



Annual Report

2025-2026



EMORY® | UNIVERSITY
OMBUDS



Dear Colleagues:

Happy International Ombuds Day! Today we have an opportunity not only to recognize the work of the Office of the Ombuds, but also to reaffirm the kind of university community we aspire to be - one grounded in trust, fairness, dignity, respect, and a willingness to engage thoughtfully across differences.

At a university as dynamic and complex as Emory, disagreement and uncertainty are inevitable. How we respond to them matters. Our capacity to listen carefully, communicate candidly, and address concerns constructively strengthens our relationships and our institution, while helping each of us remain focused on Emory's broader mission of teaching, research, learning, and service.

As we share this Annual Report, we reflect not only on the numbers, but on what they represent: members of our university community who reached out for support, participated in conversations, attended programs, and engaged with the Ombuds Office in ways that contribute to a healthier and more constructive working and learning environment. This information is presented at an aggregate level to protect confidentiality while offering insights into the concerns brought to the Office and the broader reach of our work.

This important work would not be possible without the efforts of our small but dedicated team. Special thanks to Angela Dash, PhD., (University Ombuds) and Ren Brooks (Administrative Assistant), for their daily commitment to our goals and for their unwavering support and service to our community.

We also extend our appreciation to our leadership for recognizing the importance of our mission, and to the Emory community for trusting us with your most personal experiences. It is truly a privilege to serve you and to contribute to Emory's vision of a collegial and engaged environment.

Best Regards,



Lynell A. Cadray
University Ombuds
Sr. Adviser to the President

The Office of the Ombuds

The Office of the Ombuds offers a safe space for members of the Emory community to seek guidance, gain clarity, and find paths forward when facing workplace or academic challenges.

Our engagements are confidential, independent, informal, and impartial. We listen with care, ask questions, and help you consider options that support informed decisions and productive relationships.



These four principles guide every engagement. They define the Ombuds role and create the conditions for open, honest, and constructive conversations.



Confidential

Conversations are private, subject to the limits of the Ombuds role.



Independent

The office operates independently and does not serve as an advocate for any party.



Informal

The office helps people explore options and resolve concerns through informal means.



Impartial

The office listens fairly and does not take sides.

2025–2026 At a Glance



INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

294

WHO CAME TO US?

294 faculty, staff and students sought confidential individual Ombuds support for the first time.

439

HOW MUCH INDIVIDUAL ENGAGEMENT OCCURRED?

439 confidential meetings created space to talk through concerns, explore options, and consider next steps.

596

HOW MANY CONCERNS VISITORS WERE NAVIGATING?

Visitors brought 596 concerns to the Ombuds Office, including concerns related to work and career, academic experiences, interpersonal dynamics, and organizational issues.

BROADER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1,200+

HOW DID OUR REACH EXTEND BEYOND INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT?

More than 1,200 people engaged with the Ombuds Office through outreach, educational presentations and workshops, and facilitated group and team engagements.

Together, these engagements reflect how the Ombuds Office serves both individuals and the organization, supporting people as they navigate concerns while creating opportunities for dialogue, learning, and engagement across Emory.

OUR VISITORS

INDIVIDUAL VISITOR
ENGAGEMENTS



Individual Visitor Engagements

A visitor is an individual who engages with the Ombuds Office for confidential support.

