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Can an Ombuds Help Resolve Conflicts & Improve Labor-Management Relationships?

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CO-OP

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MC Office of the Ombuds

Fourth Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2017

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Message from the Montgomery College Ombuds

The Office of the Ombuds is excited to present the Montgomery College Office of the Ombuds Fourth Annual Report. The report is intended to provide an opportunity for the Montgomery College community to learn of and from the many workplace issues and conflicts that fellow employees brought to the Office of the Ombuds this past year. More broadly and ideally, the report is meant to serve as a springboard to productive discussion, feedback, and problem-solving on how, together, we can work to address identified workplace issues and improve the employee experience. Ultimately, by resolving such issues and providing a better employee experience, employees will be able to focus as fully as possible on the key mission of Montgomery College—to empower our students to change their lives and to enrich the life of our community.

This past year marked the fourth year of the Office of the Ombuds at Montgomery College. The founding and original Montgomery College ombuds, Ms. Sarah Miller Espinosa, officially handed the reigns to me in July 2016, having already put in place a fully operating and robust ombuds program. I spent a lot of my first year getting up to speed as quickly as possible about Montgomery College’s policies, procedures, cultures, history, future plans, programs, and divisions. However, the highlight of my year was getting to meet with and learn about you, Montgomery College’s employees, who crossed my path, either as visitors to the office or in other capacities.

Having recently celebrated my first year work anniversary, I wanted to take this space to share my profound gratitude for Dr. DeRionne Pollard and the rest of the community for supporting the work of the Office of the Ombuds. First, I want to expressly thank Dr. Pollard and other administrators, in particular, for supporting the independence and confidentiality of the office, especially where these somewhat unique but fundamental principles can be challenging to work with at times. In my short time at Montgomery College, I have greatly appreciated how much these principles have been respected and not challenged.

Second, I want to thank the entire community for the many ways in which you have supported the Office of the Ombuds and me, in particular, as the new Montgomery College ombuds. These ways include, but are not limited to:

- providing a warm welcome;
- helping me move and settle into office space;
- engaging in discussions both inside and outside of scheduled appointments on individual and systemic matters that are important to you;
- advising the Office of the Ombuds on how to improve its services or marketing;
- inviting the Office of the Ombuds to present to your council, department, class, work group or at your orientation;

- educating the Office of the Ombuds on the culture, history, or practices of a particular department or function of Montgomery College;
- inviting the Office of the Ombuds to work in an advisory capacity on an important workplace matter;
- assisting the Office of the Ombuds in creating ombuds marketing material;
- updating the Office of the Ombuds website;
- helping the Office of the Ombuds purchase its supplies and plan conference travel;
- updating the Office of the Ombuds on departmental news or changes that will have an impact on employees;
- trusting the Office of the Ombuds to facilitate large and small group discussions; and, on a daily basis,
- putting faith in the Office of the Ombuds as a confidential, neutral, informal, and independent resource that helps with resolving workplace concerns.

Your support and trust has been invaluable, and I will continue to work exceedingly hard to ensure that the Office of the Ombuds is worthy of your trust and support.

Finally, as part of my ongoing effort to reach out to the Montgomery College community to introduce the Office of the Ombuds services and/or share annual report findings and recommendations, I invite you to ask me to visit with your department, group, or unit. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and your co-workers to discuss how the Office of the Ombuds may be able to assist in any specific or general conflict management matters and/or discuss highlights from this report. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours in conflict and resolution,

Julie Weber, JD
Ombuds
Montgomery College

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide data concerning the number and type of issues brought to the Office of the Ombuds from July 1, 2016–June 30, 2017 (FY17), as well as to provide context regarding the demographics of the visitors to the Office of the Ombuds¹, including the visitors’ role, division, gender, and race. *As confidentiality is essential to the Office of the Ombuds, the data collected are shared in terms of categories of issues and in a manner that protects the anonymity of the visitors to the office.*

Moreover, this report provides information concerning systemic issues identified by the Office of the Ombuds, as well as recommendations for positive change to address those issues going forward. Additionally, this report presents an update on the status of past systemic recommendations that have been previously adopted by Dr. Pollard. Finally, this report shares some information concerning other activities in which the Office of the Ombuds has engaged, as well as provides feedback from visitors regarding their experience working with the Office of the Ombuds.

Office of the Ombuds Overview

Montgomery College Office of the Ombuds – Background and Staff

The Office of the Ombuds was established by Dr. Pollard in 2013. In establishing the Office of the Ombuds, Dr. Pollard considered and adopted recommendations from the Employee Engagement Advisory Group as well as the Integrated Conflict Management System workgroup. Both of these groups included governance leaders and faculty and staff union leaders as well as representatives from the Office of Human Resources, Development, and Engagement.

The Office of the Ombuds began providing services to Montgomery College employees in August 2013 (FY14). The office was staffed on a part-time basis by the first College Ombuds, Sarah Miller Espinosa, JD, Certified Organizational Ombudsman Practitioner (CO-OP). During the first two fiscal years of its existence, the Office of the Ombuds provided services to five percent of all College employees in each year. In FY16, the Office of the Ombuds provided services to four percent of all College employees.

In February 2016, the College strengthened its commitment to the Office of the Ombuds when the Board of Trustees adopted College Policy 39001, College Ombuds. The Board policy affirmed Montgomery College’s commitment “to providing ombuds services to

¹ “Visitor” is the technical term used by the ombuds profession to describe a person who has availed himself/herself of ombuds’ services.

the College community” and specified that the purpose of the Office of the Ombuds “is to assist the College community in managing conflict constructively and to support positive change. Constructively managing conflict stimulates teamwork, promotes excellence, and enhances engagement” (College Policy 39001). The policy further specified that all ombuds services “be provided in accordance with the International Ombudsman Association’s Code of Ethics” (College Policy 39001). In March 2016, Dr. Pollard adopted procedures, 39001CP, to implement this policy.

Also in FY16, the College committed resources to provide a regular status full-time position to the Office of the Ombuds, and a search for a full-time ombuds was conducted. The search committee included stakeholders from governance, labor unions, and offices of the president, general counsel, and human resources strategic talent management (HRSTM), as well as part-time College Ombuds Sarah Espinosa. As a result of this successful search, Julie Weber, an experienced employment lawyer and HR manager, with training and experience in mediation, joined Montgomery College in July 2016 as its first full-time College Ombuds. Ms. Weber completed the International Ombuds Association’s (IOA) Foundations of Organizational Ombudsman multi-day training and is well versed in the IOA Code of Ethics and Standards of practice.

In FY17, the Office of the Ombuds provided services to four percent (4%) of all College employees. During this same time, the prior College Ombuds, Ms. Espinosa, transitioned to a part-time role as Special Assistant to the Office of the President, after which she resigned from the College in June 2017.

Advisory Committee to the Office of the Ombuds

The Office of the Ombuds is supported by the Advisory Committee to the Office of the Ombuds. This Advisory Committee meets three times a year. The purpose of the Advisory Committee to the Office of the Ombuds is to assist the Office of the Ombuds by relating “constituent feedback/informed opinions, objective and relevant points of view, suggestions, and ideas to the ombuds for the purpose of assisting the ombuds fulfill the ombuds’ objective of helping the college community manage conflict constructively and cooperatively and to support positive change” (“Purpose and Expectations: Advisory Committee to the Office of the Ombuds”). Representatives from the College Council, AAUP, AFSCME, SEIU, and HRSTM serve on the committee.

During FY17, the Advisory Committee identified that there was an issue regarding the lack of diversity on the committee, and unanimously agreed to expand the diversity of the committee. Toward this end, each member was asked to invite another employee to join the committee, one who would broaden the diversity of the committee. Moreover, the “Purpose and Expectations: Advisory Committee to the Office of the Ombuds” document was amended to include language supporting this resolution.

Many thanks and much appreciation to the following individuals who served on this committee in FY17: Carl Shorter, David Neumann, Krista Leitch Walker, Ed Riggs, Harry Zarin, Rahman Monzur, and Belva Hill.

Montgomery College Office of the Ombuds - Functions

Importantly, a primary goal of the Office of the Ombuds is to help employees help themselves in matters of conflict to the greatest degree possible. Once an employee brings any kind of workplace issue to the Office of the Ombuds for discussion, the ombuds can facilitate the mitigation and/or resolution of the presented workplace conflict in a number of ways, including by:

- providing a safe and confidential forum to surface individual, group, and systemic problems;
- listening to and helping to clarify employee concerns;
- assisting in the identification of underlying issues and interests;
- providing information and exploring possible options available to visitors;
- facilitating discussions to resolve issues, where voluntarily agreed to by all involved parties and if appropriate;
- conducting mediation to resolve issues where voluntarily agreed to by all involved parties and if appropriate;
- providing a voluntary, confidential forum where whistleblowers may raise concerns;
- collecting data on emerging trends and patterns at the College;
- evaluating and analyzing trending information and making recommendations for systemic change;
- providing feedback to the College's senior administration, protecting the anonymity of the ombuds' visitors; and
- publishing an annual report that is made available to the College community.

These functions supplement the formal resources available to employees and are outlined in College Policy and Procedure 39001, College Ombuds. Each is performed in accordance with the International Ombudsman Association (IOA) Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice.

Of note, the Office of the Ombuds does not give legal advice or get involved in any formal processes (e.g., grievance procedures or disciplinary action). In addition, the ombuds does not get involved in union matters that concern terms of a collective bargaining agreement.

IOA Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice

The Office of the Ombuds adheres to the IOA Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. The Code of Ethics specifically requires an ombudsperson to be truthful, act with integrity, foster respect for all members of the community served, and to promote procedural fairness within the organization. The ethical principles are as follows:

INDEPENDENCE: The Ombudsperson is independent in structure, function, and appearance to the highest degree possible within the organization.

NEUTRALITY AND IMPARTIALITY: The Ombudsperson, as a designated neutral, remains unaligned and impartial. The Ombudsperson does not engage in any situation that could create a conflict of interest.

CONFIDENTIALITY: The Ombudsman holds all communications with those seeking assistance in strict confidence, and does not disclose confidential communications unless given permission to do so. The only exception to this privilege of confidentiality is where there appears to be imminent risk of serious harm.

INFORMALITY: The Ombudsperson, as an informal resource, does not participate in any formal adjudicative or administrative procedure related to concerns brought to his/her attention.

The IOA Standards of Practice provide additional guidance on ombuds best practices. Montgomery College Policy and Procedure, 39001, College Ombuds, in accordance with which the Montgomery College Office of the Ombuds operates, incorporates both the IOA Code of Ethics and IOA Standards of Practice, and may be reviewed at www.montgomerycollege.edu/ombuds.

Office Utilization in Fiscal Year 2017

Total Visitor Count

One of the benchmarks of a well-established ombuds program is that it is likely to serve between three to five percent of the employee population each year. During Fiscal Year 2017, the Montgomery College Office of the Ombuds served 126 individual employees, or four percent of the overall employee population.² Although a greater number of visitors came to the Office of the Ombuds in FY17, approximately the same percentage of employees was served as compared to Fiscal Year 2016; in FY16, 115 individual employees were served out of a possible 2,939 population, or four percent of the overall employee population.³

In addition, 13% of the employees (17 employees) who sought the support of the Office of the Ombuds were repeat visitors. These are visitors who came into the office with a *new* issue to discuss, after having discussed/resolved a prior matter.

The case data from which this report is drawn only counts each visitor once regardless of the number of new matters presented or number of visits to the office. However, the case data does include the total number of issues that each of the visitors brought to the attention of the Office of the Ombuds in FY17.

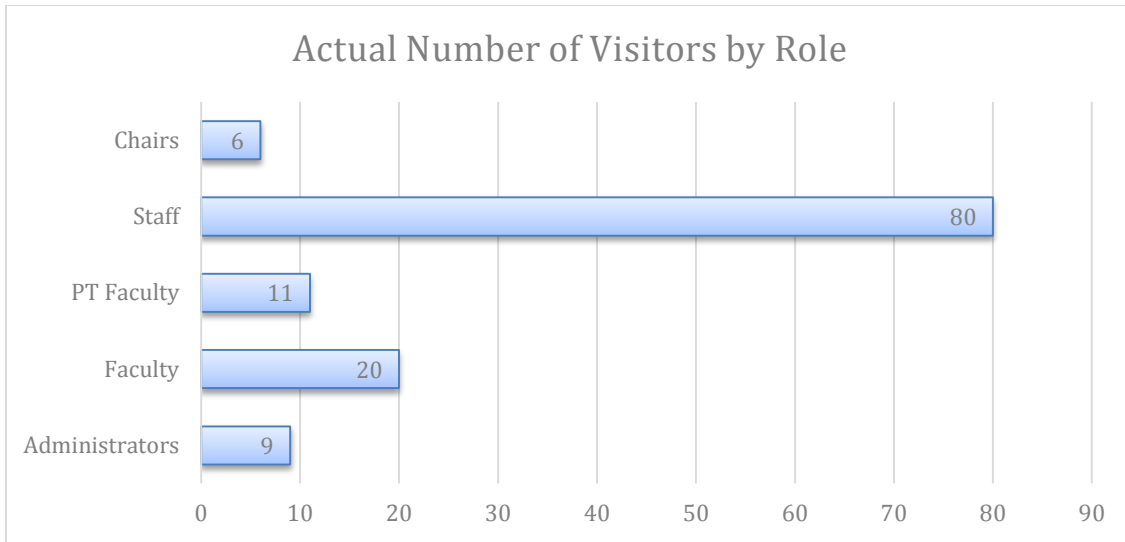
Demographics

Visitors by Employee Category/Role

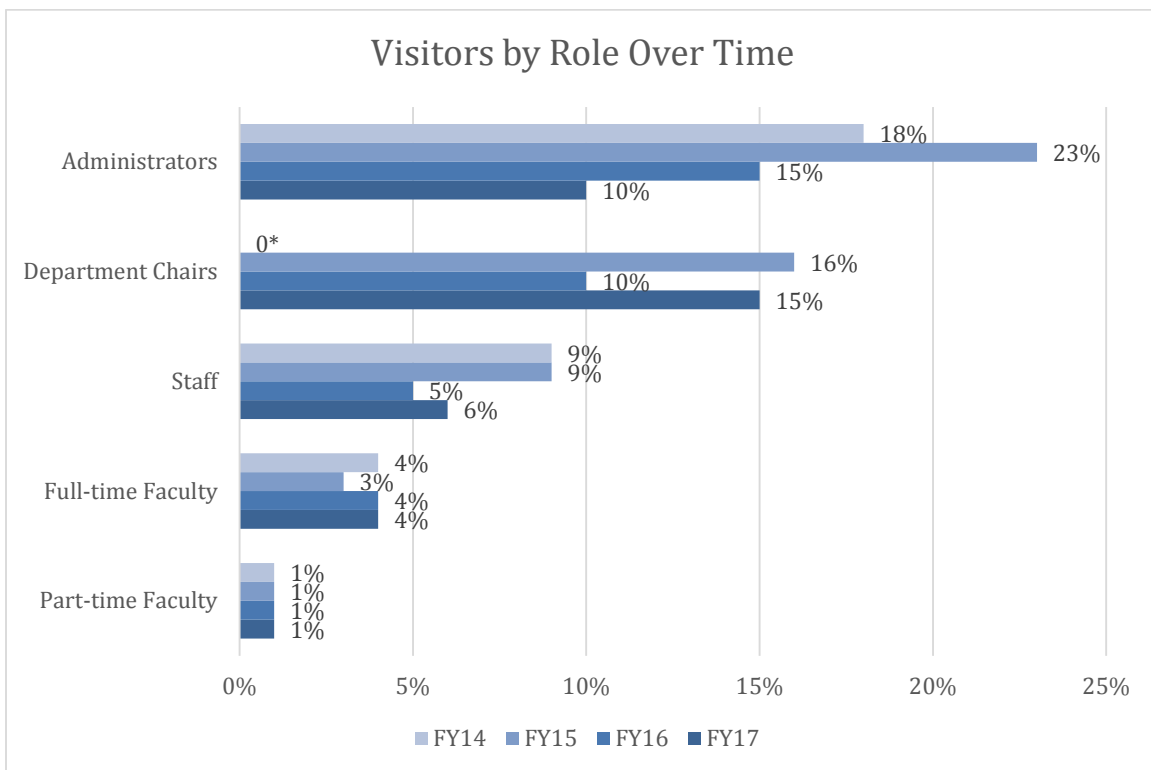
While in FY17, staff accessed the services of the Office of the Ombuds in the greatest numbers, full-time faculty were the second most common users of the ombuds services, followed by part-time faculty.

² The employee population of 2,860 employees was derived from the October 2016 Human Resources Strategic Talent Management report, which listed 556 full-time faculty, 39 department chairs, 937 part-time faculty, 1,245 associate and support staff (including temporary employees with benefits), and 83 administrators.

³ See Montgomery College Office of the Ombuds Third Annual Report, found at: www.montgomerycollege.edu/ombuds under Annual Reports.



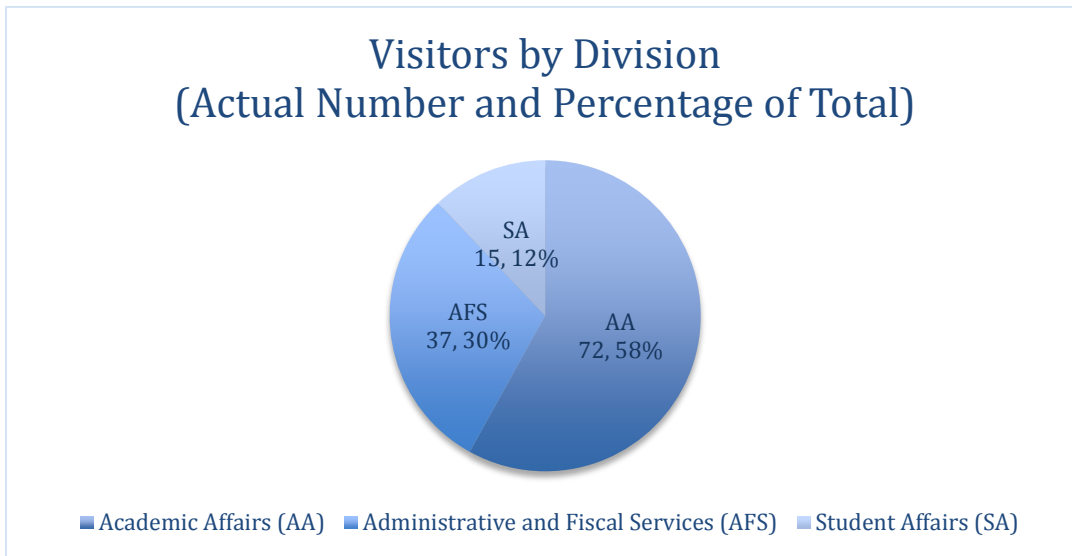
The percentage of visitors served by each employee category in FY17 is fairly similar to the percentages of like visitors last year. A comparison of the percentages of visitors for each category over the past four fiscal years is below:



* Please note that in 2014, there were no department chairs at Montgomery College.

