

NC STATE UNIVERSITY



NC State Faculty & Staff Ombuds Office

Annual Report 2020 1/1/2020 - 12/31/2020

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Message from the NC State Faculty & Staff Ombuds Roy Baroff:

Welcome to the 2020 Annual Report of the NC State Faculty & Staff Ombuds Office!

Let's go ahead and acknowledge up front – what a challenging year on so many levels for the NC State community! One after another from covid-19, to social issues, to an election unlike any other – all contributed to the range of issues that showed up at the ombuds office. At the same time, as I talked with faculty and staff, they demonstrated again and again the strength of their resilience.

This report is designed to share a snapshot of ombuds services for the year along with some of the stories and impacts of the work.

The ombuds office is now in its 7th year of operation and it continues to be an honor and privilege to be the NC State University Faculty & Staff Ombuds.

With warm regards and best wishes,

Roy Baroff

Roy Baroff, MA, JD, CO-OP
NC State Faculty & Staff Ombuds

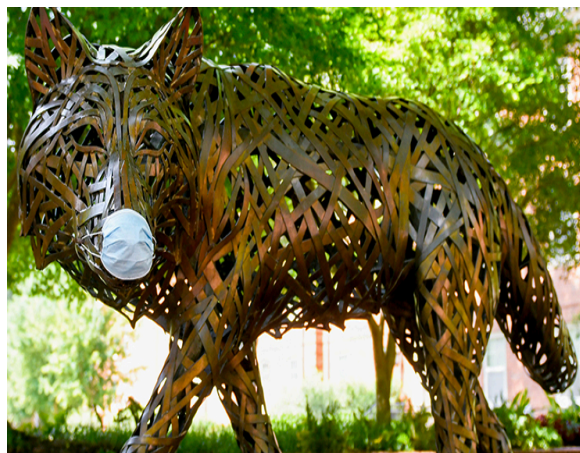


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Summary

Office Scope, Development and Operations

The ombuds office supplements existing conflict engagement services and fits within NC State's conflict resolution system as an alternate communications channel and resource. People can speak with the ombuds in confidence and obtain assistance on a wide range of workplace issues. The ombuds office can serve as a first stop for support, resource identification and often leads to utilization of other university services.

↑ Faculty services began February 2015 with Staff services added January 2017. The office serves all with a faculty appointment (about 2400) along with all other university staff (about 6900). Use of the office is on a voluntary basis. The ombuds participates in a range of university activities from attending Faculty Senate, Staff Senate and University Council meetings to providing multiple departmental and unit presentations. The ombuds also has regular administrative meetings with senior university leaders to share trend information and observations.

Case and Post Contact Survey Data

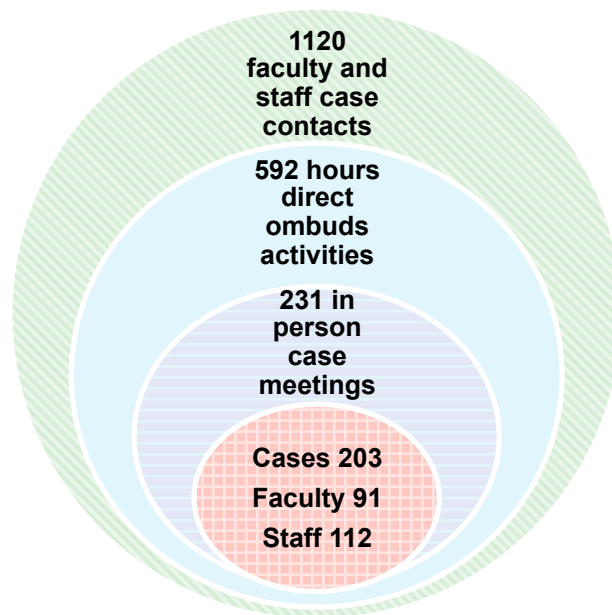
In 2020, the office opened 203 cases - Faculty 91 / Staff 112 (See case information below and Data Summary - Appendix A.) A post contact survey is provided to ombuds office visitors for office improvement and to gauge impact. Results indicate high visitor satisfaction with services and demonstrate a range of impacts. (See Post Contact Survey Results below and - Appendix B)

Observations / General Considerations / System Issues

Based on the day-to-day work of the office along with Case Data and Post Contact

Survey results, a number of issues / themes surfaced for review and consideration:

1. Covid-19 - work location and return to campus - lack of flexibility at local levels – strong provision of information related to all things covid-19
2. Diversity Equity Inclusion Belonging – “do it yourself” efforts causing problems
3. New staff position creation - without full integration or support causing turf issues
4. Career advancement – staff want defined paths to advance / want to be rewarded for expanded scope of work (continued from 2019)