294

First-time visitors

439

Total visits

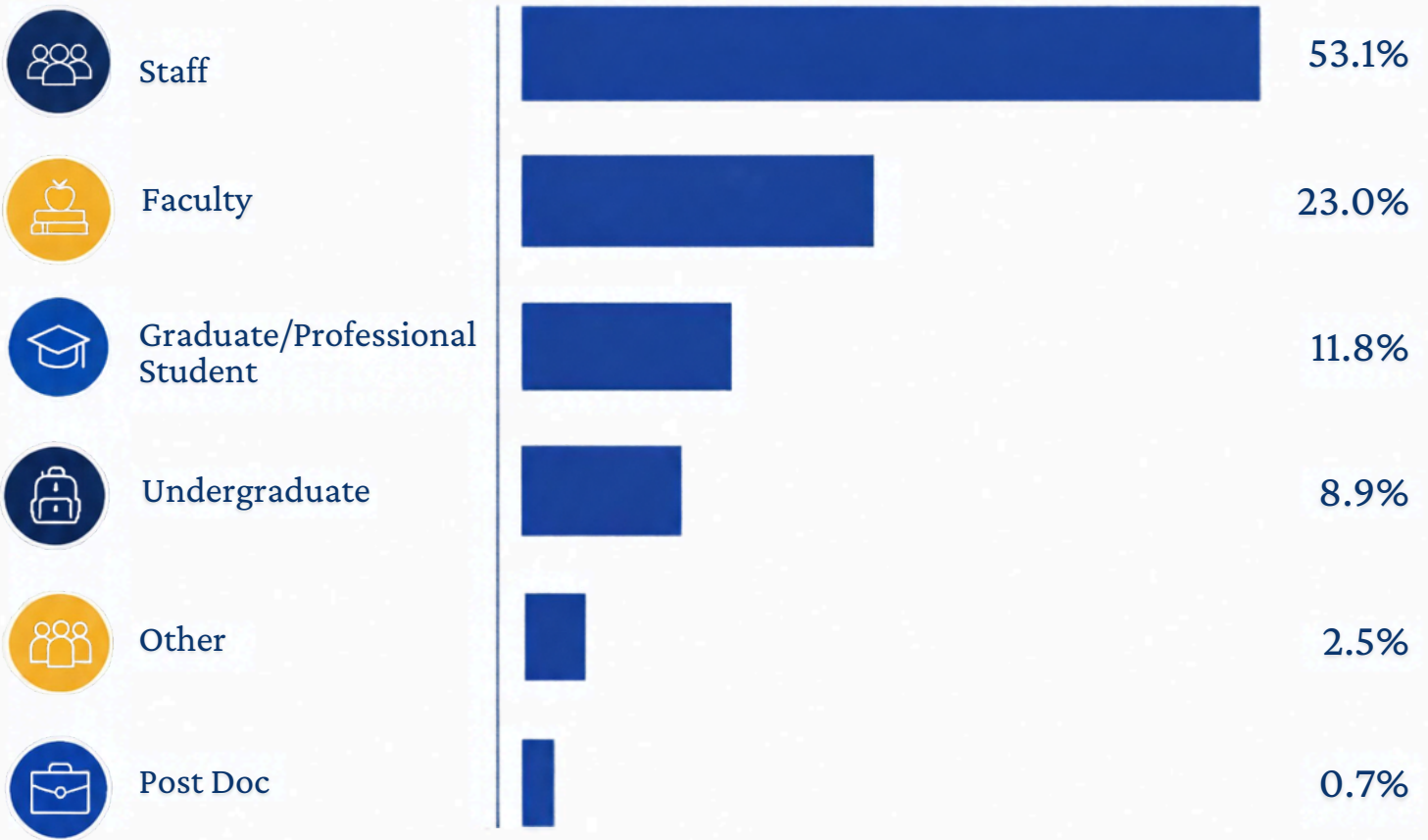


Visitors may participate in more than one session while navigating concerns and exploring options.





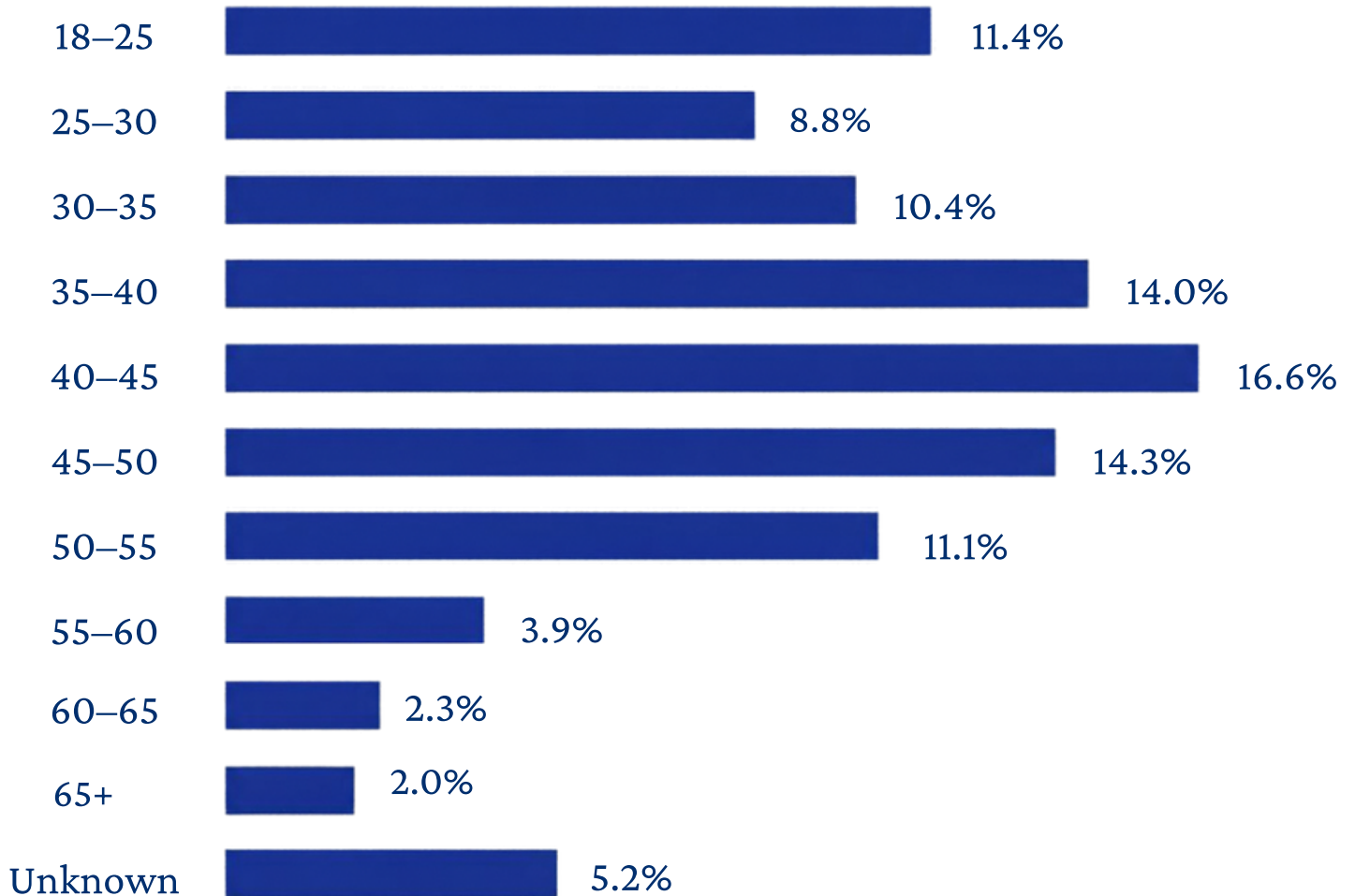
Visitor Constituency



The overall composition of Ombuds visitors remained relatively consistent with the previous reporting period, with staff continuing to represent the largest visitor group. The most notable shifts were among students and faculty: the combined share of undergraduate and graduate/professional student visitors increased by 4.0 percentage points, while the share of faculty visitors decreased by 4.2 percentage points. These changes reflect the composition of those who accessed the Ombuds Office and should not be interpreted as changes in the prevalence of concerns within these groups.