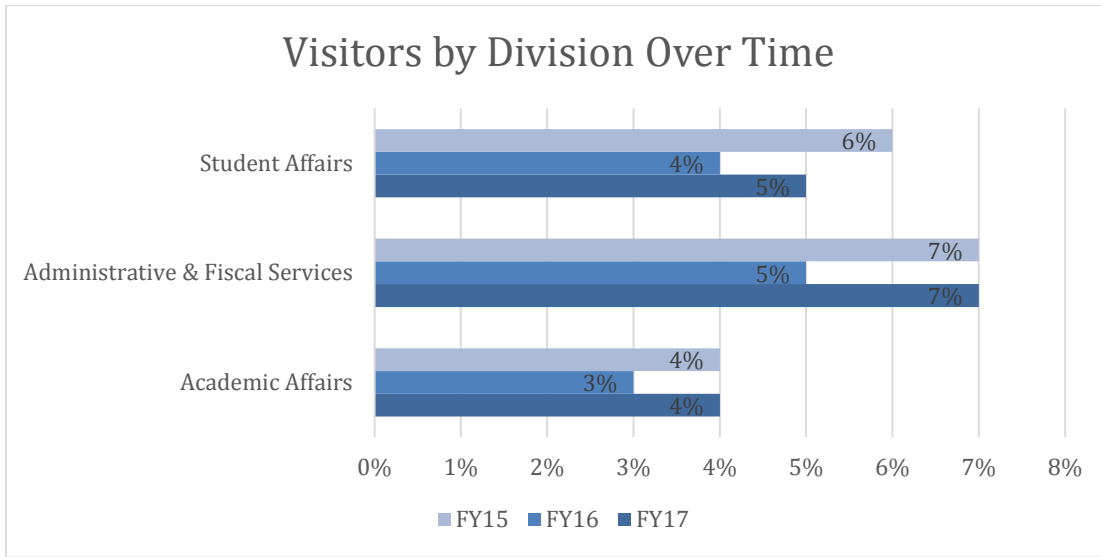
Visitors by Division

The majority of the 126 visitors were from the Academic Affairs division, while the second largest group of visitors was from the Administrative and Fiscal Services division.⁴



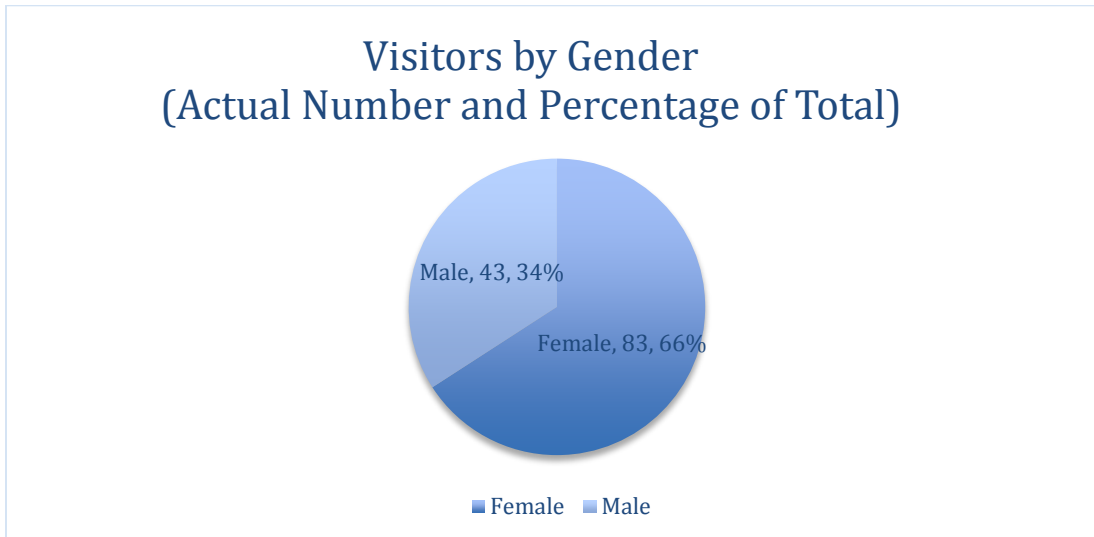
The percentage of visitors served by each division in FY17 is fairly similar to the percentage of like visitor in previous years. A comparison of the percentages of visitors for each division over the past three fiscal years is below:

⁴ The percentage of employees served in each division was calculated utilizing information provided by Institutional Research concerning the number of employees in each division as of Fall 2016 and the number of employee visitors from each division as collected by the Office of the Ombuds. No information regarding the number of visitors and types of issues discussed is reported from the Advancement and Community Engagement division and the Office of the President division where anonymity was not assured.

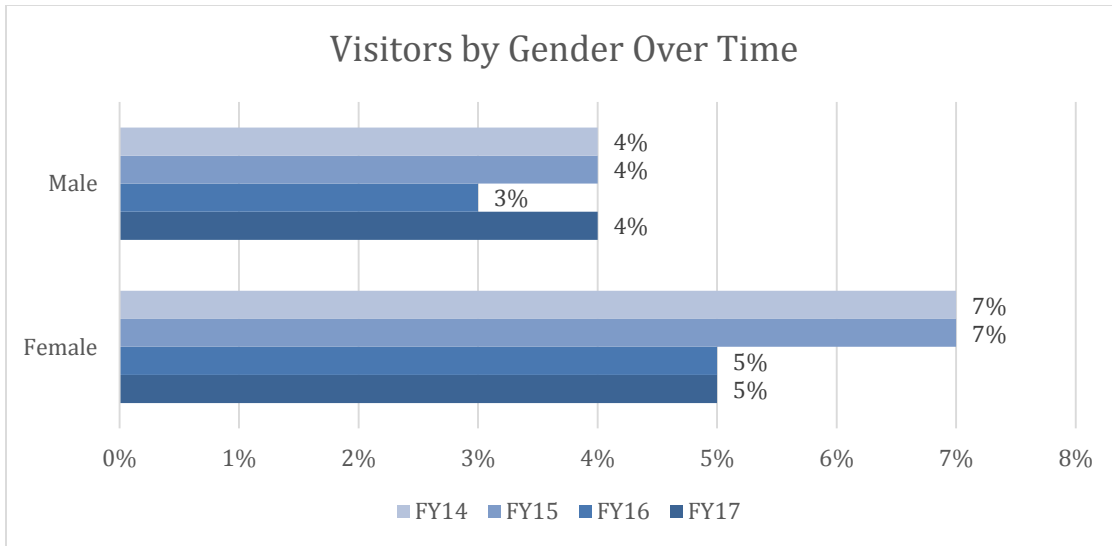


Visitors by Gender

This year, as in the previous years, more women sought out the services of the Office of the Ombuds than did men.

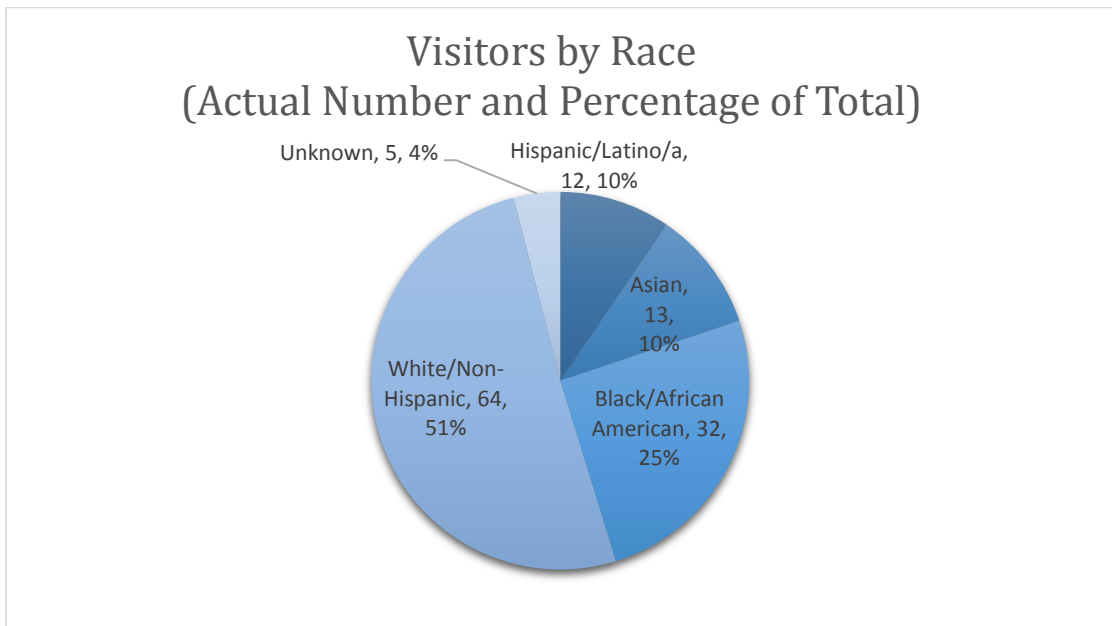


The gender differences in utilization of the Office of the Ombuds services is in keeping with multi-year trends reflecting this disparity, as reflected in the chart below. The percentage of visitors categorized by gender in FY17 compared to previous fiscal years is below:



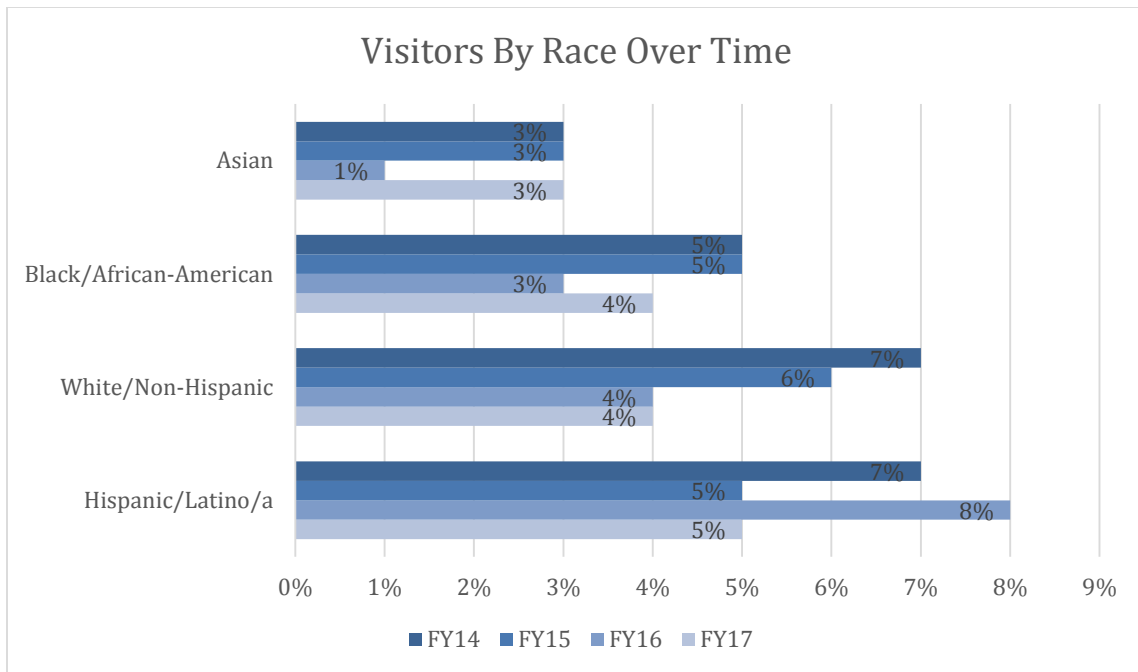
Visitors by Race/Ethnicity

White/Non-Hispanic employees accessed the Office of the Ombuds services in the greatest numbers, while the second largest group to use the services was Black/African American employees. The actual number and percentage of the total 126 visitors in FY17 as categorized by race/ethnicity is recorded below:



The percentage of visitors categorized by race/ethnicity in FY17 as compared to the previous three fiscal years is below:⁵

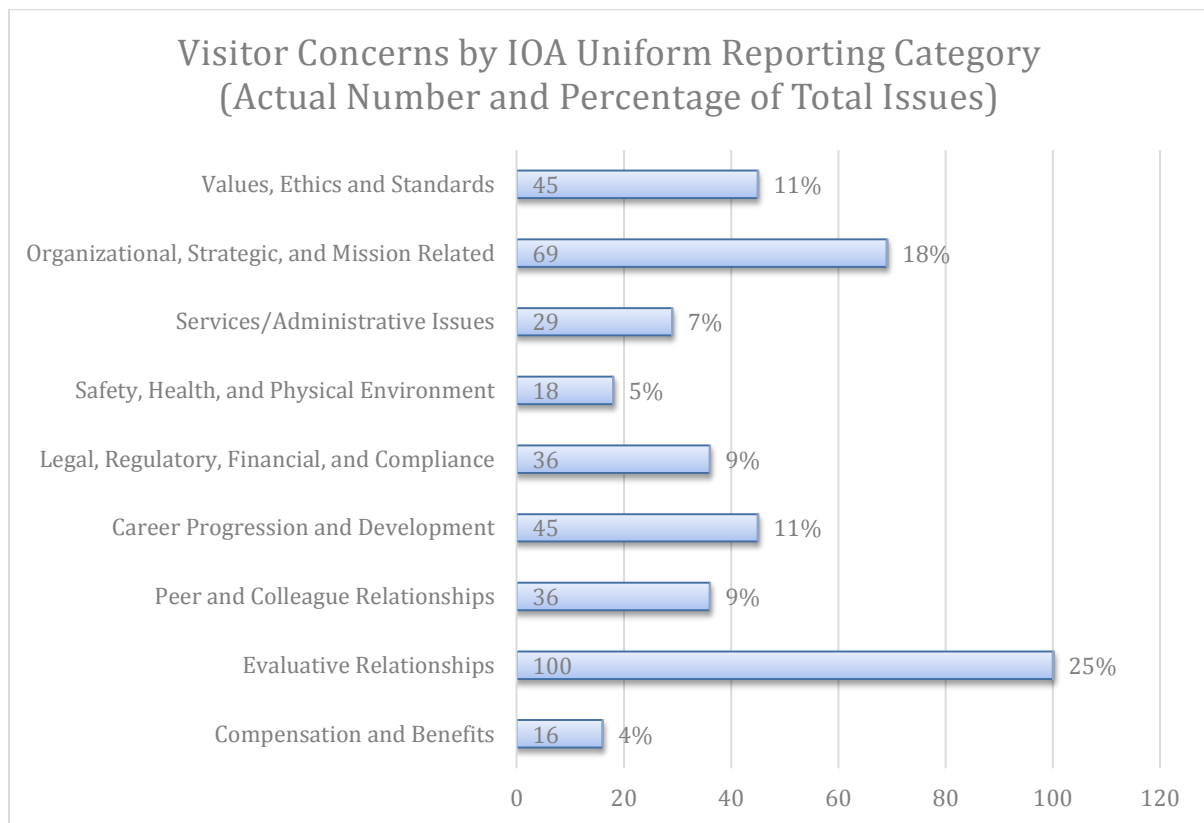
⁵ The ethnicity/race of five of the visitors was not identified.



Workplace Concerns in Fiscal Year 2017

The Office of the Ombuds identified 394 issues raised by the 126 visitors during FY17, all of which were recorded into categories using the IOA Uniform Reporting Categories (IOAURC).⁶ The IOAURC includes nine main categories, with over 80 sub-categories associated with each category of questions, concerns, and inquiries. See Appendix B for a copy of the IOAURC, or go to www.montgomerycollege.edu/ombuds. Multiple issues were often identified after speaking with each visitor.

The chart below depicts a breakdown of the 394 issues raised by visitors during FY17:



⁶ Please note that the number of issues and the types of issues reported this year as compared to last year are different, as is expected from year to year. However, the differences are also, in part, due to the fact that two different ombuds were making assessments about the concerns that they were hearing. In short, determining whether a specific concern is being voiced, and which exact IOA category or categories is/are invoked by the raising of such a concern, is a somewhat subjective process. Importantly, however, both ombuds were consistent within their own process in how they assessed the respective concerns that they heard.

Prevalent Issues

The four most prevalent issues in FY17 were: Evaluative (supervisory) Relationships (25%), Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related matters (18%), Values, Ethics and Standards (11%), and Career Progression and Development (11%).⁷

Two of the most prevalent issues this year—Evaluative Relationships and Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related matters—were also two of the most prevalent issues last year.

Evaluative Relationships

Seventy-nine percent (79%) of the visitors to the Office of the Ombuds raised issues involving the Evaluative Relationships category. The Evaluative (supervisory) Relationships category is defined by the IOAURC as: “questions, concerns, issues or inquiries arising between people in evaluative relations (supervisor-employee).”⁸

Twenty-one percent (21%) of visitors who raised Evaluative Relationship issues came in for consultations; the IOAURC defines consultations as “requests for help in dealing with issues between two or more individual they supervise/teach or with other unusual situations in evaluative relationships.” The remaining seventy-nine percent (79%) of visitors were employees discussing issues concerning an employee to whom they report.

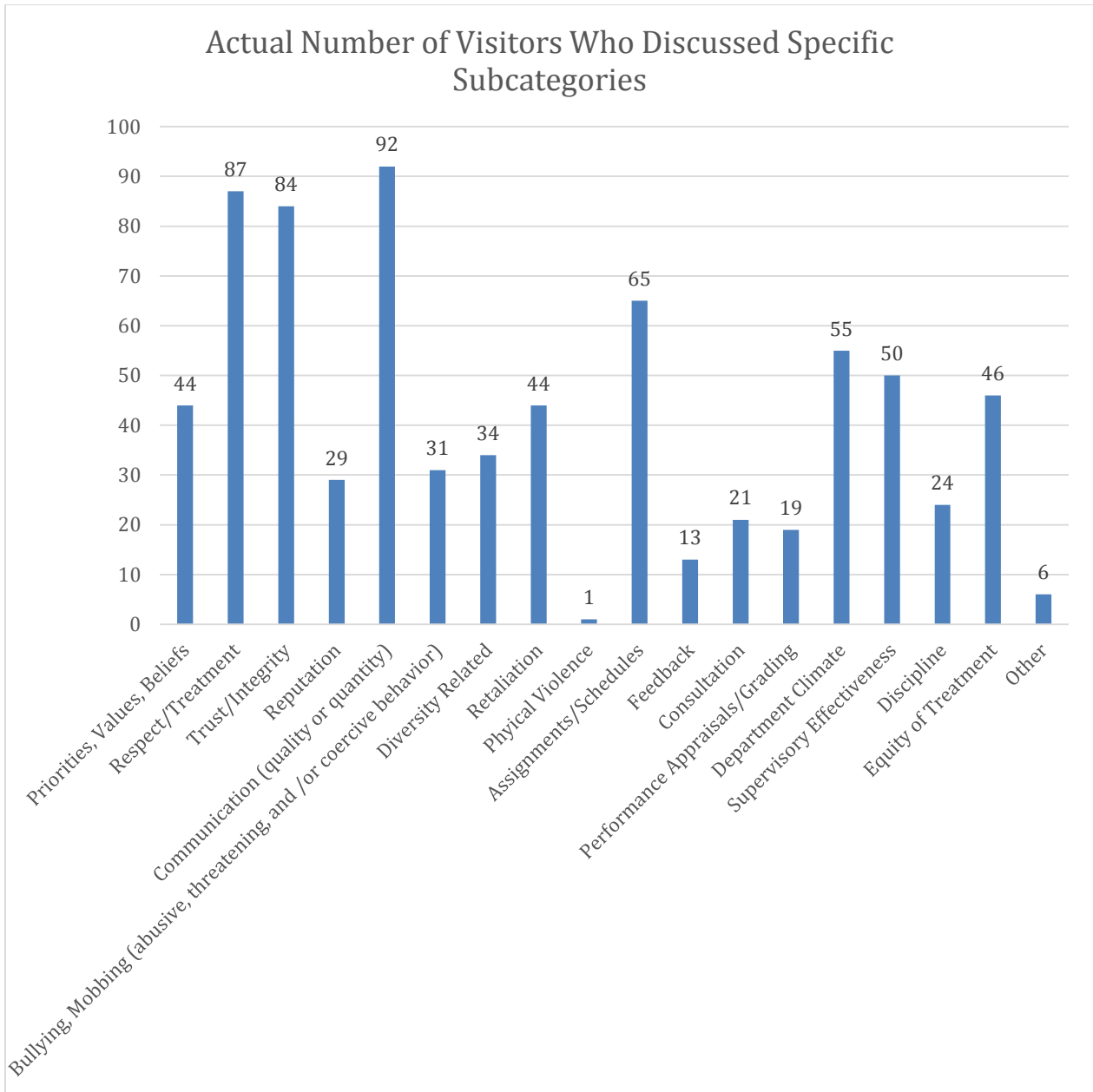
Evaluative Relationships has been the number one issue of concern at Montgomery College since the Office of the Ombuds was established in December 2013.

