, appropriate tasks)
- 4.c **Involuntary Transfer/Change of Assignment** (notice, selection and special dislocation rights/benefits, removal from prior duties, unrequested change of work tasks)
- 4.d **Tenure/Position Security/Ambiguity** (security of position or contract, provision of secure contractual categories)
- 4.e **Career Progression** (promotion, reappointment, or tenure)
- 4.f **Rotation and Duration of Assignment** (non-completion or over-extension of assignments in specific settings/countries, lack of access or involuntary transfer to specific roles/assignments, requests for transfer to other places/duties/roles)
- 4.g **Resignation** (concerns about whether or how to voluntarily terminate employment or how such a decision might be communicated appropriately)
- 4.h **Termination/Non-Renewal** (end of contract, non-renewal of contract, disputed permanent separation from organization)
- 4.i **Re-employment of Former or Retired Staff** (loss of competitive advantages associated with re-hiring retired staff, favoritism)
- 4.j **Position Elimination** (elimination or abolition of an individual's position)
- 4.k **Career Development, Coaching, Mentoring** (classroom, on-the-job, and varied assignments as training and developmental opportunities)
- 4.l **Other** (any other issues linked to recruitment, assignment, job security or separation not described by the above sub-categories)



5. Legal, Regulatory, Financial and Compliance

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries that may create a legal risk (financial, sanction etc.) for the organization or its members if not addressed, including issues related to waste, fraud or abuse.

- 5.a **Criminal Activity** (threats or crimes planned, observed, or experienced, fraud)
- 5.b **Business and Financial Practices** (inappropriate actions that abuse or waste organizational finances, facilities or equipment)
- 5.c **Harassment** (unwelcome physical, verbal, written, e-mail, audio, video psychological or sexual conduct that creates a hostile or intimidating environment)
- 5.d **Discrimination** (different treatment compared with others or exclusion from some benefit on the basis of, for example, gender, race, age, national origin, religion, etc. [being part of an Equal Employment Opportunity protected category – applies in the U.S.])
- 5.e **Disability, Temporary or Permanent, Reasonable Accommodation** (extra time on exams, provision of assistive technology, interpreters, or Braille materials including questions on policies, etc. for people with disabilities)
- 5.f **Accessibility** (removal of physical barriers, providing ramps, elevators, etc.)
- 5.g **Intellectual Property Rights** (e.g., copyright and patent infringement)
- 5.h **Privacy and Security of Information** (release or access to individual or organizational private or confidential information)
- 5.i **Property Damage** (personal property damage, liabilities)
- 5.j **Other** (any other legal, financial and compliance issue not described by the above sub-categories)

6. Safety, Health, and Physical Environment

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about Safety, Health and Infrastructure-related issues.

- 6.a **Safety** (physical safety, injury, medical evacuation, meeting federal and state requirements for training and equipment)
- 6.b **Physical Working/Living Conditions** (temperature, odors, noise, available space, lighting, etc)
- 6.c **Ergonomics** (proper set-up of workstation affecting physical functioning)
- 6.d **Cleanliness** (sanitary conditions and facilities to prevent the spread of disease)
- 6.e **Security** (adequate lighting in parking lots, metal detectors, guards, limited access to building by outsiders, anti-terrorists measures (not for classifying "compromise of classified or top secret" information)

- 6.f **Telework/Flexplace** (ability to work from home or other location because of business or personal need, e.g., in case of man-made or natural emergency)
- 6.g **Safety Equipment** (access to/use of safety equipment as well as access to or use of safety equipment, e.g., fire extinguisher)
- 6.h **Environmental Policies** (policies not being followed, being unfair ineffective, cumbersome)
- 6.i **Work Related Stress and Work-Life Balance** (Post-Traumatic Stress, Critical Incident Response, internal/external stress, e.g. divorce, shooting, caring for sick, injured)
- 6.j **Other** (any safety, health, or physical environment issue not described by the above sub-categories)

7. Services/Administrative Issues

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about services or administrative offices including from external parties.

- 7.a **Quality of Services** (how well services were provided, accuracy or thoroughness of information, competence, etc.)
- 7.b **Responsiveness/Timeliness** (time involved in getting a response or return call or about the time for a complete response to be provided)
- 7.c **Administrative Decisions and Interpretation/Application of Rules** (impact of non-disciplinary decisions, decisions about requests for administrative and academic services, e.g., exceptions to policy deadlines or limits, refund requests, appeals of library or parking fines, application for financial aid, etc.)
- 7.d **Behavior of Service Provider(s)** (how an administrator or staff member spoke to or dealt with a constituent, customer, or client, e.g., rude, inattentive, or impatient)
- 7.e **Other** (any services or administrative issue not described by the above sub-categories)

8. Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries that relate to the whole or some part of an organization.

- 8.a **Strategic and Mission-Related/ Strategic and Technical Management** (principles, decisions and actions related to where and how the organization is moving)
- 8.b **Leadership and Management** (quality/capacity of management and/or management/leadership decisions, suggested training, reassignments and reorganizations)

- 8.c **Use of Positional Power/Authority** (lack or abuse of power provided by individual's position)
- 8.d **Communication** (content, style, timing, effects and amount of organizational and leader's communication, quality of communication about strategic issues)
- 8.e **Restructuring and Relocation** (issues related to broad scope planned or actual restructuring and/or relocation affecting the whole or major divisions of an organization, e.g. downsizing, off shoring, outsourcing)
- 8.f **Organizational Climate** (issues related to organizational morale and/or capacity for functioning)
- 8.g **Change Management** (making, responding or adapting to organizational changes, quality of leadership in facilitating organizational change)
- 8.h **Priority Setting and/or Funding** (disputes about setting organizational/departmental priorities and/or allocation of funding within programs)
- 8.i **Data, Methodology, Interpretation of Results** (scientific disputes about the conduct, outcomes and interpretation of studies and resulting data for policy)
- 8.j **Interdepartment/Interorganization Work/Territory** (disputes about which department/organization should be doing what/taking the lead)
- 8.k **Other** (any organizational issue not described by the above sub-categories)

9. Values, Ethics, and Standards

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about the fairness of organizational values, ethics, and/or standards, the application of related policies and/or procedures, or the need for creation or revision of policies, and/or standards.

- 9.a **Standards of Conduct** (fairness, applicability or lack of behavioral guidelines and/or Codes of Conduct, e.g., Academic Honesty, plagiarism, Code of Conduct, conflict of interest)
- 9.b **Values and Culture** (questions, concerns or issues about the values or culture of the organization)
- 9.c **Scientific Conduct/Integrity** (scientific or research misconduct or misdemeanors, e.g., authorship; falsification of results)
- 9.d **Policies and Procedures NOT Covered in Broad Categories 1 thru 8** (fairness or lack of policy or the application of the policy, policy not followed, or needs revision, e.g., appropriate dress, use of internet or cell phones)
- 9.e **Other** (Other policy, procedure, ethics or standards issues not described in the above sub-categories)