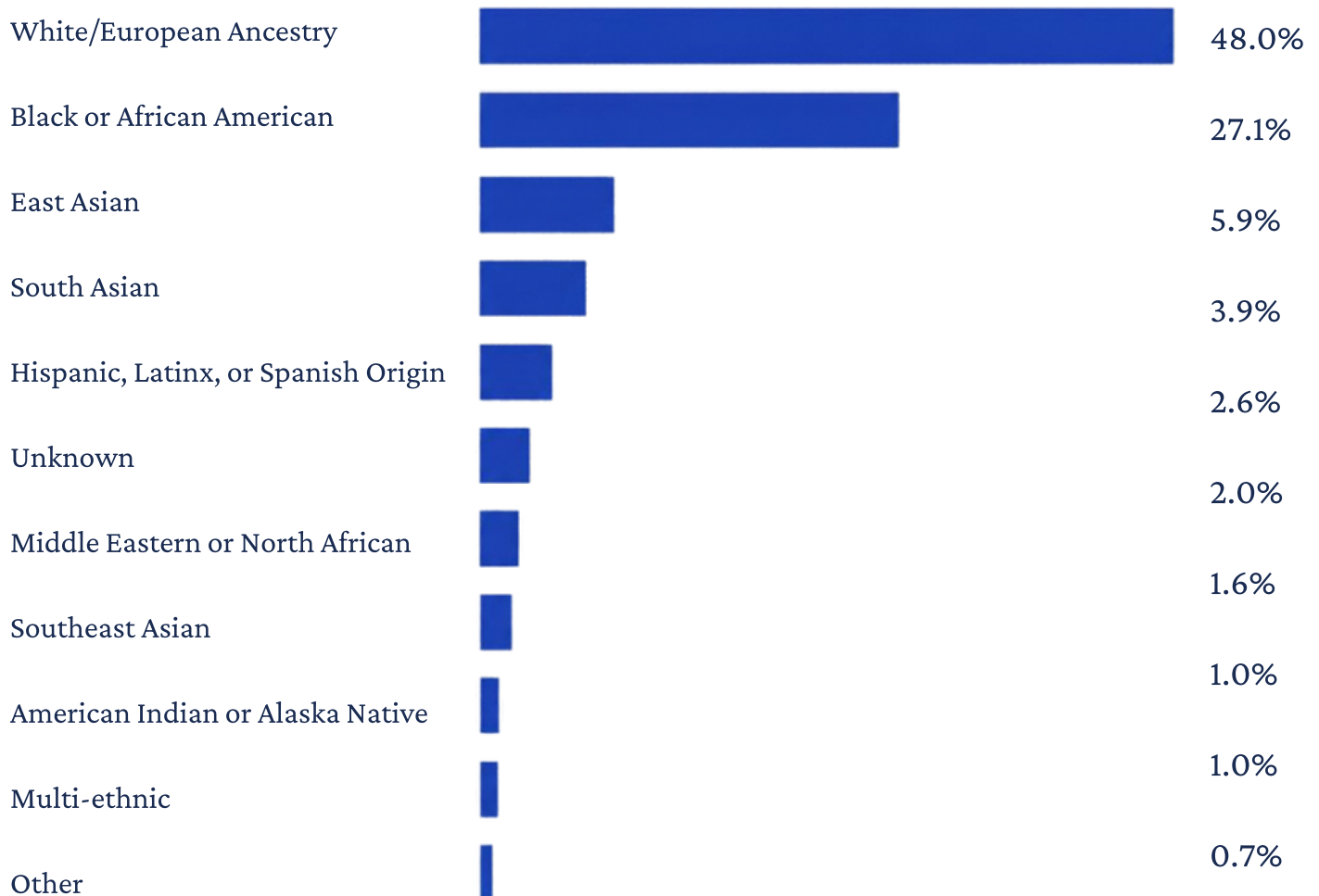
Visitor Age Distribution



Visitors to the Ombuds Office represented a broad range of age groups. This distribution underscores that the Ombuds Office serves individuals across career and life stages within the university community.