Subcategories Chart

The Evaluative relationships category is further divided into sub-categories (See Appendix B). The 100 visitors who discussed Evaluative Relationships also discussed one or more of these IOAURC subcategories, as seen below.

⁷ To review top concerns for each employee category, see Appendix C. However, to ensure anonymity of visitors, and given the small number of department chairs, information concerning this employee category is not included in this report.

⁸ The term supervisor is used broadly to reflect any role that has supervisory authority or responsibility.



The three most prevalent IOAURC subcategories related to Evaluative Relationships in FY17 are defined as follows:

2.b Respect/Treatment: demonstrations of inappropriate regard for people, not listening, rudeness, crudeness, etc.

- Eighty-seven percent (87%) of the 100 visitors who discussed Evaluative Relationship matters specifically raised respect/treatment issues. These issues took a number of forms, including but not limited to the

perception that an employee was: insulted, demeaned, ignored, excluded, moved to new roles/assignments with little to no notice, denied a reasonable request while others were granted the same request, or forced to take some action even when they strongly disagreed with the action on a personal/ethical level.

2.c Trust/Integrity: suspicion that others are not being honest, whether or to what extent one wishes to be honest, etc.

- Eighty-four percent (84%) of the 100 visitors who discussed Evaluative Relationship matters specifically raised trust/integrity issues. These issues largely appeared to be tied to 2.e, below, the lack of communication or the quality of communication, as well as 2.b Respect/Treatment.

2.e Communication: quality and/or quantity of communication.

- Ninety-two percent (92%) of the 100 visitors who discussed Evaluative Relationship matters specifically raised issues of communication or lack thereof. Communication issues commonly focused on the manner or frequency in which messages are communicated (or not communicated), as well as the need for more open communication and transparency, especially with regard to changes that are being made within each division or department, including personnel changes.

While **Diversity-Related issues** was not a top three subcategory overall, it is important to note that:

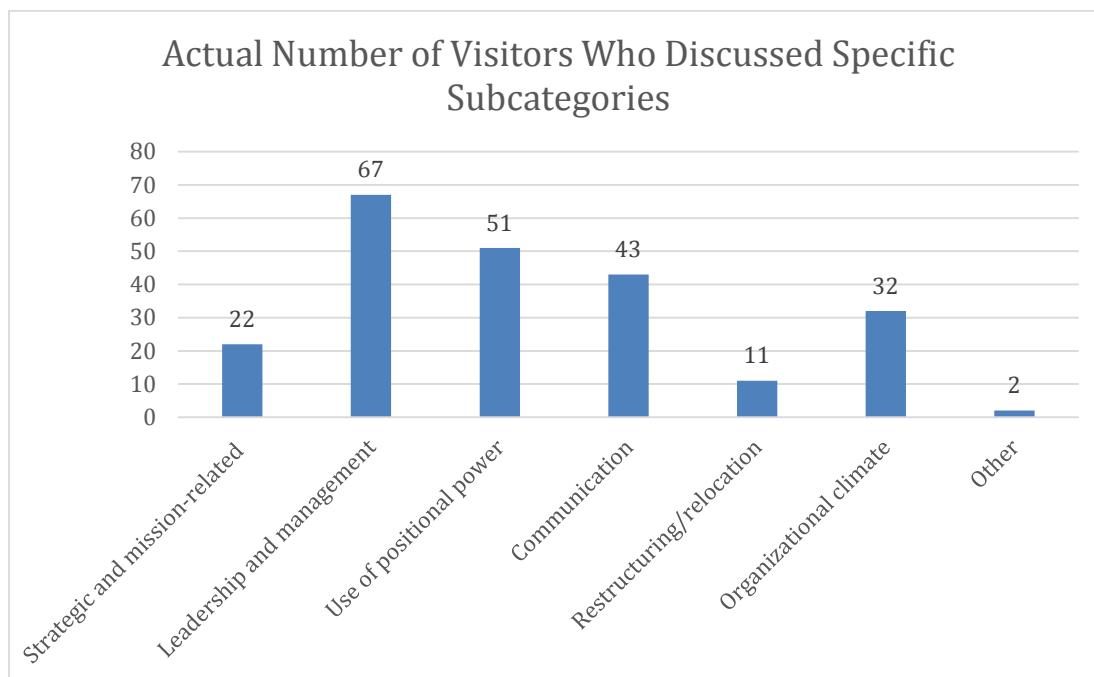
- Fifty-eight percent (58%) of Hispanic or Latino/a employees shared concerns about IOAURC subcategory, **2.g Diversity-Related issues**. The IOAURC defines diversity-related issues as “comments or behaviors perceived to be insensitive, offensive, or intolerant on the basis of an identity-related difference such as race, gender, nationality or sexual orientation.”
- Sixty-one percent (61%) of Asian employees also shared concerns about Diversity-Related issues.
- Twenty-seven percent (27%) of all visitors raised Diversity-Related issues.

Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related

Fifty-five percent (55%) of visitors discussed Organizational, Strategic, and Mission related matters. The Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related category is defined by the IOAURC as: “questions, concerns, issues or inquiries that relate to the whole or some part of an organization.”

Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related matters has been a top three concern for the past two years for all employee groups, except for part-time faculty.⁹

Subcategories Chart



When considering the IOAURC subcategories associated with Organizational, Strategic, Mission Related issues, the three most prevalent subcategories are defined as follows:

8.b Leadership and Management: quality/capacity of management and/or management/leadership decisions, suggested training, reassignments and reorganizations.

- Ninety-seven percent (97%) of visitors who raised Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related matters

⁹ For more information regarding top concerns for each employee group, please see Appendix C.

discussed Leadership and Management issues. One theme that emerged concerned the perception that a manager/leader was lacking in one or more managerial skillsets, including the ability and/or desire to address conflict in the workplace, and the ability and/or desire to communicate effectively.

8.d Communication: style, timing, effect, and amount of organizational and leader's communication, quality of communication about strategic issues.

- Sixty-two percent (62%) of visitors who raised Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related matters discussed communication issues. A recurring theme shared by visitors concerned the perceived need for more open communication and transparency from administrators and department heads, especially with respect to changes and key decisions that affect all employees.

8.e Use of positional power: lack or abuse of power provided by individual's position.

- Seventy-four percent (74%) of visitors who raised Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related matters discussed positional power issues. One recurring theme in this category was the visitor perception of either direct or indirect threats from employees in power positions to thwart employees from seeking help from someone higher in the organizational hierarchy, HRSTM, or the Office of the Ombuds, for an issue they have identified and brought to the person in the power position. Another recurring theme was the perceived directive to not ask questions about decisions, even when employees may have strong concerns about the decisions based on work experience and knowledge, where the act of asking questions resulted in perceived retaliation or the threat of such retaliation.

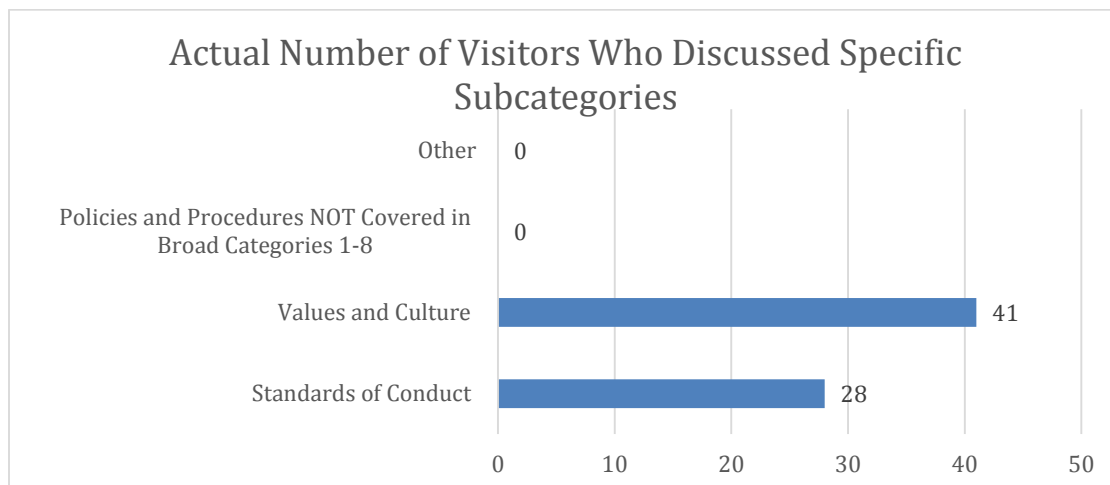
Values, Ethics, and Standards

Thirty-six percent (36%) of visitors to the Office of the Ombuds discussed the category of Value, Ethics, and Standards. This category is defined by the IOAURC as: “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.”

Values, Ethics, and Standards was a top concern¹⁰ this year for:

- Administrative and Fiscal Services,
- Student Affairs,
- staff,
- male and female employees, and
- Asian and Hispanic/Latino/a employees.

Subcategories Chart:



In FY17, the two most prevalent IOAURC subcategories related to Values, Culture, and Standards are defined as follows:

9.a Standards of Conduct: fairness, applicability or lack of behavioral guidelines and/or Code of Conduct, e.g., Academic Honesty, plagiarism, Code of Conduct, conflict of interest.

¹⁰ For more information regarding top concerns for each employee group, please see Appendix C.

- Sixty-two percent (62%) of visitors who raised issues of Values, Ethics, and Standards specifically discussed their perception that a person (to whom they report or a coworker) behaved unfairly, unprofessionally, disrespectfully and/or improperly, and in many cases, this behavior was known about by others and nothing appeared to have been done to address it.

9.b Values and Culture: questions, concerns or issues about the culture of the organization

- Ninety-one percent of visitors (91%) who raised issues of Values, Ethics, and Standards specifically discussed their perception that the College employee culture is one where employees can be treated poorly (this could mean unprofessionally, disrespectfully, and/or unfairly) by other employees—who were reported as being at all levels of the organization—and the behavior is allowed to persist without substantial consequence for the person behaving improperly.

Career Progression and Development

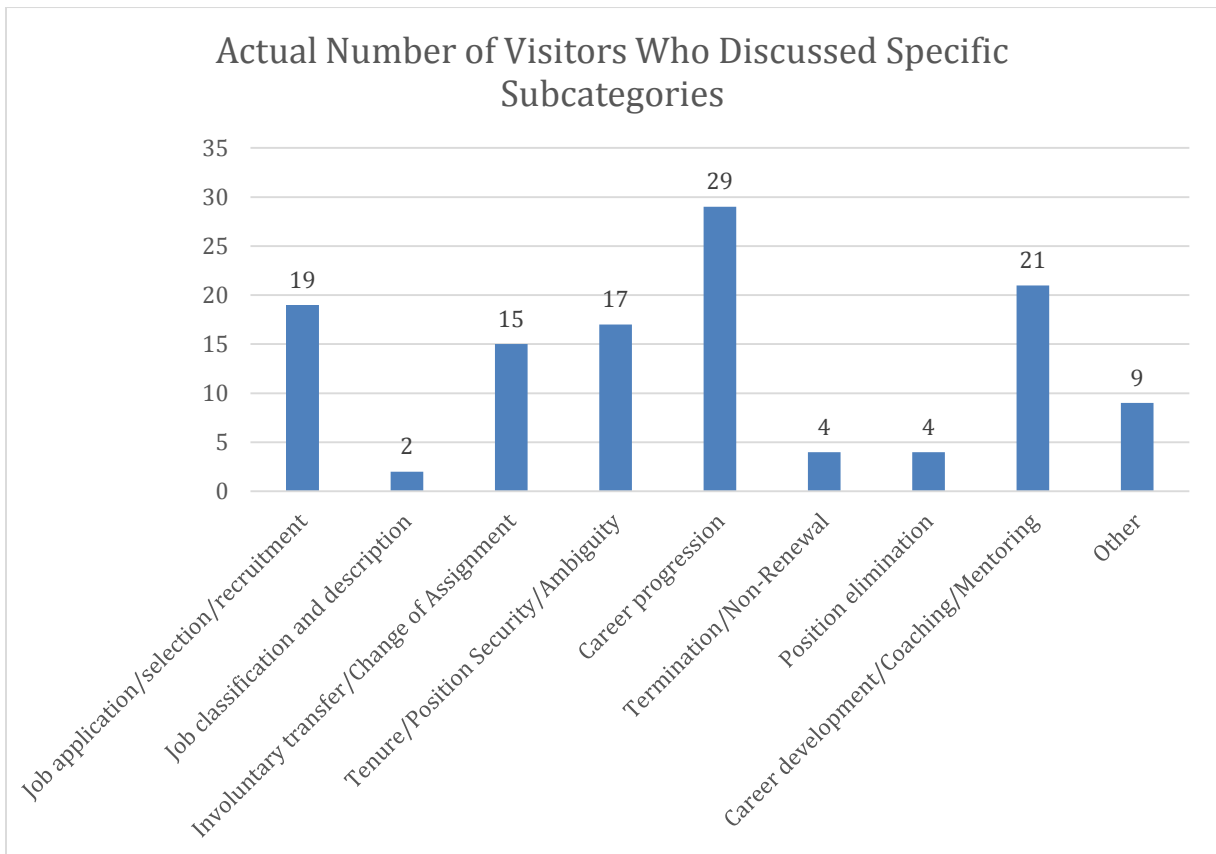
Thirty-six percent (36%) of visitors discussed the category of Career Progression and Development. This category is defined as: “Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about administrative processes and decisions regarding entering and leaving a job, what it entails (i.e., Recruitment, nature and place of assignment, job security and separation.)”

Career Progression and Development was a top concern¹¹ this year for:

- Student Affairs (this year and last year),
- Black/African American and White/Non-Hispanic employees,
- female employees, and
- part-time faculty (this year and last year), and full-time faculty.

¹¹ For more information regarding top concerns for each employee group, please see Appendix C.

Subcategories chart



In FY17, the three most prevalent IOAURC subcategories that related to Career Progression and Development are defined as follows:

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.

- Forty-two percent (42%) of visitors who raised Career Progression and Development issues discussed job application/selection and recruitment matters. One common theme that emerged was the perception that internal candidates are not being treated respectfully throughout the process; a number of visitors reported having to wait a long period of time to hear any news, including that they were not chosen for the position or even for an interview. Another common theme was the perception that the application process was not fair due to any of a variety of reasons. These reasons included the perception that a favorite candidate had already been pre-selected before the interviewing process

began, the new job/position had never been posted or discussed, but instead a person had been appointed to the seemingly newly created job/position, or the hiring manager had chosen friends to fill positions over more qualified internal candidates.

4.e Career Progression: promotion, reappointment, or tenure.

- Sixty-four percent (64%) of visitors who raised Career Progression and Development issues discussed career progression, mostly with respect to promotion opportunities or the lack thereof. One common theme that emerged was the perception of “being stuck” in a role or in a classification, unable to advance, even after demonstrating competence and hard work over time. Another common theme was the perception of not having a clear understanding of what is required to be promoted or what opportunities exist for promotion within the College.

4.k Career Development, Coaching, and Mentoring: classroom, on-the-job and varied assignments as training and developmental opportunities.

- Forty-seven percent (47%) of visitors who raised Career Progression and Development issues discussed career development, coaching, and mentoring. One recurring theme was of wanting one’s boss to take an active interest in career development, coaching, and mentoring, including encouraging employees to take advantage of opportunities, especially those that are in line with an employee’s professional development plan.

Ombuds' Recommendations

As outlined in Montgomery College Policy and Procedure, 39001, College Ombuds, one of the responsibilities of the Office of the Ombuds is to evaluate and analyze data and make recommendations for positive systemic change. In each of the three previous annual reports, the ombuds has made multiple recommendations for positive change, all of which were adopted by Dr. Pollard. The following section includes updates on previously approved recommendations where implementation is in process.¹² These recommendations are previously outlined in the Montgomery College Office of the Ombuds Third Annual Report, and in the December 14, 2016 Memo from Dr. Pollard to Montgomery College Colleagues Regarding 2016 Ombuds Recommendations, both documents which may be found at: www.montgomerycollege.edu/ombuds. Additionally, this section includes four new recommendations for positive change based on the FY17 data. ***Ultimately, the FY17 Recommendations include nine (9) recommendations – five (5) that were previously adopted by Dr. Pollard and where implementation is underway, and four (4) new recommendations.***

Previously Adopted and Implementation is in Process

1. Support and Enhance Managerial Competencies by Soliciting Feedback from Employees

Recommendation (previously adopted in FY14, FY15, and FY16):

Support and enhance managerial competencies and best practices by regularly soliciting feedback from employees and building professional development plans considering the results of 360-degree feedback instruments.

Dr. Pollard's approval of this revised recommendation in FY16 resulted in HRSTM researching and selecting a new 360-degree feedback instrument package; this package includes three separate but similar surveys that are tailored for different classification ranges. These surveys will be used throughout the College, including with supervisors, managers, chairs, and administrators. HRSTM began piloting the 360-degree program with one department in May 2017, and is continuing to roll out the program across the College in FY18. Currently, supervisory personnel in the AFS division are undergoing this 360-degree survey process. The survey process will be conducted every other year for each subject.

¹² Please note that "implementation is in process" means that action has been taken or is in the process of being taken that is responsive to the recommendations, but that full implementation of the recommendation has not yet occurred.

As recommended by the previous ombuds in earlier annual reports, these new 360-degree surveys and their related processes attempt to maximize the effectiveness of the feedback and planning instruments. Not only does each survey automatically request feedback from all of an employee's direct reports (unless the number of direct reports exceeds 18 employees), but also the results of each survey will be shared with the subject employee's supervisor, to aid with performance improvement and professional development planning for that employee. In addition, upon receiving the results of his/her survey, each employee is strongly encouraged to attend a coaching session with certified facilitators from the external vendor. These coaching sessions focus on reading and interpreting the survey results as well as helping each employee begin to develop an action plan.

Case data from FY17, particularly with regard to Evaluative Relationships, Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related matters, and Values, Ethics, and Standards, provides further support for this recommendation.

2. Take Affirmative Steps to Ensure an Inclusive Workplace for All Employees

Recommendation (previously adopted in FY14 and, as revised, in FY15 and then again in FY16):

Critically examine the employee experience and take affirmative steps to ensure an inclusive workplace for all employees. Provide a fair and efficient process to address employee concerns about identity-related inequities, including those rising to the level of discrimination.