Visitor Race / Ethnicity



Zero-value categories

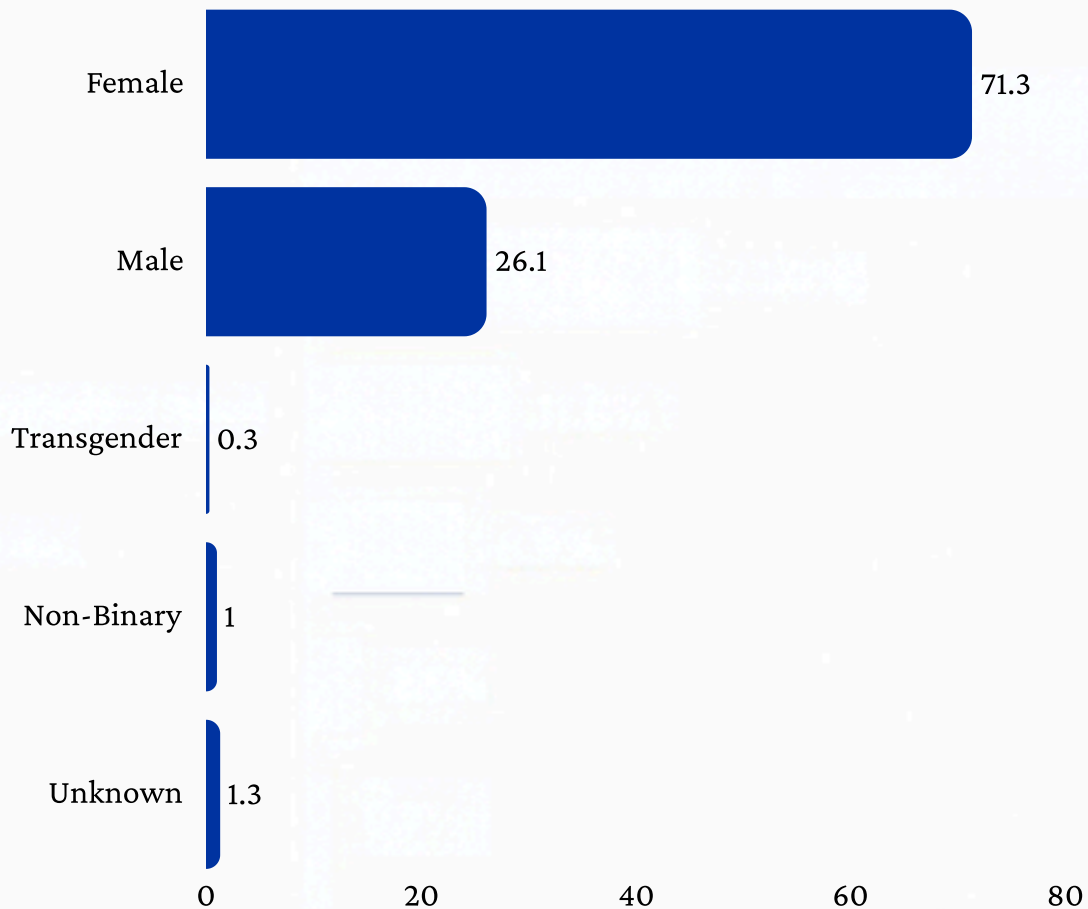
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander: 0%



The racial and ethnic composition of Ombuds visitors remained broadly consistent with the previous reporting period, with no substantial change in the overall distribution. The largest year-over-year shift was a 3.5 percentage-point decrease among visitors identifying as White/European Ancestry; changes across individual racial and ethnic categories were otherwise modest.