Dr. Pollard adopted the original recommendation and the subsequent revisions regarding examining the employee experience to ensure that Montgomery College is an inclusive workplace. Most recently, with respect to the specific revised recommendation above, Dr. Pollard stated, in relevant part:

With the College's efforts to attract and retain employees of diverse backgrounds, any trends that suggest obstacles to this must be more closely examined. The Ombuds' recommendation of a climate assessment, as a first step, is accepted and will be implemented. This will be one of the first tasks of the new chief equity and inclusion officer, who is to be hired sometime in the coming year.

Further implementation steps to ensure fair and equal treatment of all people involved in the EEO complaint process will be determined.

(December 14, 2016 Memo from Dr. Pollard to Montgomery College Colleagues Regarding 2016 Ombuds Recommendations, see also www.montgomerycollege.edu/ombuds).

As Dr. Pollard indicated in the above cited memo, a chief equity and inclusion officer was hired in July 2016. Ms. Sharon Bland, JD, was selected for this position. Since her arrival, among other activities and tasks, Ms. Bland has participated in numerous “listening tours” collegewide, with over 350 individuals and seven employee groups. The primary goal of these conversations has been to learn about employees’ experience at Montgomery College with respect to equity and inclusion. Ms. Bland is also in the process of creating a climate survey, which is scheduled to be distributed to the College in October 2017.

Moreover, Dr. Pollard is taking additional steps to ensure inclusion for all employees, by establishing a President’s Advisory Committee on Equity and Inclusion, to provide “recommendations about how to reduce barriers to equal access, create practices that produce more equitable outcomes, and infuse more equity-mindedness in our teaching and learning” (August 25, 2017 Memo from Dr. Pollard to Montgomery College Colleagues Regarding President’s Advisory Committee on Equity and Inclusion). This committee will consist of appointed and nominated members of the College community, and all employees at Montgomery College were invited to apply to be on the committee.

Continuing to critically examine issues involving equity and inclusion is supported by the FY17 findings, including where case data showed 58% of Hispanic or Latino/a employees and 61% of Asian employees shared concerns about IOAURC subcategory, 2.g Diversity-Related issues. In addition, 46 visitors who raised Evaluative Relationship issues specifically discussed matters involving equity of treatment.

3. Examine and Address Challenges Related to the EEO and employee and labor relations processes

Recommendation (previously adopted in FY16):

Critically examine the employee experience and address challenges related to the service provided to employees in the EEO complaint process as well as the employee and labor relations processes. Ensure fair, efficient, and confidential processes to address employee concerns.

Dr. Pollard adopted this recommendation in December 2016, stating, in part, “Steps are already underway to improve the College’s assessment of EEO complaints. Specifically, Senior Vice President for Administrative and Fiscal Services Janet Wormack has

examined the operations of the office and implemented changes” (December 14, 2016 Memo from Dr. Pollard to Montgomery College Colleagues Regarding 2016 Ombuds Recommendations, see also www.montgomerycollege.edu/ombuds).

One of the changes that was implemented was the hiring of a new director of employee and labor relations who has specialized in employee and labor relations throughout her career. In March 2017, Heather Pratt, JD, was selected for this position. Ms. Pratt is now overseeing the EEO complaint process, and is working to streamline processes for employees, including reviewing Montgomery College policies and procedures for fairness and clarity. Ms. Pratt has also recently hired another attorney who also has specialized in employee relations, Mr. Santo Scrimenti, to join her staff.

4. Code of Ethics & Standards of Conduct for All Montgomery College Employees

Recommendation One (previously adopted in FY14, FY15, and FY16):

Collaboratively develop, adopt, and implement both a Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct for all Montgomery College employees.

Dr. Pollard first approved this recommendation in 2014, and the recommendation has been partly actualized since then. Most notably, in June 2017, the Board of Trustees approved the Code of Ethics and Employee Conduct Policy and Procedure, 31000 and 31000CP, to establish the Montgomery College Code of Ethics. The Employee Services Council’s original proposal was integral to the creation of the current Code of Ethics and Employees Standards of Conduct handbook, which can be found at:

<http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/EDU/Department4sub1.aspx?id=102164>. In addition, the Office of Compliance, Risk, and Ethics is in the process of aligning the current code with MC Policies and Procedures as well as developing an awareness campaign, comprehensive employee training, and an ethics reporting line.

When making this recommendation in FY14, the previous ombuds wrote:

This recommendation is intended to enhance both evaluative relationships as well as confidence in leadership and management by transparently setting ethical and professional expectations for all employees. Such clarity is expected to reduce confusion and disagreement regarding expectations and standards, to the benefit of both non-supervisory and supervisory employees. While there is expected to be healthy disagreement over direction and priorities, having the backdrop of a shared Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct may enhance the constructive nature of those discussions. If adopted, training should be required of all employees in the organization.

(Montgomery College Office of the Ombuds Third Annual Report, see also www.montgomerycollege.edu/ombuds).

Case data in FY17, particularly regarding the most prevalent concerns—Evaluative Relationships, Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related matters, and Values, Ethics, and Standards—further supports the actualization of the final step outlined in this recommendation—that of implementing a Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct.

5. Commit to Continue to Provide Access to the Office of the Ombuds

Recommendation Two (previously adopted in FY16):

Commit to continue to provide the Montgomery College community with access to the Office of the Ombuds by allocating sufficient resources to maintain the quality of the service, including: identifying new office space; allocating positions and recruiting for an associate ombuds and administrative support person; and providing a modest, independent budget for training, materials, and other needs.

Dr. Pollard adopted this recommendation in December 2016, stating, in relevant part:

I am accepting this new recommendation, though its implementation depends on resource availability. The possibility of funding for additional ombuds staff persons and allocation of a separate budget for training and materials are tied to the availability of funds. . . .The ombuds program began as a pilot in 2013. It has proven itself to be an important service in the College's repertoire of employee engagement tools. Every effort will be made to institutionalize the office as a permanent part of the community.

(December 14, 2016 Memo from Dr. Pollard to Montgomery College Colleagues Regarding 2016 Ombuds Recommendations, see also www.montgomerycollege.edu/ombuds).

On July 1, 2017, the Office of the Ombuds was allocated a separate budget for the office to oversee, rendering the Office of the Ombuds in compliance with the International Ombuds Association's ethical principle of independence. This budget is intended to be used for training and materials, conferences, and other office needs.

To date, resources have not been formally allocated to provide for the expansion of staff for the Office of the Ombuds. However, the Office of the Ombuds is hopeful that in FY18 resources will be available to start with the office expansion, allowing for the hiring an associate ombuds who would be focused on helping Montgomery College students navigate conflict.

New Recommendations for Positive Change

1. Commit to providing employees protected access to the Office of the Ombuds services, without the fear of retaliation

New Recommendation One: *Commit to providing the Montgomery College community with protected access to the Office of the Ombuds by directing the Administration to communicate widely to all levels of employees that the Office of the Ombuds was established intentionally by the President and Board of Trustees to help employees mitigate and manage workplace conflict, and is, in fact, a viable, informal, and confidential means of helping all employees address workplace issues. Communicate to leaders that employees should not be dissuaded from using the Office of the Ombuds or cooperating with the Ombuds, and reiterate that learning that an employee visited or cooperated with the Office of the Ombuds cannot result in retaliation without consequence.*

The Office of the Ombuds continues to demonstrate its value as a resource for Montgomery College employees. Unfortunately, however, a sizable number of visitors in FY17 talked about their fear of retaliation in the event that their supervisor discovered that they had visited the Office of the Ombuds. In addition, a number of visitors reported receiving the message either indirectly or directly from their supervisor or others that they should not visit with the ombuds or otherwise go outside the unit to ask for help.

In addition to having administrators communicate clearly to all levels of the organization that the Office of the Ombuds is meant to be used and is intended to help every employee who is facing workplace issues and wants some support, the College could add specific language to the College Ombuds policy and procedure, 39001, to protect employees expressly from retaliation. Suggested language is as follows: “Threatening retaliation as well as attempting or succeeding in actual retaliation against a person who contacted or cooperated with the ombuds shall not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action.”

2. Integrate the core values of civility and respectful communication into the standards for employee performance for all employees

New Recommendation Two: *Commit to integrating the core values of civility and respectful communication into the standards for employee performance for all employees by explicitly incorporating these values into the language of existing competencies that are already a part of the annual performance evaluation or by creating a new competency if pre-existing competencies are not applicable to these values.*

Much of the FY17 case data focused on the perception of poor, unprofessional, or uncivil behavior in the context of evaluative relationships, peer relationships, leadership/management, and workplace culture. While the creation and implementation of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct are important steps in addressing these issues, integrating these values into the standards for employee performance is a second means of underscoring the importance of them. In addition, by explicitly making civility and respectful communication a critical part of every employee's evaluation, the expectation is reinforced that each and every employee is responsible for demonstrating these values himself/herself consistently and over time.

Where staff, faculty, and administrators each have different performance evaluation forms, it is important to determine where on each form these values of civility and respectful communication can be expressly addressed, underscored, and evaluated.

3. Provide greater transparency and clear guidelines regarding internal promotion opportunities

New Recommendation Three: *Commit to providing employees with greater transparency and clear guidelines regarding internal promotion opportunities by beginning to map out objective criteria—such as competencies and qualifications—that need to be met to be eligible for promotion to key and/or high volume positions.*

The FY17 case data revealed that employees were concerned about Career Progression and Development, particularly with regard to promotion and the job application/selection process. Multiple employee groups raised Career Progression and Development as a top three concern this year, including Student Affairs, Black/African American and White/Non-Hispanic employees, female employees, and both full-time and part-time faculty. Issues focused mostly on the perception of a lack of fairness in the job selection processes, including promotion, as well as a perception of a lack of information regarding what is required to be promoted and what the opportunities are for promotion.

Providing employees with greater transparency and clear guidelines regarding internal promotion opportunities will be helpful in a number of ways. First, it will allow for common and deeper understanding about what exactly is required for promotion in specific roles; this alone will infuse the promotion and job selection process with a greater sense of fairness and provide specific information upon which employees can act. Second, clear guidelines will be vital in helping employees and their supervisors together discuss tangible next steps employees should take to build skills and experience to meet the required qualifications and gain the necessary competencies. Third, and more generally, with transparency, clear communication, and active engagement comes greater trust in processes, people, and the organization as a whole. Continuing to build trust is especially important where this year, visitors focused largely

on trust/integrity and communication issues with their supervisors, incivility in the College culture, and a lack of communication and transparency from Leadership.

4. Ensure greater and more consistent support for employee career growth

New Recommendation Four: *Commit to ensuring greater and more consistent support for employee career growth through a number of means, including by expecting a supervisor to discuss career planning with his/her supervisee at the annual performance evaluation meeting, encouraging employees to take charge of their own career planning by giving them some useful tools to do so (including New Recommendation Three above, which would begin to provide a roadmap concerning how to become qualified for high volume and key positions), and by allocating resources in HRSTM to help provide career coaching to interested employees.*

As mentioned above, a number of employees raised issues concerning Career Progression and Development. Some of the professional development issues that were raised focused on a perceived lack of support or engagement from supervisors or others at the College regarding employee career development, coaching, and mentoring, leaving many employees to feel “stuck” in their current roles and alone in their attempts to move forward.

To address these perceptions and to further support employees, Montgomery College can first expect all supervisors to discuss a tailored plan for progression or advancement with each supervisee, at least once a year at the annual performance review. The annual evaluation meeting is already the specified juncture at which supervisors and supervisees discuss goals for the following year, and thus, the opportunity to also discuss longer term plans is ripe and available. In addition, engaging in this type of communication may help grow trust between supervisors and supervisees, a critical element in strengthening evaluative relationships. This effort to communicate and build trust is especially important where the majority of FY17 visitors raised issues around communication and trust/integrity within their evaluative relationships.

Second, by encouraging employees to take charge of their career growth with transparent and easily accessible tools (e.g., a road map of criteria and qualifications needed to be promoted to a specific job), and by providing additional opportunities for career coaching, employees will likely feel more supported, less stuck, and, more generally, optimistic about working at Montgomery College.

Conclusion

Although the data in this report only represents those issues experienced by 4% of the employee population at Montgomery College, it can serve as a valuable tool in highlighting some of the causes of and contributing factors to workplace conflict at the College. The Office of the Ombuds looks forward to discussing the details herein, including visitor data, issue data, and the recommendations for positive change. In addition, the Office of the Ombuds is eager to discuss additional ways to improve the Montgomery College employee experience.

Appendix A. Accomplishments and Activities

Since December 2013, the Office of the Ombuds has worked hard to inform the community about its conflict management support services as well as to provide direct guidance and support for individual employees or groups seeking help with conflict management and resolution. The Office of the Ombuds provided support to the community in a variety of ways, including by participating in one-on-one meetings, facilitated meetings with two or more employees, trainings, and group meetings. Below please find a summary of outreach and other ombuds activities from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017.

Outreach

In FY17, the new ombuds conducted substantial outreach to inform College employees about the services provided by the Office of the Ombuds, as well as to introduce herself, especially where the most recent ombuds began working at the College in July 2017. More particularly, the new ombuds accomplished the following:

- ❖ Presented to over 27 Campus groups from all different constituencies, including various councils, part-time faculty orientations, staff and faculty division or departmental meetings, administrator meetings, and unions.
- ❖ Participated in over 31 introductory meetings with administrators.
- ❖ Started a bi-monthly Ombuds Post on InsideMC.
- ❖ Reworked the ombuds website to make it more user-friendly and aesthetically pleasing.
- ❖ Created a new wallet size tri-fold card in Spanish and English about the ombuds services to distribute throughout the College.

Trainings

In FY17, the new ombuds served as a trainer as well as received training. More particularly, the ombuds:

- ❖ Presented a half-day CPOD class on Options for Handling Conflict at the College.
- ❖ Participated as a panelist for an Association of Conflict Resolution discussion on ethical considerations and alternative dispute resolution.

- ❖ Taught a paralegal class for WD&CE students on the ombuds profession.
- ❖ Attended the International Ombuds Association (IOA) Foundations Class and Annual Conference, and became a member of IOA.
- ❖ Attended the Association of Conflict Resolution (ACR) Annual Conference and became a member of ACR.
- ❖ Completed the Thomas-Kilmann three-course module on conflict management techniques and received a Certificate of Mastery.
- ❖ Completed the required professional development courses for supervisors and employees.

Other Activities

Moreover, in this past fiscal year, the new ombuds has been active in collaborating with employees inside and outside the Montgomery College community. More specifically, the ombuds has:

- ❖ Participated in an advisory capacity on matters related to Title IX, professional development, policies and procedures, 360 evaluations, and the employee Code of Ethics.
- ❖ Co-founded the Maryland Ombuds Network to provide ongoing professional support for ombuds who primarily work in solo practices in a variety of settings, including other academic institutions. Members of MON meet monthly and share support, referrals, and resources between and among members on an ongoing basis.

Satisfaction with the Ombuds Services

The information below was compiled from the 36 completed evaluations that were returned to the Office of the Ombuds in Fiscal Year 2017. There was a 29 percent rate of return in FY16, a decrease from 36%, the rate of return in FY16.¹³

Please note that five possible responses were provided for survey questions: “strongly disagree,” “disagree,” “neither,” “agree,” and “strongly agree.” The feedback was as follows:

97 percent of visitors responding answered that they “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with the following statements:

- ❖ “The Office of the Ombuds provides an informal, off-the-record resource for all employees.”
- ❖ “I trust the ombuds to maintain confidentiality.”
- ❖ “The Office of the Ombuds acts independently from other organizational units and management.”
- ❖ “The ombuds responded to my e-mail(s)/phone call(s) in a timely manner.”
- ❖ “The ombuds listened carefully to my concerns.”
- ❖ “The ombuds treated me fairly, without prejudice or bias.”
- ❖ “The ombuds helped me identify and evaluate the options available to address my concerns.”
- ❖ “I would refer others to the Office of the Ombuds for assistance.”
- ❖ “Overall, I was satisfied with the assistance I received from the Office of the Ombuds.”

¹³ To promote a greater return of the evaluations in the coming year, the Office of the Ombuds is using an electronic form via Survey Monkey in lieu of the original paper form. It is the hope that the electronic form will be easier to complete and return than the paper form, which has required checking off boxes and placing the evaluation back in an envelope to submit to interoffice mail.

Meanwhile, 94 percent of visitors responding answered that they “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with the statement: “I found the ombuds to be knowledgeable about relevant institutional policies and procedures.”

In addition, a number of employees expressed appreciation concerning the services they received from the Office of the Ombuds. Below are the comments received from visitors in response to the question, “Is there any other feedback you’d like to share?”:

- ❖ “Fantastic! Her understanding of my situation and concern and plans to address concerns. Very professional.”
- ❖ “Great experience. The ombuds listened carefully to my concerns and helped me identify other strategies to improve my situation.”
- ❖ “I had heard good things and Julie did not disappoint. Very professional, concerned, engaged. I am very glad the College provides an ombuds.”
- ❖ “I have already started trying to implement some of the ideas that were brought up. She helped bring much needed clarity to the situation and I am feeling much more positive. I think she is an excellent resource. I hope she is able to assist with a tangential need for my unit. I would not hesitate to refer others to her office, even if it made it tougher to get an appointment.”
- ❖ “A wonderful resource for employees who need a safe space to share. Just talking it out helped me identify strategies, and the knowledge and expertise of the listener was extremely helpful to proactively solving potential personnel issues. A valuable experience.”
- ❖ “I believe if it was common knowledge it would be more useful. It’s almost like a secret society at least at the Germantown Campus.”
- ❖ “Very good experience!”
- ❖ “The Ombuds responded to my concerns in a positive way.”
- ❖ “Julie is a wonderful asset to MC. Her advice is very appreciated.”