Gender

Percentage Share of Ombuds Visitors by Gender

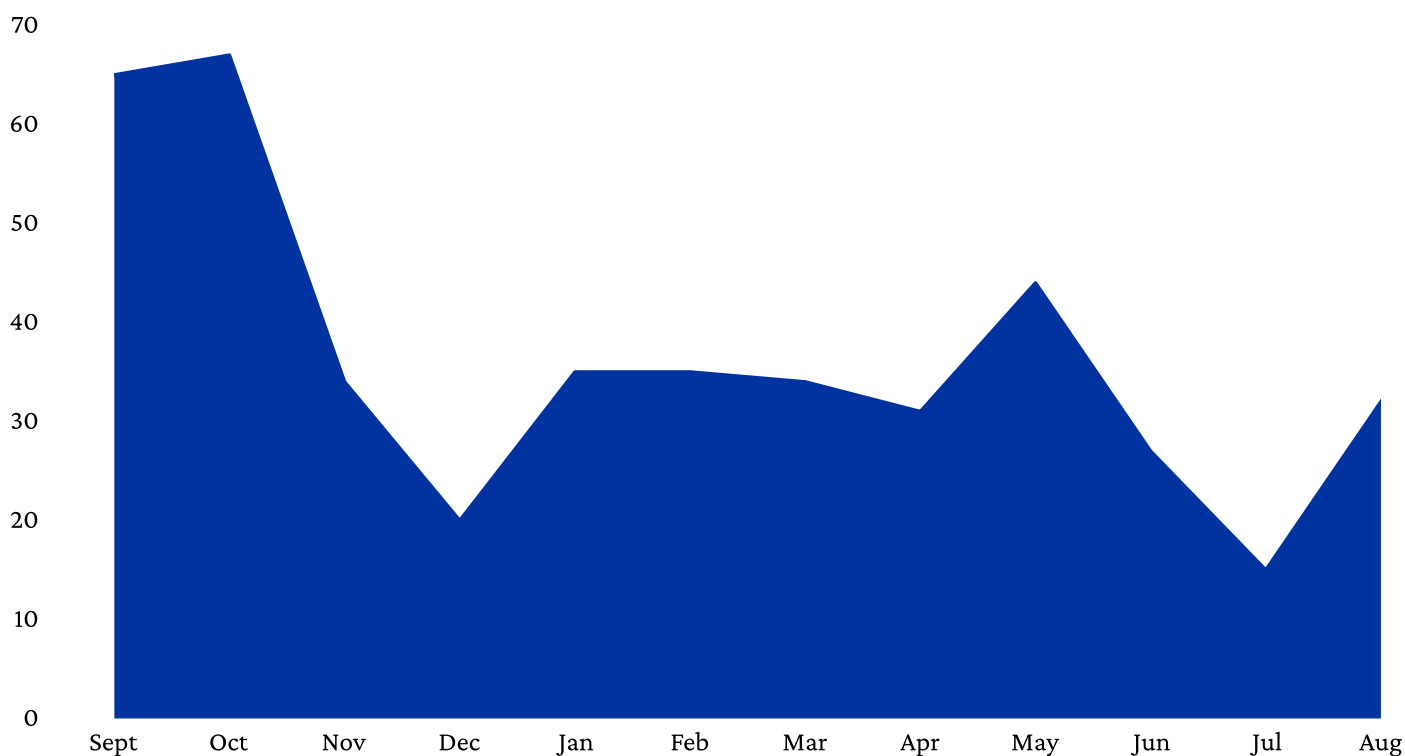


Share of visitors represented in the data.

Female visitors continued to represent the largest share of those accessing the Ombuds Office. Compared with the previous reporting period, their share decreased by 2.1 percentage points, from 73.4% to 71.3%. Overall, gender representation remains generally consistent with patterns observed in prior annual reports.



Monthly Visitor Trends



Total Individual Ombuds Visits - 439



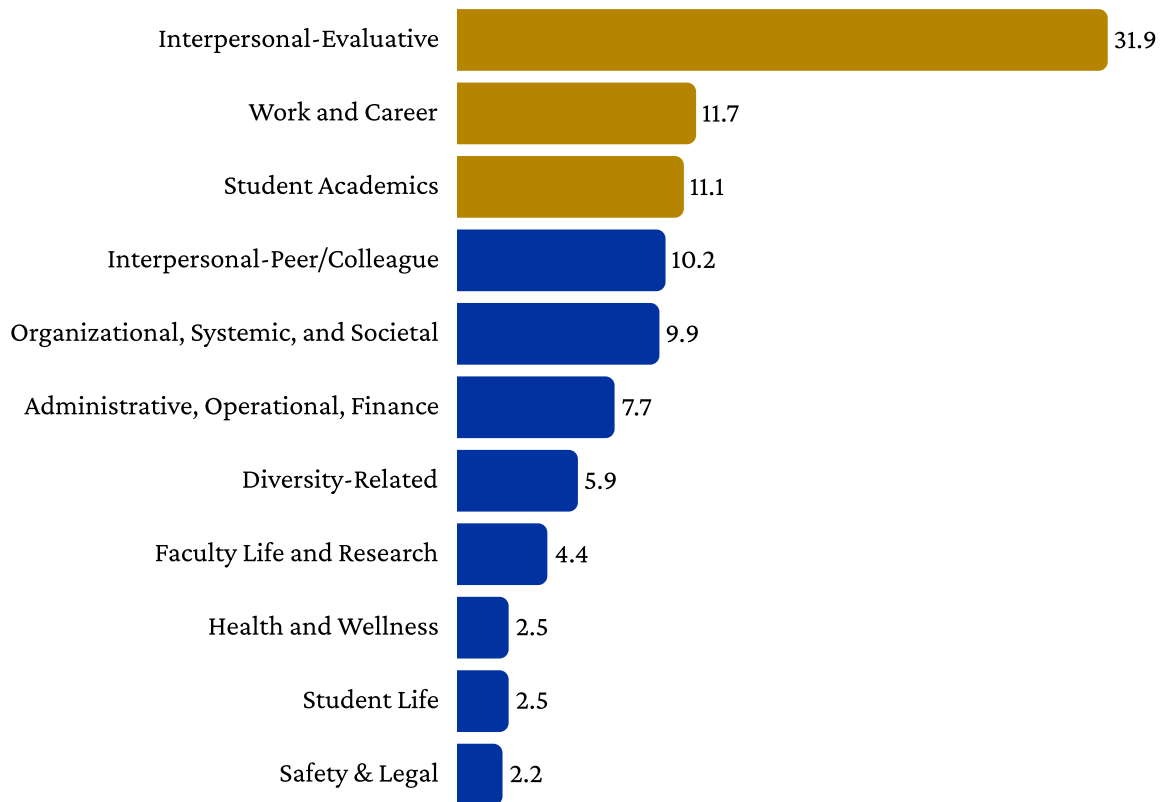
Individual visit patterns varied with the rhythms of the university calendar, with higher activity at the beginning of the academic year and in late spring and lower activity around winter break and portions of the summer. This variability allows the Office to respond to periods of greater demand for individual support while maintaining capacity for the broader work of the Ombuds Office throughout the year.

CONCERNS & ISSUES



Categorical Concerns

Percentage Share of All Reported Concerns



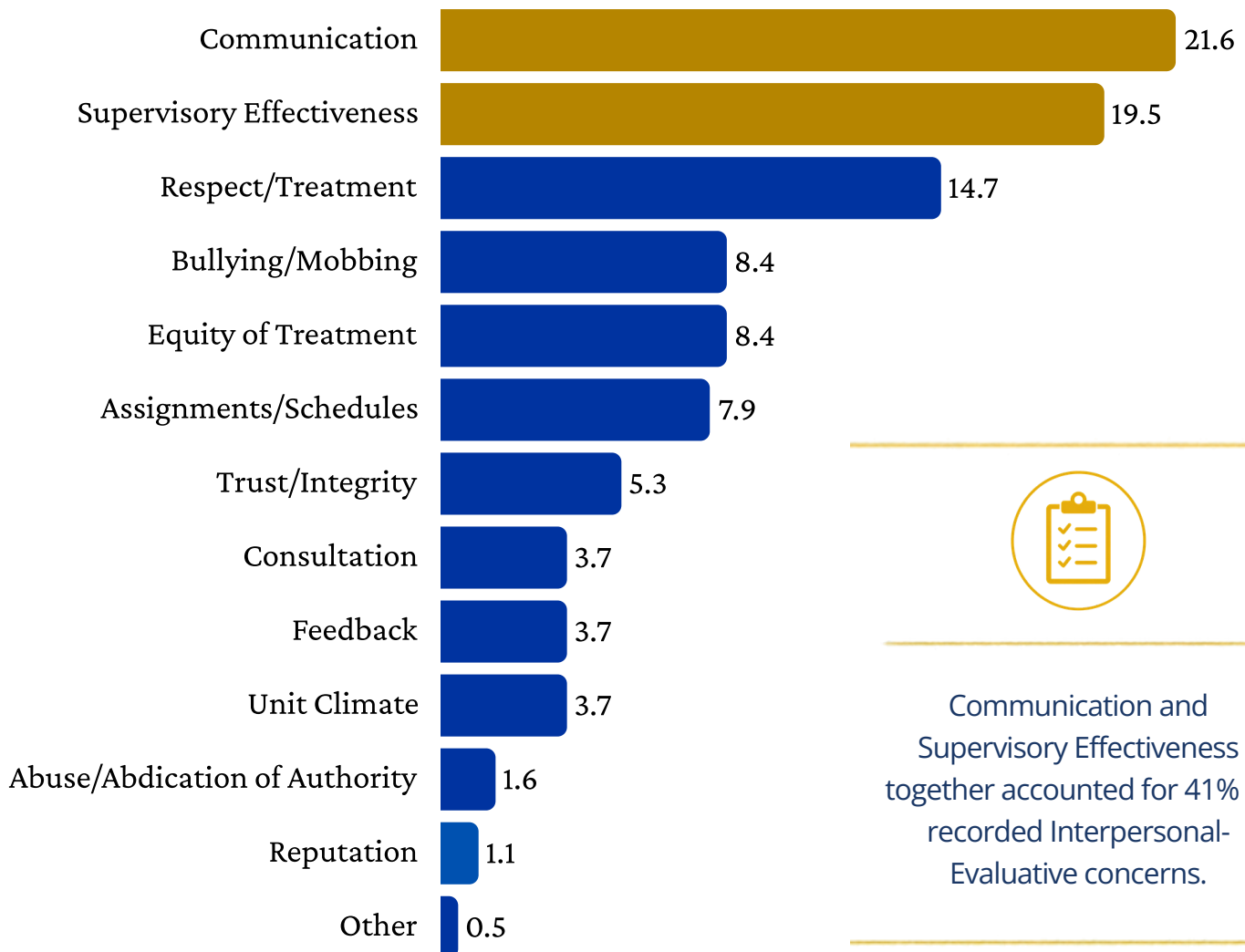
WHAT STANDS OUT

Among the 596 primary and secondary concerns recorded in 2025–2026, Interpersonal-Evaluative, Work and Career, and Student Academic concerns were the three most frequently recorded categories. Compared with the previous reporting period, the share of Interpersonal-Evaluative concerns increased from 27.3% to 31.9%, while Work and Career concerns decreased from 18.1% to 11.7%. Student Academic concerns increased from 7.8% to 11.1%, moving into the three most frequently recorded categories in place of Organizational, Systemic, and Societal concerns. The following pages take a closer look at these three leading categories and the types of concerns represented within them.



Interpersonal-Evaluative

Percentage Share of Interpersonal-Evaluative Related Concerns



Communication and Supervisory Effectiveness together accounted for 41% of recorded Interpersonal-Evaluative concerns.