Appendix B. IOA Uniform Reporting Categories



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)

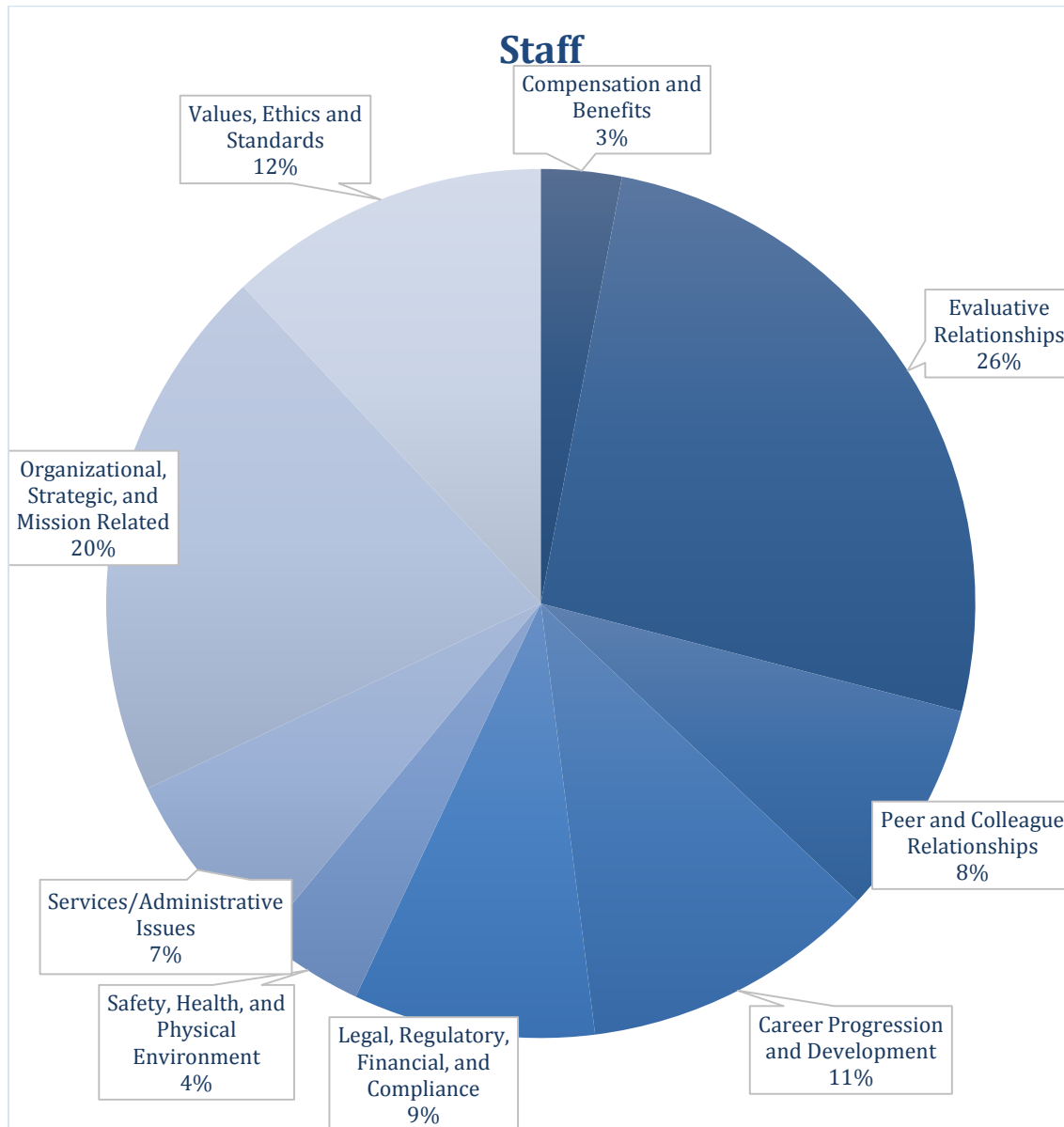
- 8.c **Use of Positional Power/Authority** (lack or abuse of power provided by individual's position)
- 8.d **Communication** (content, style, timing, effects and amount of organizational and leader's communication, quality of communication about strategic issues)
- 8.e **Restructuring and Relocation** (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)

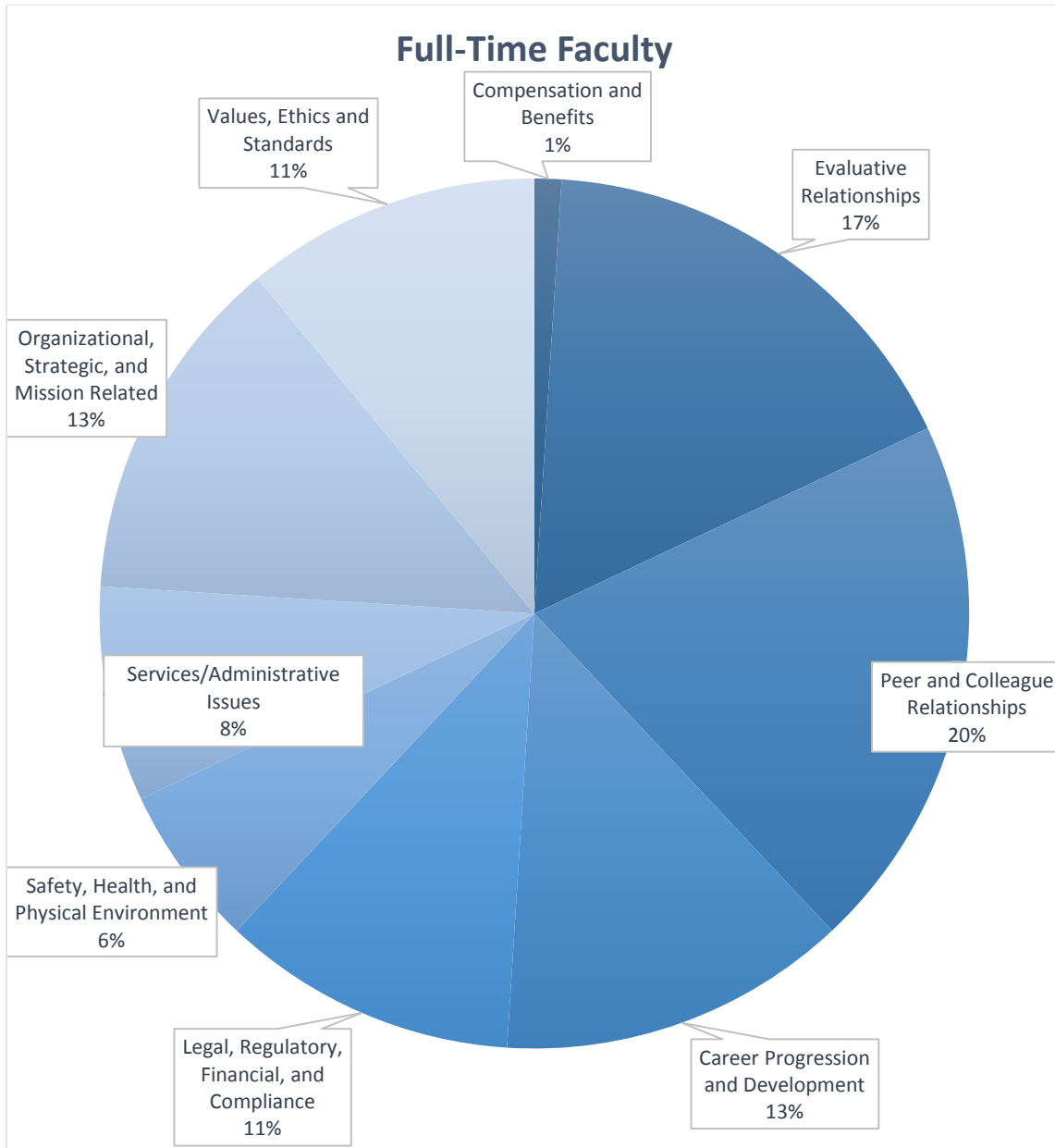
Appendix C. Concerns for Each Employee Group



Top Concerns for Staff in FY17:

- 1) Evaluative Relationships (26%),
- 2) Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related matters (20%), and
- 3) Values, Ethics, and Standards (12%).

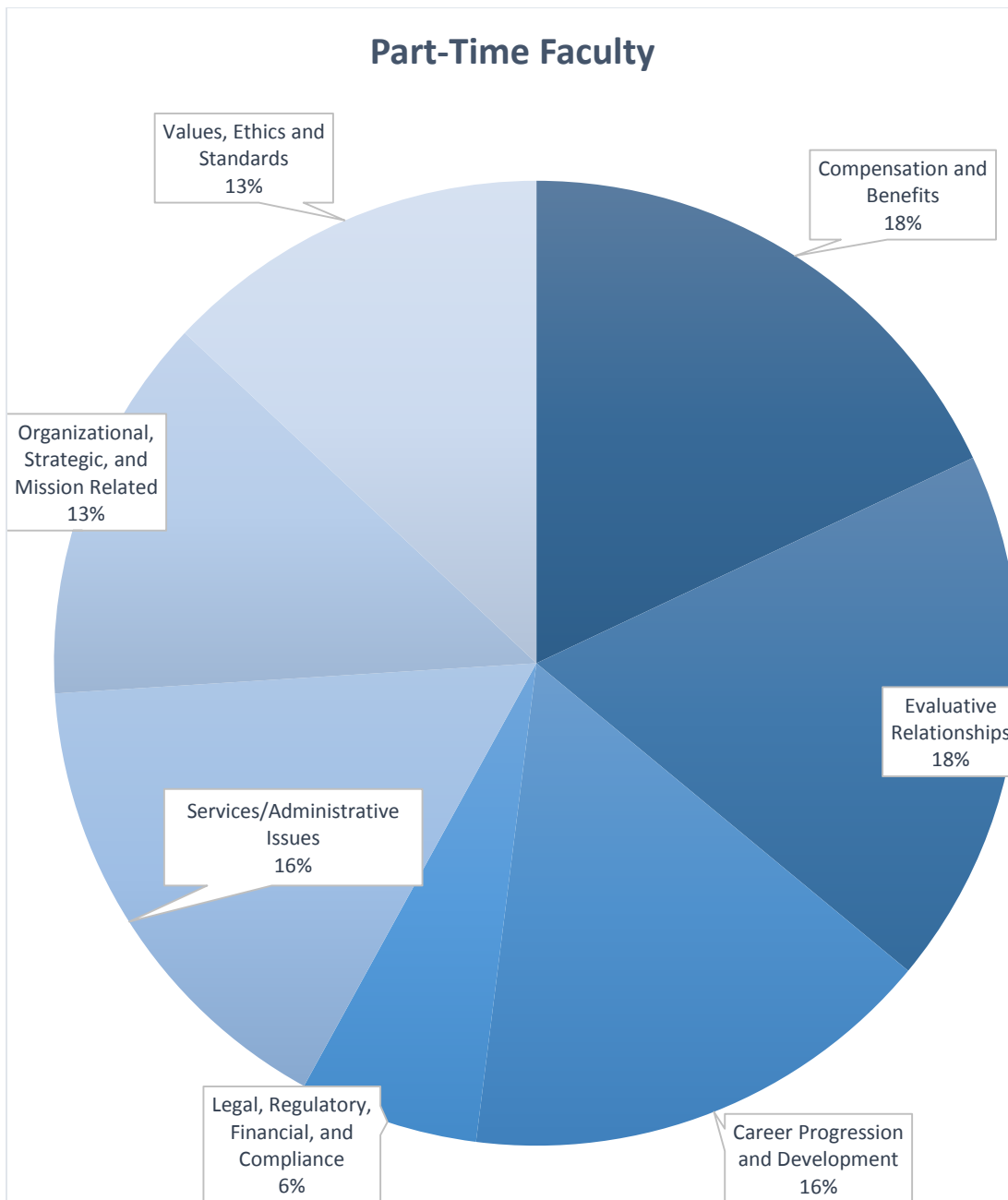
The top two concerns in FY17 are similar to those top two concerns for this same group last year. However, the third most prevalent concern for staff employees last year was Services/Administrative matters.



Top Concerns for Full-Time Faculty in FY17:

- 1) Peer and Colleague Relationships (20%),
- 2) Evaluative Relationships (17%), and
- 3) Organizational, Strategic and Mission Related matters (13%), and Career Progression and Development (13%).

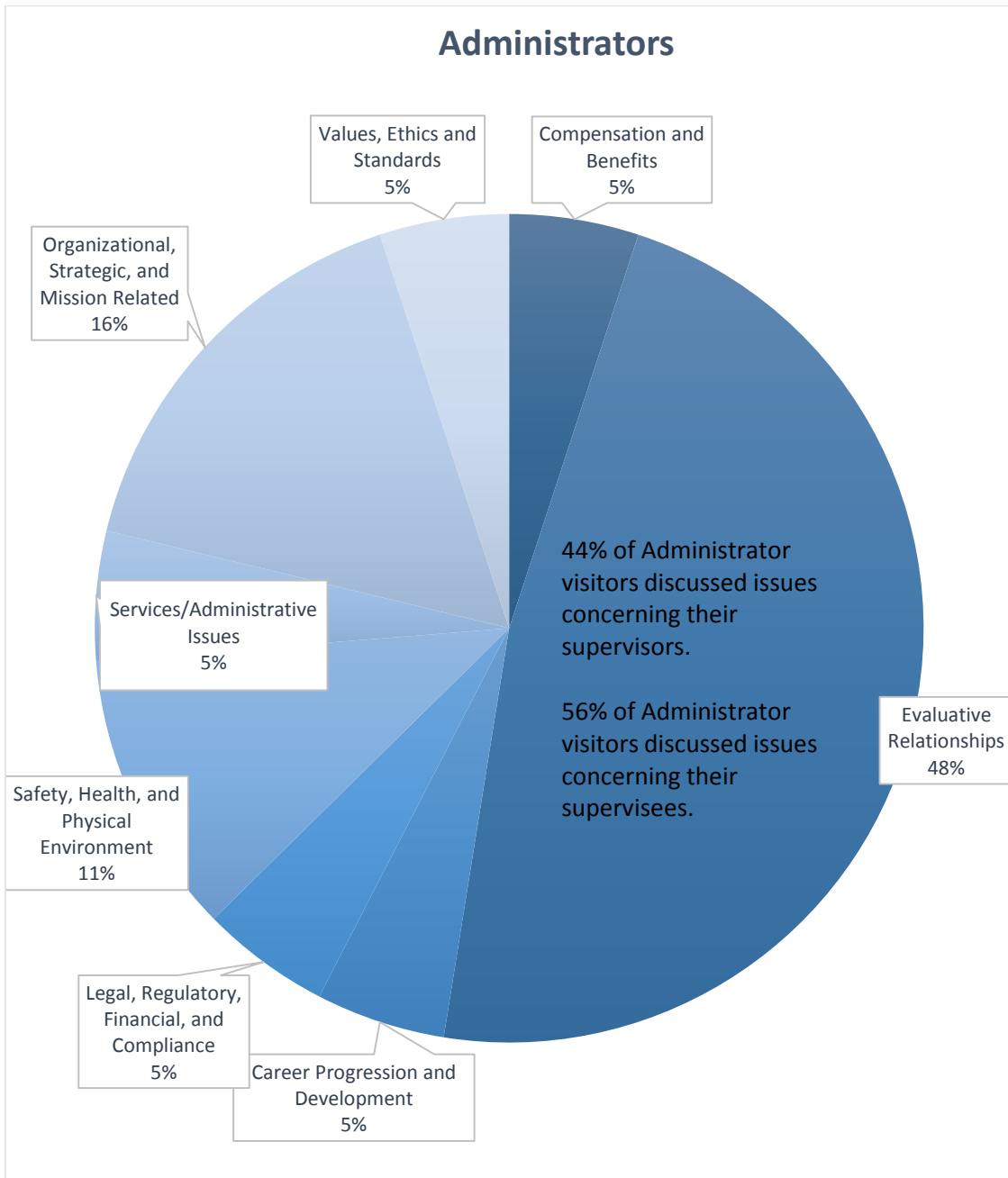
While Peer and Colleague Relationships, Evaluative Relationships, and Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related matters were also top concerns for full-time faculty last year, Career Progression was not a top concern in FY16. Instead, Services/Administrative Issues was a top concern.



Top Concerns for Part-Time Faculty in FY17:

- 1) Evaluative Relationships (18%), and Compensation and Benefits (18%), and
- 2) Career Progression and Development (16%), and Services and Administrative Issues (16%).

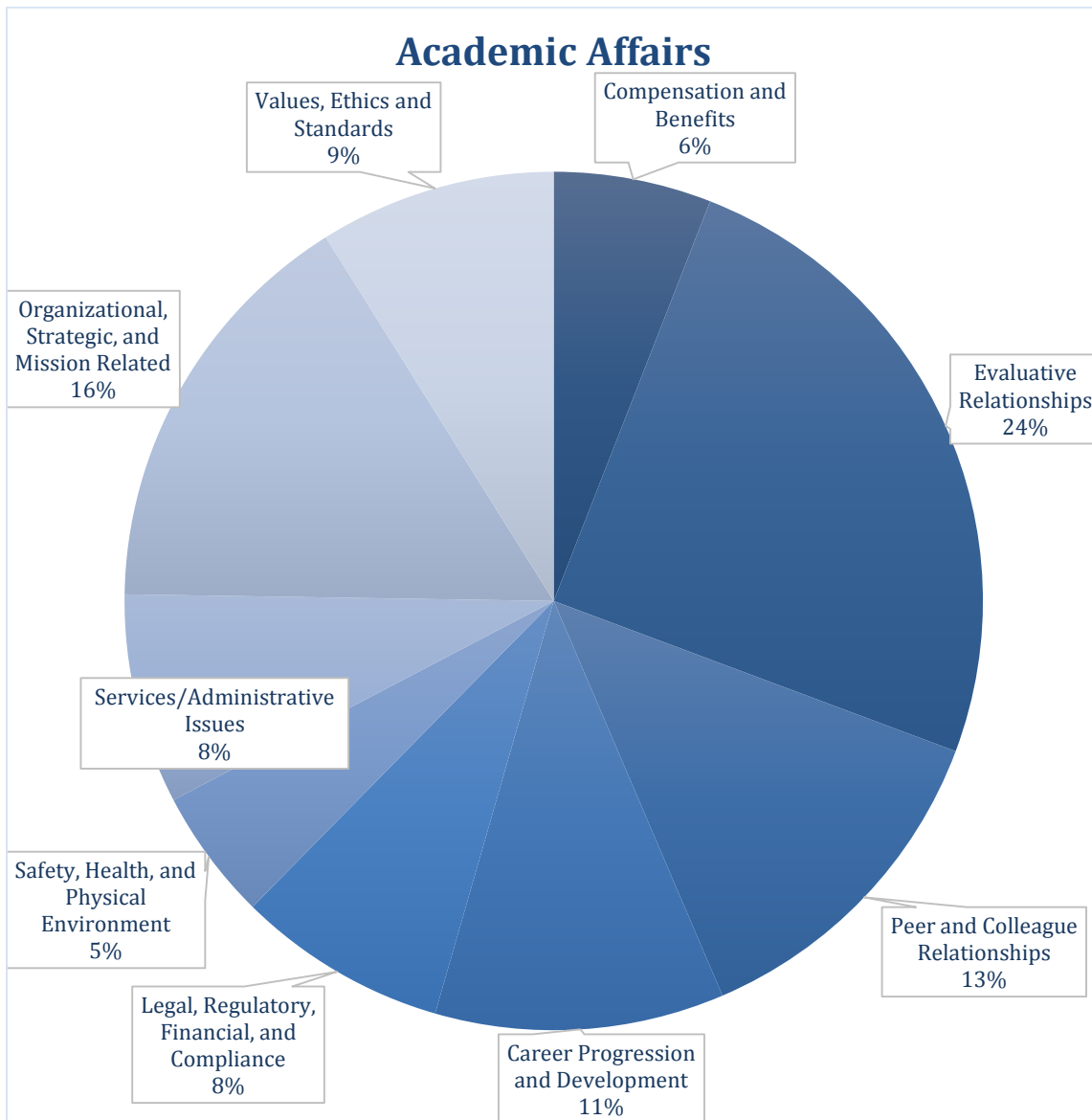
In FY16, part-time faculty had the same top concerns as they did in FY17.



Top Concerns for Administrators in FY17:

- 1) Evaluative Relationships (48%),
- 2) Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related matters (16%), and
- 3) Safety, Health, and Physical Environment (11%).