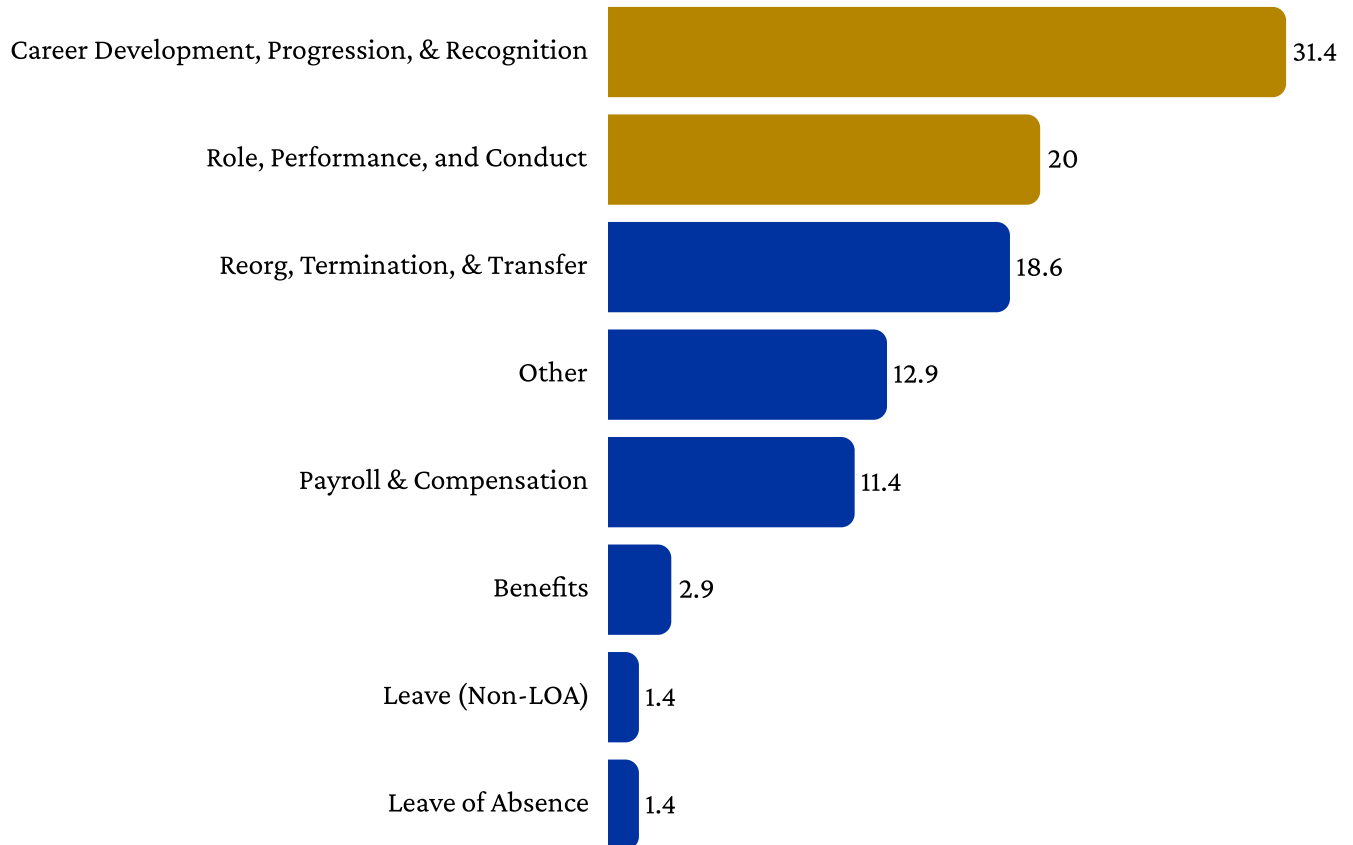
WHAT STANDS OUT

Among the 190 Interpersonal-Evaluative concerns, Communication and Supervisory Effectiveness were the most frequent within this category. Together with concerns related to respect/treatment, bullying/mobbing, and equity of treatment, these engagements often centered on how people communicate, lead, and experience workplace relationships.



Work and Career

Percentage Share of Work and Career Related Concerns

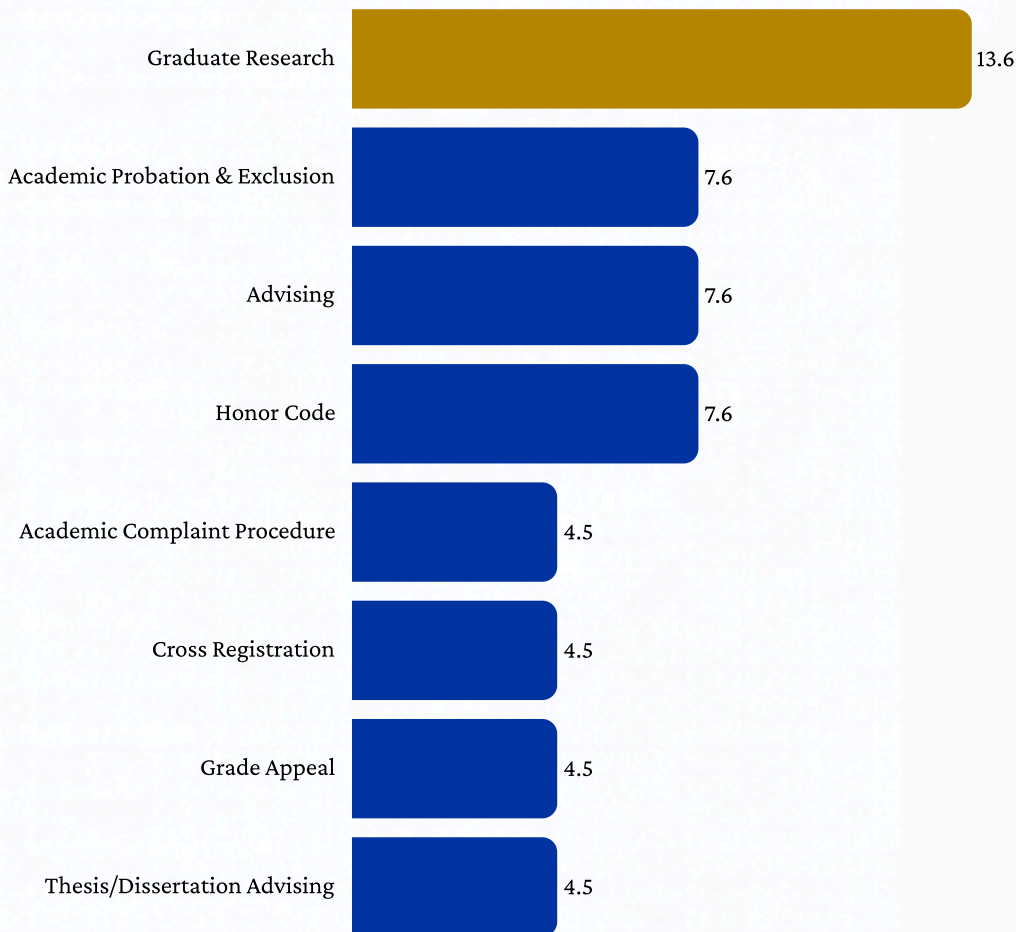


Among the 70 Work and Career concerns, Career Development, Progression, & Recognition as well as Role, Performance, and Conduct were the most frequent concerns within this category. Together with concerns related to Reorganization, Termination, & Transfer and Payroll & Compensation, these concerns often centered on professional growth and recognition, performance expectations, organizational transitions, and compensation.