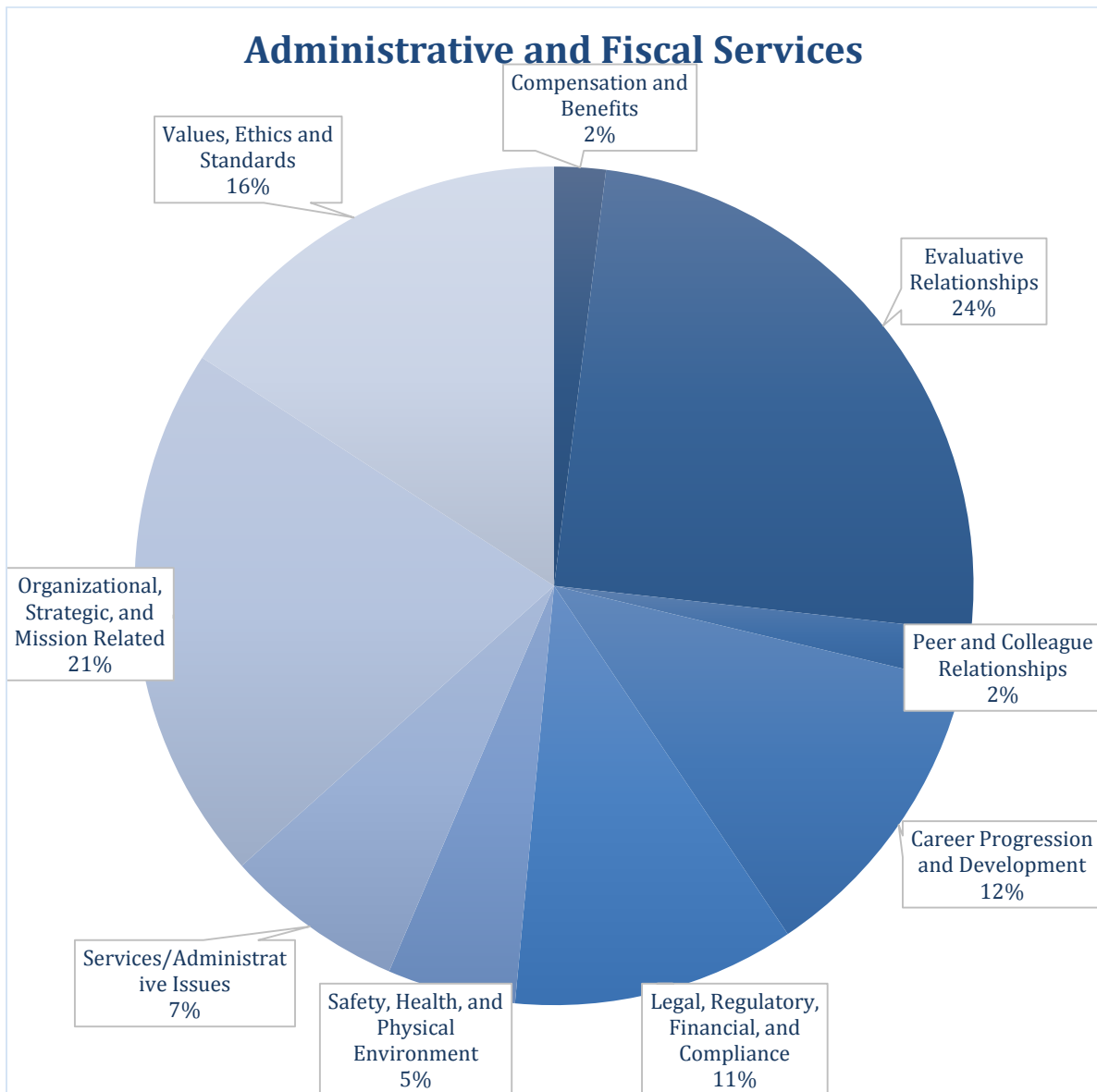
Evaluative Relationships and Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related matters were also top concerns for administrators in FY16. However, last year, Peer Relationships was the third most prevalent concern.



Top Concerns for the Academic Affairs division in FY17:

- 1) Evaluative Relationships (24%),
- 2) Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related matters (16%), and
- 3) Peer and Colleague Relationships (11%).

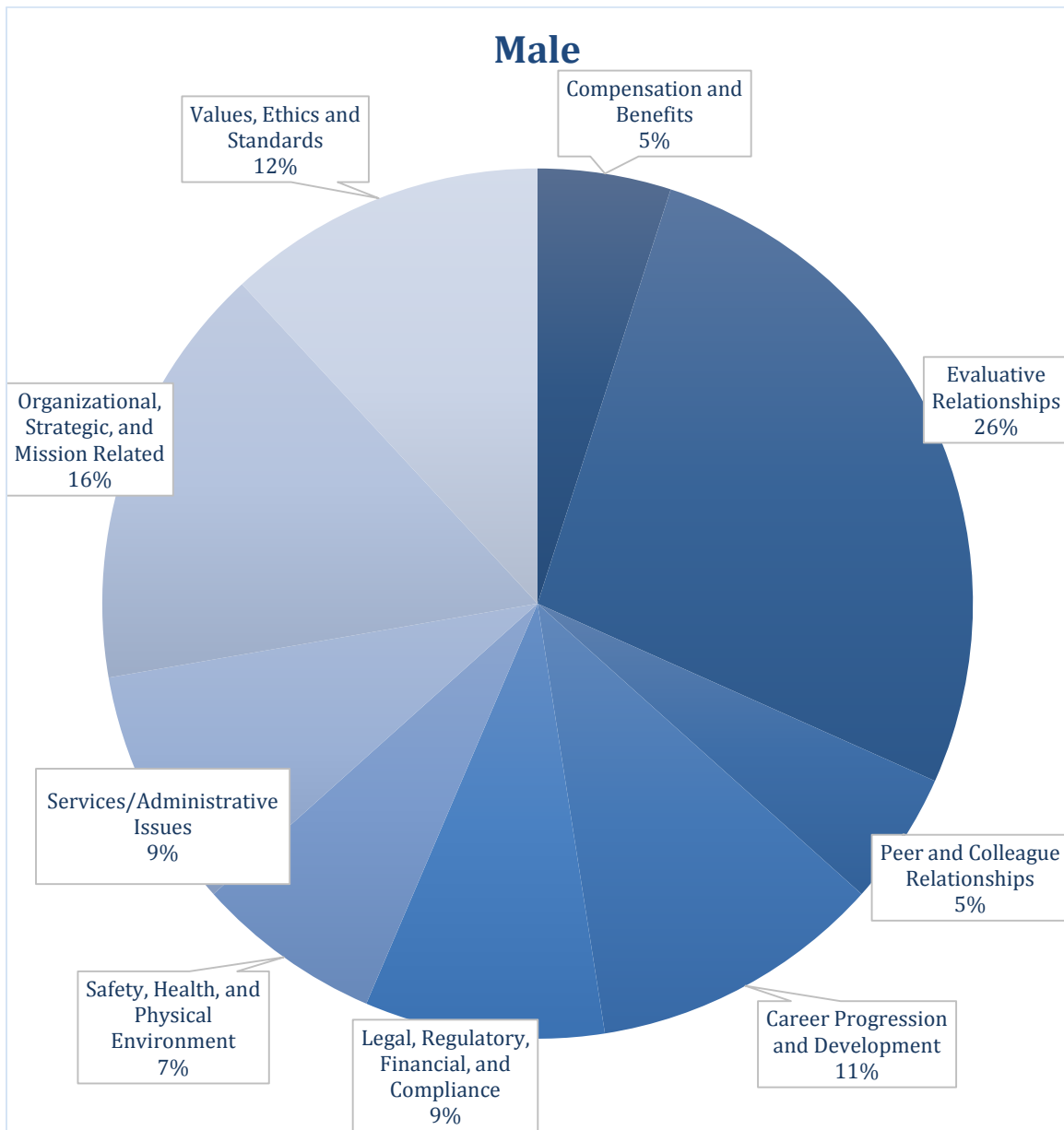
In FY16, Evaluative Relationships and Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related matters were also two of the top three concerns for this group. Peer and Colleague Relationships was not a top concern last year. Instead, Administrative/Services Issues was a top concern.



Top Concerns for the Administrative and Fiscal Services division in FY17:

- 1) Evaluative Relationships (24%),
- 2) Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related matters (21%), and
- 3) Values, Ethics, and Standards (16%).

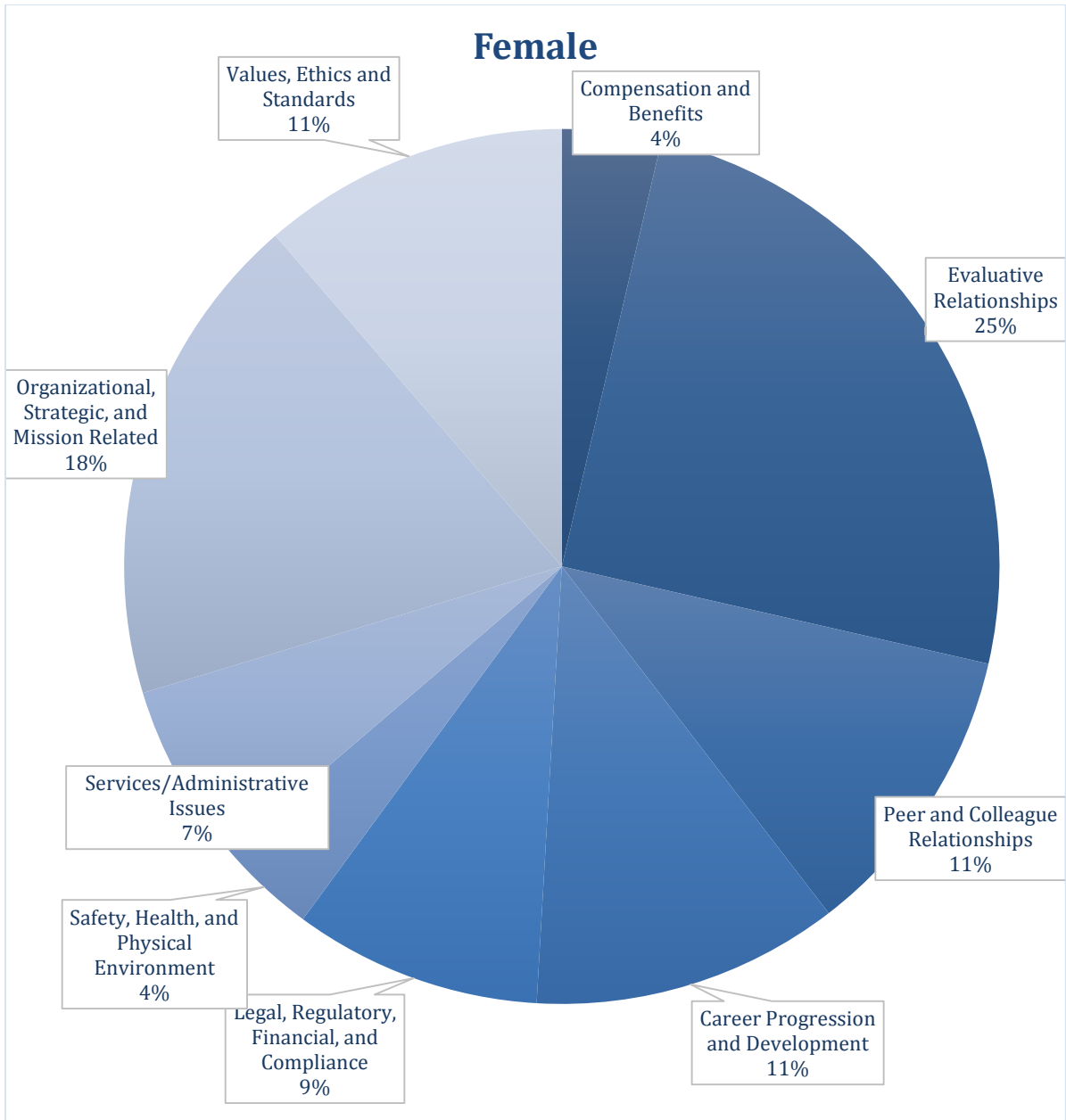
In FY16, Evaluative Relationships and Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related matters were two of the top three concerns for this group. However, last year, Services/Administrative Issues was a top concern, where issues involving Values, Ethics, and Standards were just 1% of the issues raised by this group.



Top Concerns for Male Employees in FY17:

- 1) Evaluative Relationships (26%),
- 2) Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related matters (16%), and
- 3) Values, Ethics, and Standards (12%).

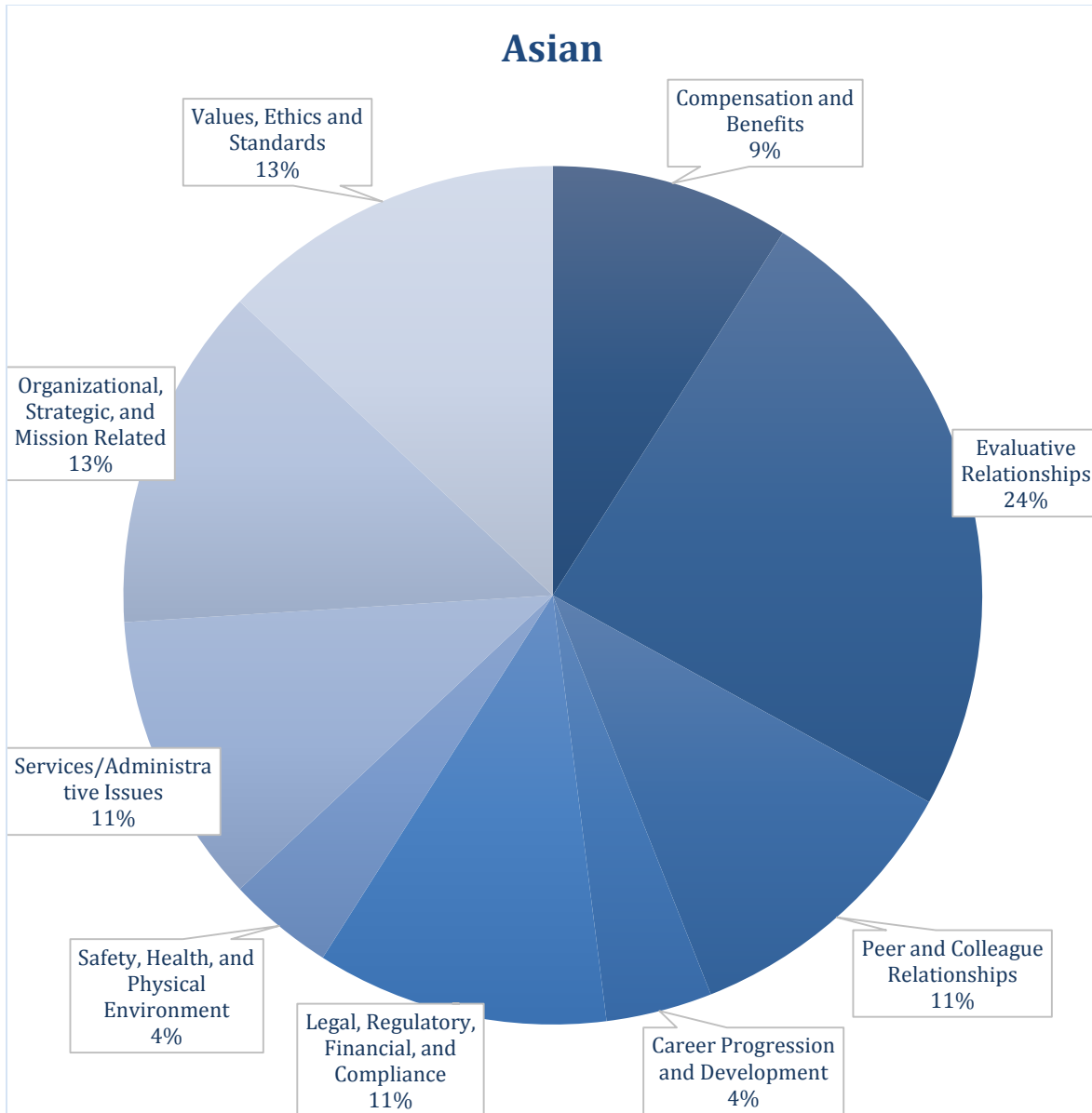
The top two concerns in FY17 are similar to those top two concerns for this same group last year. However, the third most prevalent concern for male employees last year was Services/Administrative Issues.



Top Concerns for Females in FY17:

- 1) Evaluative Relationships (25%),
- 2) Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related matters (18%), and
- 3) Values, Ethics, and Standards (11%), Peer and Colleague Relationships (11%), and Career Progression and Development (11%).

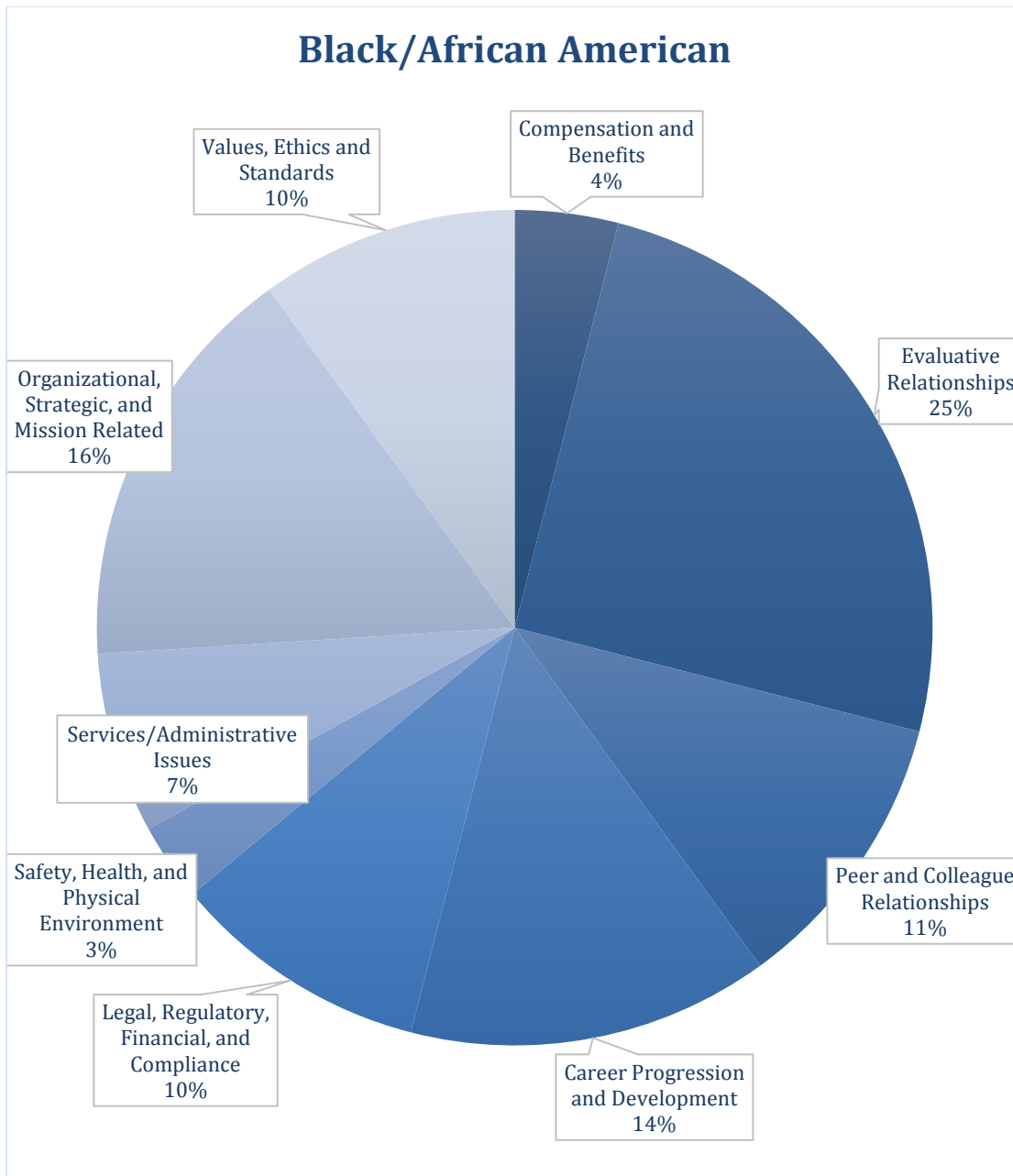
Like this year, in FY16, two of the top three concerns for female employees involved Evaluative Relationships and Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related matters. However, the third most prevalent concern last year was Services/Administrative issues, a category that did not rise to a top three concern for female visitors this year.



Top Concerns for Asian Employees in FY17:

- 1) Evaluative Relationships (24%),
- 2) Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related matters (13%), and Values, Ethics, and Standards (13%), and
- 3) Services, Administrative Issues (11%), Peer and Colleague Relationships (11%), and Legal, Regulatory, Financial, and Compliance (11%).

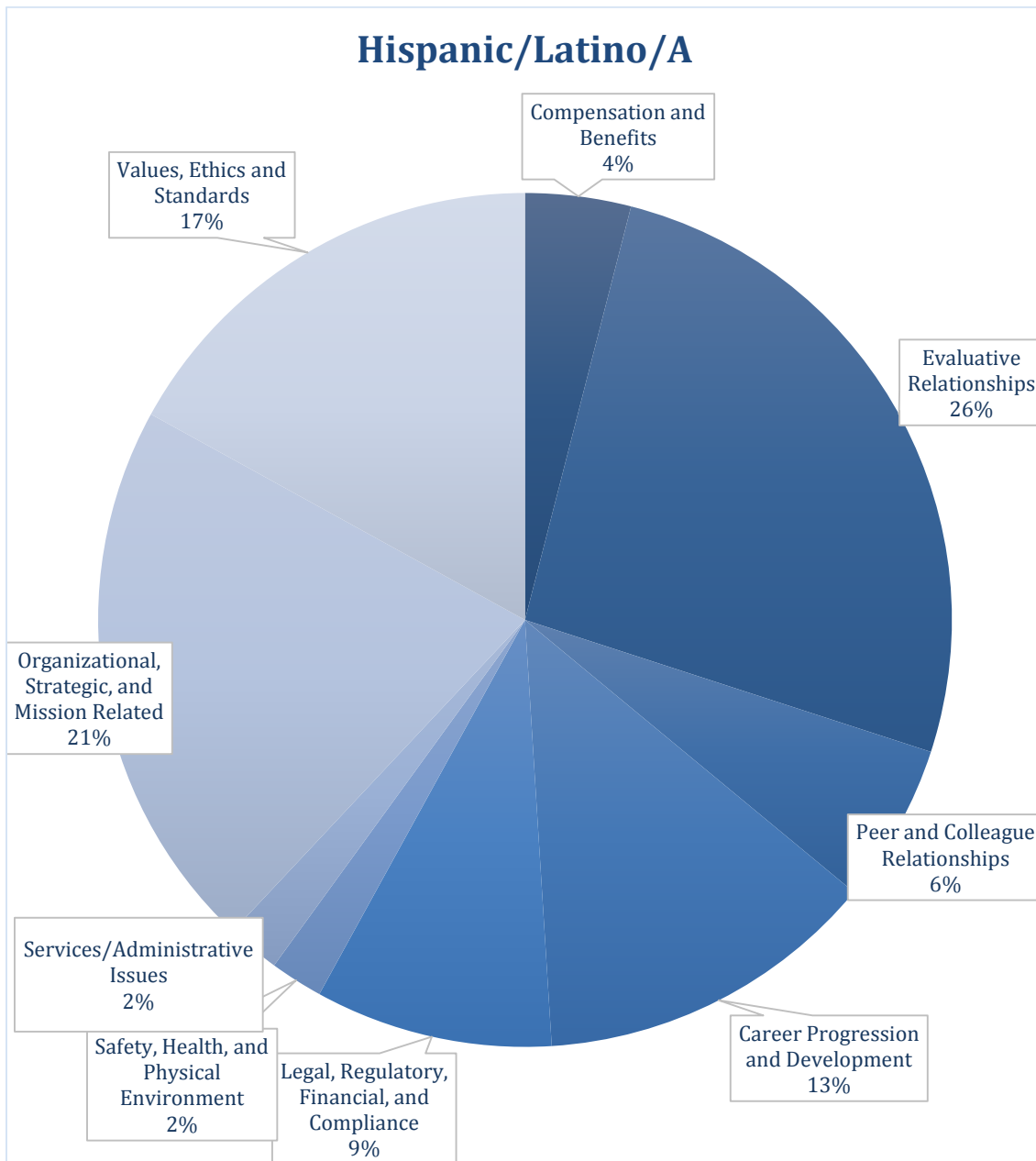
In FY16, Evaluative Relationships and Services/Administrative Issues were also top concerns for this same group. However, there were no concerns registered last year regarding Organizational, Strategic and Mission Related matters.



Top Concerns for Black/African American Employees in FY17:

- 1) Evaluative Relationships (25%),
- 2) Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related matters (16%), and
- 3) Career Progression and Development (14%).

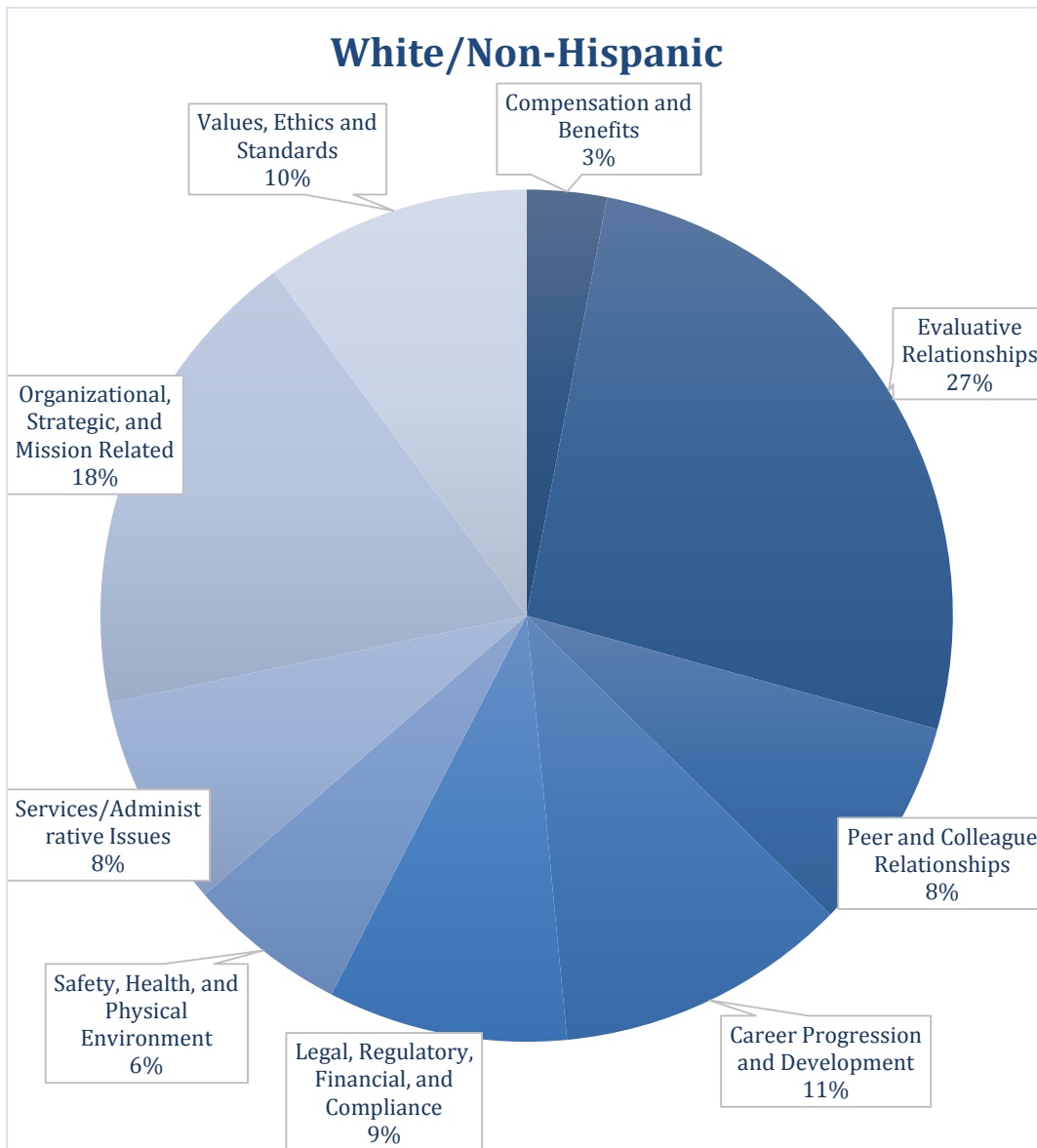
Last year, Evaluative Relationships and Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related matters were also the top two concerns for this group. However, unlike this year, Administrative/Services Issues was the third most prevalent concern for this group in FY16.



Top Concerns for Hispanic/Latino/A Employees in FY17:

- 1) Evaluative Relationships (26%),
- 2) Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related matters (21%), and
- 3) Values, Ethics, and Standards (17%).

In FY16, Evaluative Relationships and Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related matters were both top concerns for this same employee group. However, last year Services/Administrative Issues and Career Progression were also top concerns, while Values, Ethics, and Standards was not a concern for this group.



Top Concerns for White/Non-Hispanic Employees in FY17:

- 1) Evaluative Relationships (27%),
- 2) Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related matters (18%), and
- 3) Career Progression and Development (11%).

In FY16, the top two concerns for this group were the same as this year. However, last year, Services/Administrative Issues was the third main concern for this group.

Arbitrator • Mediator • Ombuds

SME Dispute Resolution, LLC

673 Potomac Station Drive #815

Leesburg, VA 20176

sarahmillerespino@gmail.com

Tel: (301) 828-8566



Can an Ombuds Office help resolve conflict and positively impact labor relations?

Description: Join a panel of higher education professionals, including administrators, Union officers, and conflict resolvers, to explore how the creation and utilization of a College Ombuds Office may assist parties in enhance conflict resolution for faculty, staff, and administrators throughout the institution. The discussion will include providing participants with an overview of the role and responsibilities of an organizational ombudsman as well as the International Ombudsman Association (IOA) Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. Participants will learn about factors considered by administration, Union, and governance stakeholders in the establishment of an Office of the Ombuds at Montgomery College, a multi-campus community college in Montgomery County, Maryland. Using the Montgomery College experience as a springboard for discussion of what may be possible at other colleges and universities, panelists will discuss best practices in establishing an ombuds office which serves employees, including the creation of an Ombuds Charter, the potential benefits to labor relations, and lessons learned. There will be multiple opportunities for participants to join the discussion.

Panel: Dr. Jason Rivera; Ms. Jacia Smith; Ms. Julie Weber; Mr. Harry Zarin

Panel Moderator: Sarah Miller Espinosa

Materials

International Ombudsman Association Code of Ethics

International Ombudsman Association Standards of Practice

International Ombudsman Association Uniform Reporting Categories

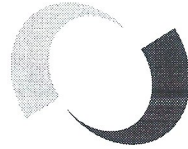
Montgomery College Policy & Procedure 39001, College Ombuds

Montgomery College Office of the Ombuds Fourth Annual Report, 2017

Montgomery College Office of the President Adoption of Ombuds Recommendations 2016

Montgomery College Office of the President Adoption of Ombuds Recommendations 2015

Montgomery College Office of the President Adoption of Ombuds Recommendations 2014



INTERNATIONAL
OMBUDSMAN
ASSOCIATION

IOA CODE OF ETHICS

PREAMBLE

The IOA is dedicated to excellence in the practice of Ombudsman work. The IOA Code of Ethics provides a common set of professional ethical principles to which members adhere in their organizational Ombudsman practice.

Based on the traditions and values of Ombudsman practice, the Code of Ethics reflects a commitment to promote ethical conduct in the performance of the Ombudsman role and to maintain the integrity of the Ombudsman profession.

The Ombudsman shall be truthful and act with integrity, shall foster respect for all members of the organization he or she serves, and shall promote procedural fairness in the content and administration of those organizations' practices, processes, and policies.

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

INDEPENDENCE

The Ombudsman is independent in structure, function, and appearance to the highest degree possible within the organization.

NEUTRALITY AND IMPARTIALITY

The Ombudsman, as a designated neutral, remains unaligned and impartial. The Ombudsman does not engage in any situation which could create a conflict of interest.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Ombudsman holds all communications with those seeking assistance in strict confidence, and does not disclose confidential communications unless given permission to do so. The only exception to this privilege of confidentiality is where there appears to be imminent risk of serious harm.

INFORMALITY

The Ombudsman, as an informal resource, does not participate in any formal adjudicative or administrative procedure related to concerns brought to his/her attention.

www.ombudsassociation.org



INTERNATIONAL
OMBUDSMAN
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IOA STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

PREAMBLE

The IOA Standards of Practice are based upon and derived from the ethical principles stated in the IOA Code of Ethics.

Each Ombudsman office should have an organizational Charter or Terms of Reference, approved by senior management, articulating the principles of the Ombudsman function in that organization and their consistency with the IOA Standards of Practice.

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

INDEPENDENCE

- 1.1 The Ombudsman Office and the Ombudsman are independent from other organizational entities.
- 1.2 The Ombudsman holds no other position within the organization which might compromise independence.
- 1.3 The Ombudsman exercises sole discretion over whether or how to act regarding an individual's concern, a trend or concerns of multiple individuals over time. The Ombudsman may also initiate action on a concern identified through the Ombudsman's direct observation.
- 1.4 The Ombudsman has access to all information and all individuals in the organization, as permitted by law.
- 1.5 The Ombudsman has authority to select Ombudsman Office staff and manage Ombudsman Office budget and operations.

NEUTRALITY AND IMPARTIALITY

- 2.1 The Ombudsman is neutral, impartial, and unaligned.
- 2.2 The Ombudsman strives for impartiality, fairness and objectivity in the treatment of people and the consideration of issues. The Ombudsman advocates for fair and equitably administered processes and does not advocate on behalf of any individual within the organization.
- 2.3 The Ombudsman is a designated neutral reporting to the highest possible level of the organization and operating independent of ordinary line and staff structures. The Ombudsman should not report to nor be structurally affiliated with any compliance function of the organization.
- 2.4 The Ombudsman serves in no additional role within the organization which would compromise the Ombudsman's neutrality. The Ombudsman should not be aligned with any formal or informal associations within the organization in a way that might create actual or perceived conflicts of interest for the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman should have no personal interest or stake in, and incur no gain or loss from, the outcome of an issue.
- 2.5 The Ombudsman has a responsibility to consider the legitimate concerns and interests of all individuals affected by the matter under consideration.
- 2.6 The Ombudsman helps develop a range of responsible options to resolve problems and facilitate discussion to identify the best options.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- 3.1 The Ombudsman holds all communications with those seeking assistance in strict confidence and takes all reasonable steps to safeguard confidentiality, including the following: The Ombudsman does not reveal, and must not be required to reveal, the identity of any individual contacting the Ombudsman Office, nor does the Ombudsman reveal information provided in confidence that could lead to the identification of any individual contacting the Ombudsman Office, without that individual's express permission, given in the course of informal discussions with the Ombudsman; the Ombudsman takes specific action related to an individual's issue only with the individual's express permission and only to the extent permitted, and even then at the sole discretion of the Ombudsman, unless such action can be taken in a way that safeguards the identity of the individual contacting the Ombudsman Office. The only exception to this privilege of confidentiality is where there appears to be imminent risk of serious harm, and where there is no other reasonable option. Whether this risk exists is a determination to be made by the Ombudsman.
- 3.2 Communications between the Ombudsman and others (made while the Ombudsman is serving in that capacity) are considered privileged. The privilege belongs to the Ombudsman and the Ombudsman Office, rather than to any party to an issue. Others cannot waive this privilege.
- 3.3 The Ombudsman does not testify in any formal process inside the organization and resists testifying in any formal process outside of the organization regarding a visitor's contact with the Ombudsman or confidential information communicated to the Ombudsman, even if given permission or requested to do so. The Ombudsman may, however, provide general, non-confidential information about the Ombudsman Office or the Ombudsman profession.
- 3.4 If the Ombudsman pursues an issue systemically (e.g., provides feedback on trends, issues, policies and practices) the Ombudsman does so in a way that safeguards the identity of individuals.
- 3.5 The Ombudsman keeps no records containing identifying information on behalf of the organization.
- 3.6 The Ombudsman maintains information (e.g., notes, phone messages, appointment calendars) in a secure location and manner, protected from inspection by others (including management), and has a consistent and standard practice for the destruction of such information.
- 3.7 The Ombudsman prepares any data and/or reports in a manner that protects confidentiality.
- 3.8 Communications made to the ombudsman are not notice to the organization. The ombudsman neither acts as agent for, nor accepts notice on behalf of, the organization and shall not serve in a position or role that is designated by the organization as a place to receive notice on behalf of the organization. However, the ombudsman may refer individuals to the appropriate place where formal notice can be made.

INFORMALITY AND OTHER STANDARDS

- 4.1 The Ombudsman functions on an informal basis by such means as: listening, providing and receiving information, identifying and reframing issues, developing a range of responsible options, and – with permission and at Ombudsman discretion – engaging in informal third-party intervention. When possible, the Ombudsman helps people develop new ways to solve problems themselves.
- 4.2 The Ombudsman as an informal and off-the-record resource pursues resolution of concerns and looks into procedural irregularities and/or broader systemic problems when appropriate.
- 4.3 The Ombudsman does not make binding decisions, mandate policies, or formally adjudicate issues for the organization.
- 4.4 The Ombudsman supplements, but does not replace, any formal channels. Use of the Ombudsman Office is voluntary, and is not a required step in any grievance process or organizational policy.
- 4.5 The Ombudsman does not participate in any formal investigative or adjudicative procedures. Formal investigations should be conducted by others. When a formal investigation is requested, the Ombudsman refers individuals to the appropriate offices or individual.
- 4.6 The Ombudsman identifies trends, issues and concerns about policies and procedures, including potential future issues and concerns, without breaching confidentiality or anonymity, and provides recommendations for responsibly addressing them.
- 4.7 The Ombudsman acts in accordance with the IOA Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, keeps professionally current by pursuing continuing education, and provides opportunities for staff to pursue professional training.
- 4.8 The Ombudsman endeavors to be worthy of the trust placed in the Ombudsman Office.