Student Academics

Percentage Share of Leading Student Academic Concerns



Beyond the concerns highlighted here, 16 additional concern types each represented between 1.5% and 3.0% of Student Academic concerns. An additional 6.1% were classified as Other, reflecting concerns not otherwise captured by pre-defined categories.

WHAT STANDS OUT

Among the 66 Student Academic concerns, Graduate Research was the most frequent concern within this category. Academic Probation & Exclusion, Advising, and Honor Code were also among the most frequent. Beyond these leading concerns, concerns were distributed across a broad range of academic matters, reflecting the varied academic issues brought to the Ombuds Office.



EDUCATION & OUTREACH

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Engagement



26
Community
Engagement Events



10
University
divisions



1,200+
People reached

Community engagement extends the work of the Ombuds Office beyond individual visits through ongoing outreach and education, as well as facilitated work with groups and teams. These efforts create opportunities to increase awareness of Ombuds resources, support learning, and address emerging needs across the university community.



**Outreach
Activities**



**Educational
Activities**



**Group Listening
Sessions**

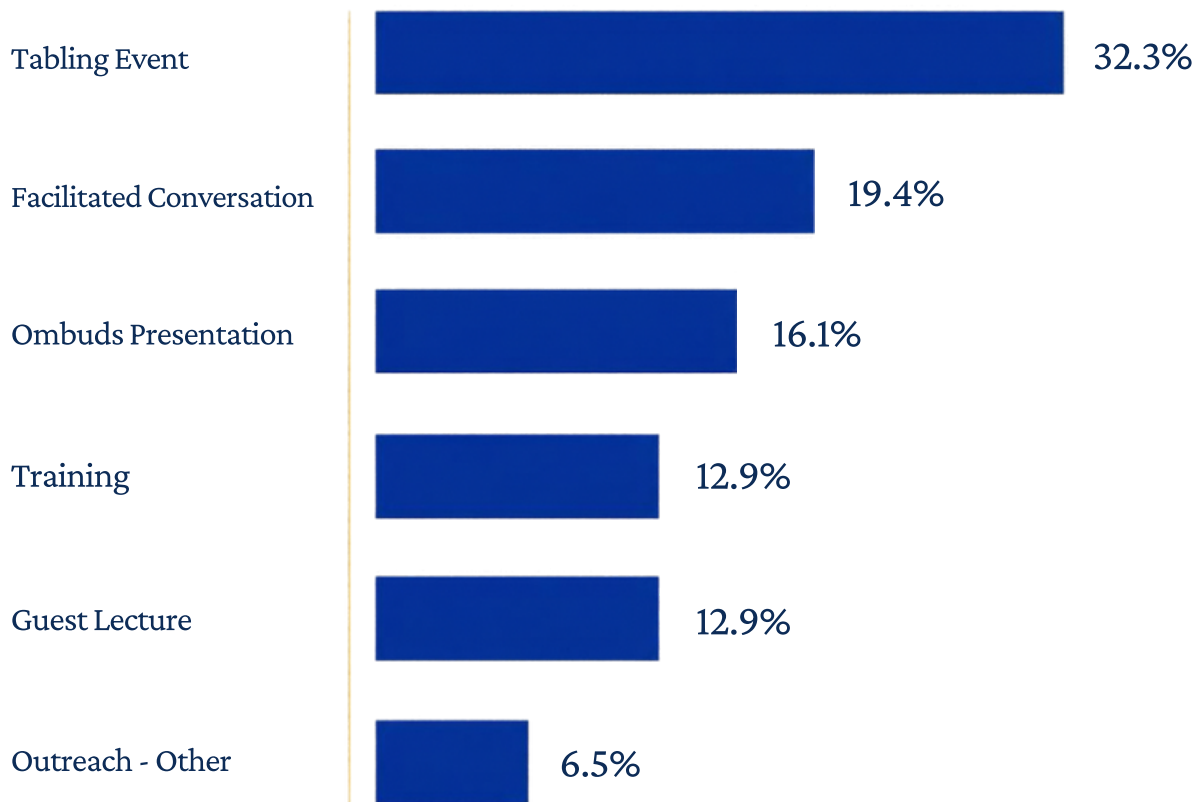


**Facilitated
Dialogues**

Through these engagements, the Office expands access to Ombuds resources while creating opportunities for learning, dialogue, and constructive engagement across the university.



Types of Community Engagement



Responding to Community Needs

Community engagement includes ongoing outreach as well as education, facilitated conversations, listening sessions, and other approaches that may vary with the needs of the university. Outreach remains a consistent priority, helping make Ombuds services visible and accessible across the university community. In 2024–2025, amid significant organizational change, the Office provided approximately 20 listening sessions to create space for community members to share concerns and process change. No listening sessions were held in 2025–2026, while other forms of community engagement continued.

Thank You

Thank you to the Emory
community for engaging with the
Office of the Ombuds.



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