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)
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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)
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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)
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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)
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POLICY Board of Trustees - Montgomery College

39001

Chapter: Personnel

Modification No. 001

Subject: **College Ombuds**

- I. Montgomery College is committed to providing ombuds services to the College community.
- II. The purpose of the Office of the Ombuds is to assist the College community in managing conflict constructively and to support positive change. Constructively managing conflict stimulates teamwork, promotes, excellence, and enhances engagement.
- III. Ombuds services will be provided in accordance with the International Ombudsman Association's Code of Ethics.
- IV. The president is authorized to develop and post procedures to implement this policy

Board Approval: February 22, 2015

PROCEDURE - Montgomery College

39001CP

Chapter: Personnel

Modification No. 001

Subject: **College Ombuds**

I. Ombuds Purpose

The goal of the ombuds is to assist the College community in managing conflict constructively and to support positive change. Constructively managing conflict, stimulates teamwork, promotes excellence, and enhances engagement.

II. Definitions

- A. "Ombuds" refers to any individual appointed by the President to provide ombuds services or support such provision of services within the Office of the Ombuds.
- B. "Visitor" refers to any employee, student, or member of the community who utilizes the services of the ombuds.

III. Ombuds Ethical Standards

- A. The ombuds will be truthful, act with integrity, foster respect for all members of the community served, and promote procedural fairness within the College.
- B. The ombuds will operate in accordance with the International Ombudsman Association's Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, acting as a confidential, impartial, informal, and independent resource for members of the College community.
- C. The ombuds functions independently and is not affiliated with any compliance function of the College. Therefore, the ombuds does not serve as an agent of notice for the College.
- D. The ombuds is independent and communication with the ombuds is confidential. This includes allegations that may be perceived to be violations of laws, regulations, or policies, including sexual misconduct. The ombuds is designated a confidential resource per 31000-Sexual Misconduct, and will normally keep private the individual's identity and any other information concerning the alleged incident of sexual misconduct and is not required to notify the Title IX Coordinator.
- E. The ombuds may unilaterally violate confidentiality if the ombuds believes there is an imminent risk of serious harm.
- F. The ombuds will avoid involvement in cases where there may be a conflict of interest. A conflict of interest occurs when the ombuds' private interests, real or perceived, supersede or compete with his or her dedication to the impartial and independent nature of the role of the ombuds. When a real or perceived conflict exists, the ombuds should take all steps necessary to disclose and/or to avoid the conflict.

IV. Ombuds Functions

PROCEDURE - Montgomery College

39001CP

The functions of the ombuds include but are not limited to:

- A. Providing a safe and confidential forum to surface individual, group and systemic problems;
- B. Listening and helping to clarify visitor concerns;
- C. Assisting in the identification of underlying issues and concerns;
- D. Providing information and exploring possible options available to visitors;
- E. Where voluntarily agreed by all involved parties, facilitating discussions to resolve issues, if appropriate;
- F. Where voluntarily agreed by all involved parties, conducting mediations, subject to a written mediation agreement;
- G. Providing a voluntary, confidential forum where whistleblowers may raise concerns;
- H. Collecting data on emerging trends and patterns in the College;
- I. Evaluating and analyzing trending information and making recommendations for systemic change;
- J. Providing feedback to the College's senior administration, protecting the anonymity of the ombuds' visitors;
- K. Publishing an annual report that will be made available to the College community.

V. Reporting Structure

The ombuds will operate independently with respect to issue handling and management. The ombuds will report to the Office of the President for administrative and budgetary purposes only.

VI. Authority and Limitations

- A. The ombuds is authorized to discuss options available to visitors, including both informal and formal processes.
- B. The services of the ombuds supplement rather than replace formal resources and processes administered by other College units, including the offices of Human Resources Strategic Talent Management and Compliance.
- C. The ombuds will have access to confidential records and data, including any information collected or generated by another office of the College, for the purpose of facilitating resolution of a particular situation and for analyzing information in order to make recommendations for systemic change.
- D. The ombuds may decline to inquire into a matter or may withdraw from a case if the ombuds believes involvement is inappropriate for any reason, including a matter not brought in good faith or which appears to be a misuse of the ombuds function.
- E. The ombuds may require legal or other professional advice in order to fulfill its required functions. The ombuds will be provided legal counsel independent of the Office of the General Counsel in the event a conflict of interest arises between the ombuds and the College administration.
- F. The ombuds will publicize its non-notice role to the College and clearly articulate that communication to the ombuds does not constitute notice to the College.

PROCEDURE - Montgomery College

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- G. The ombuds will not address any issues arising under a collective bargaining agreement, unless allowed by specific language in the collective bargaining agreement. This means that while the ombuds may discuss options available to a visitor, the ombuds recognizes the union is the appropriate party to assist bargaining unit members in determining the interpretation and/or with appropriate enforcement of the collective bargaining agreement, and will provide information to the visitor to assist the visitor in contacting the appropriate union representative.
- H. The ombuds will not conduct formal investigations of any kind. The ombuds will not participate in formal dispute processes or outside agency complaints or lawsuits, either on behalf of any visitor or on behalf of the College. Because confidentiality and informality are critically important to the ombuds, all communications with the ombuds are made with the understanding that they are confidential, off-the-record exploration of options to resolve dispute, and that the ombuds may not be called to testify as a witness in any formal or legal proceeding and may not be compelled to reveal confidential communications.
- I. The ombuds does not have authority to adjudicate, impose remedies or sanctions, or to enforce or change policies or procedures.

Administrative Approval: March 7, 2016

ATTACHMENT

**PRESIDENT'S ADOPTION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IN FY16 OMBUDS REPORT
December 14, 2016**

RECOMMENDATION 1. Collaboratively develop, adopt, and implement both a Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct for all Montgomery College employees.

Partially Implemented. This recommendation was first made in fall 2014. Over the course of several years, a committee of the Employee Services Council worked on a proposal and presented it to me this fall. It has been reviewed and discussed in the President's Executive Cabinet. A new policy—to serve as a Code of Ethics—and accompanying procedures—to serve as the Standards of Conduct—have been drafted and will be considered through the normal College process for policy and procedure evaluation. I would expect a draft to be circulated to the College community in the spring with the policy to be presented to the Board of Trustees later this fiscal year. It is my expectation that a Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct will be implemented no later than July 1, 2017.

This recommendation is intended to enhance evaluative relationships and confidence in leadership and management by setting ethical and professional expectations for all employees. Training will be provided for all employees in the organization.

RECOMMENDATION 2. Support and enhance managerial competencies and best practices by regularly soliciting feedback from employees and building professional development plans considering the results of 360-degree feedback instruments.

Partially Implemented. This recommendation was first made in FY15, in response to data collected in FY14 and has been partially implemented. The Office of Human Resources and Strategic Talent Management (HRSTM) has investigated several instruments and processes for this effort. The College is currently reviewing vendors to select the most appropriate 360-degree tool to use. A tool is currently being used in the review of administrators and department chairs, but one geared specifically to the needs of managers and supervisors will be selected in early 2017. The instrument will be piloted with a portion of managers and supervisors during the next performance review cycle.

To better enhance the effectiveness of the 360-degree tool and subsequent professional development, as many direct reports as possible—preferably all direct reports—will be included in the process. The 360-degree evaluation results will be shared and discussed between administrators and their administrative supervisors to assist in the determination of professional development to be included in the next fiscal year's goal plans. Additionally, and more importantly, the expansion of a 360-degree evaluation tool to all managers/supervisors will follow, and the survey process will be conducted every other year.

RECOMMENDATION 3. Critically examine the employee experience and take affirmative steps to ensure an inclusive workplace for all employees. Provide a fair and efficient process to address employee concerns about identity-related inequities, including those rising to the level of discrimination.

Recommendation Revised. This recommendation was adopted first in FY14 but then was revised this year in response to data that showed a pattern that requires attention. The number of Hispanic and Latino visitors, according to the Ombuds data, was considerably higher than the mean for other ethnic/racial groups, suggesting that, “further scrutiny is warranted.” With the College’s efforts to attract and retain employees of diverse backgrounds, any trends that suggest obstacles to this must be more closely examined. The Ombuds’ recommendation of a climate assessment, as a first step, is accepted and will be implemented. This will be one of the first tasks I assign to the new chief equity and inclusion officer, who is to be hired sometime in the coming year.

Further implementation steps to ensure fair and equal treatment of all persons involved in the EEO complaint process will be determined.

RECOMMENDATION 4. Critically examine the employee experience and address challenges related to the service provided to employees in the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaint process as well as the employee and labor relations processes. Ensure fair, efficient, and confidential processes to address employee concerns.

Adopted and Underway. I am accepting this new recommendation. Steps are already underway to improve the College’s assessment of EEO complaints. Specifically, Senior Vice President for Administrative and Fiscal Services Janet Wormack has examined the operations of the office and implemented changes. Currently, HRSTM is recruiting for a director of employee and labor relations, who will be expected to streamline processes for employees.

RECOMMENDATION 5. Commit to continue to provide the Montgomery College community with access to the Office of the Ombuds by allocating sufficient resources to maintain the quality of the service, including: identifying new office space; allocating positions and recruiting for an associate ombuds and administrative support person; and providing a modest, independent budget for training, materials, and other needs.

Accepted. I am accepting this new recommendation, though its implementation depends on resource availability. The possibility of funding for additional ombuds staff persons and allocation of a separate budget for training and materials are tied to the availability of funds. Positioning the Office of the Ombuds in a location that preserves confidentiality and safety will be done in consultation with the Office of Safety and Security. The ombuds program began as a pilot in 2013. It has proven itself to be an important service in the College’s repertoire of employee engagement tools. Every effort will be made to institutionalize the office as a permanent part of the College community.

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE
Office of the President

December 10, 2015

MEMORANDUM

To: Montgomery College Colleagues
From: Dr. DeRionne P. Pollard, President
Subject: Adoption of Ombuds Recommendations

The Office of the Ombuds was established in August 2013 to provide confidential assistance to staff, faculty, and administrators in mitigating and resolving workplace issues and concerns in accordance with the International Ombudsman Association's Code of Ethics. In each fiscal year since its inception, the Office of the Ombuds provided service to five percent of College employees—a number that is typical for organizations that have an ombuds. Specifically, over 150 Montgomery College individuals each year have sought assistance from our ombuds to understand options to resolve workplace concerns. Through this service, the ombuds also helped to identify critical issues that might not otherwise have been addressed in as timely and equitable a manner.

The Office of the Ombuds contributes to the organizational health of Montgomery College, and the employees who have sought its assistance are to be commended for positively contributing to the College's organizational health.

What is also clear, however, is that there are a number of workplace interactions that must improve. It is imperative that we treat each other with professionalism, respect, and tact. We must work harder to develop and maintain credible, trusting, and respectful relationships with one another. This organization must not tolerate conduct that is less than collegial and respectful.

The College Ombuds, Sarah Espinosa, made six recommendations in the second annual ombuds report, which was communicated to the College community on October 15, 2015 (see the report [here](#)). Many of the recommendations are already in various stages of implementation. I am adopting the ombuds' 2015 recommendations as explained below. What follows is a re-statement of each recommendation along with my decision regarding it.

Recommendation 1. Collaboratively develop, adopt, and implement both a Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct for all Montgomery College employees.

Adopted. As I affirmed when I originally adopted this recommendation in 2014, I agree that formally setting ethical expectations and standards of conduct is a best practice that will provide clarity and consistency for all employees. The Employee Services Council established an ad hoc group to draft a code. After it is considered through the governance

system and College Council makes its recommendations, I look forward to reviewing and establishing a code of conduct in the coming year.

Recommendation 2. Support and enhance managerial competencies and best practices by regularly soliciting feedback from employees and building professional development plans considering the results of 360-feedback tools.

Adopted. This fall, administrators and department chairs received the results of the “360” feedback that was solicited from their direct reports, peers, and supervisors. Soliciting and reflecting on this valuable feedback in constructing individualized professional development plans is of value to individual administrators and department chairs as well as the organization as a whole. In adopting this recommendation, I charge the Office of Human Resources and Strategic Talent Management (HRSTM) with identifying the appropriate 360 feedback tool and utilizing such tool to collect similar feedback for all managers and supervisors no later than fall 2016. The administrators and department chairs will continue to receive feedback every two years and will again have the opportunity to participate in this process and benefit from the feedback gathered in 2017.

Recommendation 3. Critically examine the employee experience and take affirmative steps to ensure an inclusive workplace for all employees. Provide a fair and efficient process to address employee concerns about identity-related inequities, including those rising to the level of discrimination.

Adopted. I am troubled by the issues raised by the ombuds and committed to ensuring that Montgomery College’s core values of integrity and diversity are realized in our formal processes as well as our workplace culture. To further examine the issues surfaced and to assist in identifying and implementing affirmative steps to ensure an inclusive workplace, I will ask the chief of staff/chief strategy officer to work with an outside expert and the senior leadership team and then present me with recommendations no later than August 1, 2016. I will also task the senior vice president for administrative and fiscal services to take immediate steps to review and address concerns raised regarding the equity and diversity complaint process.

Recommendation 4. Assist and support administrators, staff with supervisory responsibilities, and department chairs by providing and requiring additional training. Further, reward those exhibiting the skills developed in these trainings and hold accountable those who choose not to exhibit those skills.

Adopted. Ensuring those employees with managerial responsibilities are provided with training is a critical responsibility of Montgomery College. The Office of Human Resources and Strategic Talent Management (HRSTM) and its Center for Professional and Organizational Development (CPOD) have many effective training programs currently in place to provide such education. To begin actualizing this recommendation, HRSTM will require all employees with managerial responsibilities, who have not already done so, to complete its Crucial Conversations course and its Civility in the Workplace course no later than May 2017.

Recommendation 5. Consider the creation of a competitive, developmental cohort program or programs to help develop future model managers and administrators.

Adopted. This recommendation, first adopted in October 2014, contributed to the development of the Presidential Innovation Leadership Institute, a nine-month program designed to build senior-level leadership capacity within the organization by enhancing the knowledge, skills, and overall competencies of participants. The first cohort was selected through a competitive application process at the beginning of this academic year.

Recommendation 6. Commit to continue to provide Montgomery College employees with access to the Office of the Ombuds by: transitioning the ombuds from a temporary position, committing resources to recruit an Associate Ombuds, and incorporating the Office of the Ombuds, its roles, responsibilities, and ethical obligations into Montgomery College Policy and Procedure.

Adopted in part. The Office of the Ombuds continues to demonstrate its worth in providing employees with valuable services to mitigate and resolve workplace issues and concerns. The recruitment of a full-time employee ombuds will take place this spring, in anticipation of the successful candidate beginning prior to July 1, 2016. Once a full-time employee ombuds is successfully recruited, the current ombuds, Sarah Espinoza, will continue to work on a part-time basis, and focus on exploring the feasibility and development of an ombuds service for students. Further, I anticipate a draft policy for the Office of the Ombuds will be brought to the Board of Trustees for its consideration this spring.

Thank you for your work towards achieving Montgomery College's mission—to empower our students to change their lives and enrich the lives of our community. Thank you also to College Ombuds Sarah Espinoza for her dedication and service in establishing the Office of the Ombuds as a resource for Montgomery College.

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE
Office of the President

October 13, 2014

MEMORANDUM

To: Montgomery College Colleagues
From: Dr. DeRionne P. Pollard, President
Subject: 2014 Ombuds Recommendations

As you may recall, I established the Office of the Ombuds in August 2013 to provide confidential assistance to staff, faculty, and administrators in mitigating and resolving workplace issues and concerns. The ombuds operates in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice as established by the International Ombudsman Association. Over 150 employees accessed the services of the Office of the Ombuds in Fiscal Year 2014, and the feedback received from employee visitors to the office about its services was overwhelmingly positive. This newly established office is an example of the College's commitment to empowering and enriching the working lives of all our employees, and in furthering and reaching our vision to be a model of excellence, opportunity, and student success.

In addition to providing a safe forum for individual employees to discuss concerns, the Office of the Ombuds contributes to organizational wellness by identifying and sharing trends with senior leadership, sharing data in an annual report, and making recommendations for change. By seeking to improve the employment experience at Montgomery College, these recommendations help to contribute to the achievement of the Common Employee Experience, which is a cornerstone of our Destination Employer initiative.

Ombuds Sarah Espinosa communicated and posted the FY14 annual ombuds report in early September. That report contained six recommendations, which I am adopting as follows.

RECOMMENDATION 1. Collaboratively develop, adopt, and implement both a Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct for all Montgomery College employees.

Adopted. I agree that formally setting ethical expectations and standards of conduct is a best practice that will provide clarity and consistency for all employees. It will also enhance the institutional value of integrity. I will ask the College Council to lead a discussion about these expectations and standards and then to make a recommendation to me regarding what they should be. From there, we will work to draft or modify appropriate policies and procedures, and then develop a plan for implementation.

RECOMMENDATION 2. Support and enhance managerial competencies and best practices by regularly soliciting feedback from employees and building professional development plans considering the results of 360-degree evaluations.

Adopted. The suggested modifications to the 360-degree evaluation procedure for administrators will be incorporated into this year's evaluation process. These modifications will enhance this already powerful tool, and assist administrators in developing even more meaningful professional development goals for Fiscal Year 2016. Additionally, a 360-degree evaluation program will be expanded to managers in FY16, and then be conducted every other year so that all College managers may also benefit from this valuable feedback. I will ask the Office of Human Resources and Strategic Talent Management (HRSTM) to implement this recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION 3. Critically examine the employee experience, particularly for underrepresented minorities, to ensure an inclusive workplace.

Adopted. Ensuring equity, respect, and inclusiveness is of the highest priority to the College. I will ask HRSTM and its Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Employee Relations to develop a plan to implement this recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION 4. Assist and support administrators, staff with supervisory responsibilities, and department chairs by providing and requiring additional training. Further, reward those exhibiting the skills developed in these training and hold accountable those who choose not to exhibit those skills.

Adopted. Providing training that can support and assist those with managerial responsibilities is a critical responsibility of the institution. HRSTM and its Office of Professional and Organizational Development (CPOD) have many effective programs currently in place for critical professional training. I will ask HRSTM and CPOD to develop a plan that includes the following topics as mandatory training over the next two fiscal years:

- Developing skills in creating and nurturing inclusive workplaces that that promote respect for and appreciation for diversity
- Promoting respectful communication
- Creating a culture of civility

RECOMMENDATION 5. Consider the creation of a competitive, developmental cohort program or programs to help develop future model managers and administrators.

Adopted in part. Developing outstanding leaders and model managers is essential to achieving the College's goal of becoming a Destination Employer, as well as an opportunity to thoughtfully engage in succession planning. I will ask HRSTM to develop possible options related to the modification of the Administrative Associate program (as contained in Procedure 34001CP) and bring a proposal to the President's Executive Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATION 6. Commit to continue to provide Montgomery College employees with access to the Office of the Ombuds by: transitioning the ombuds from a temporary

position, committing resources to recruit an Associate Ombuds, and incorporating the Office of the Ombuds, its role, responsibilities, and ethical obligations, into Montgomery College Policy and Procedure.

Adopted. Given the valuable services the Office of the Ombuds provides to individual employees and the College collectively, this recommendation represents an important investment of resources that are critical to our success as an institution. I will ask the chief of staff/chief strategy officer to work closely with the ombuds in developing a plan and timeline to implement an associate ombuds position and to review the Policies and Procedure Manual to incorporate the ombuds appropriately within it.

The recommendations I have adopted represent a prioritization of resources and our commitment to achieving an effective workplace that reflects the holistic values of Montgomery College—excellence, integrity, innovation, diversity, stewardship, and sustainability—and will help us all to realize and enhance the Common Employee Experience. For all of those who worked to bring these recommendations forward, and to all of you who work diligently each day for the success of our institution, I thank you all for your continued dedication to our students and our community.