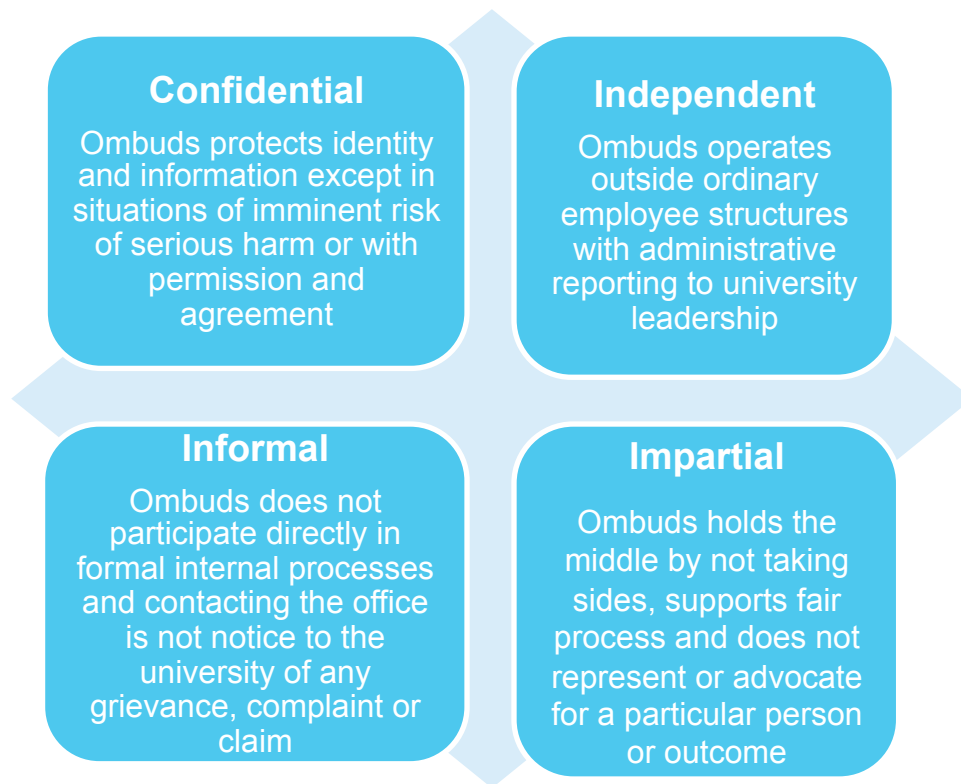


Organizational Ombuds Role and Services

An organizational ombuds has two primary roles –

- 1) direct services to individuals and groups
- 2) share information and surface trends and to support conflict engagement / resolution across campus while protecting the confidentiality of sources

The ombuds' helps people navigate and become empowered to address their issues. It connects people with resources and provides conflict coaching. In the ombuds field, people using services are referred to as "visitors." The office follows the International Ombuds Association (IOA) Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics.



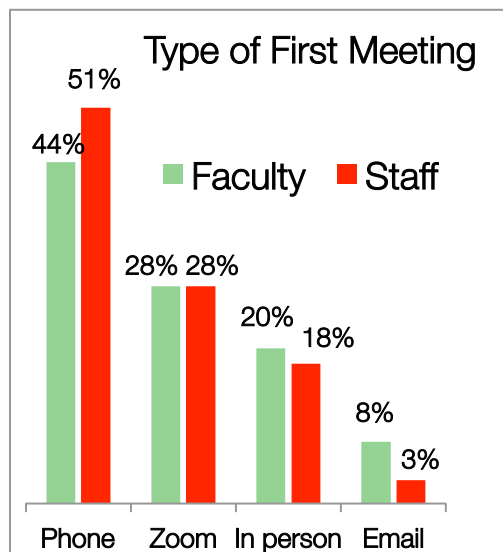
Program Operations

Due to covid-19, the office moved to a virtual platform along with use of conference space on campus as needed. The online presence was anchored by its website - facultyombuds.ncsu.edu and staffombuds.ncsu.edu.

The ombuds virtually attended faculty and staff meetings across campus to provide office introductions and updates. The office also provided various conflict resolution related trainings / workshops to groups across campus including Lunch & Learn programs (Conflict Leadership with the Faculty & Staff Ombuds). Specifically, in response to covid-19, the ombuds also presented a once per week 10 session "Covid 20" program that included a "grounding exercise," introduced ombuds services and a conflict resolution tool – all in 20 minutes.

Direct ombuds services primarily focus on individual meetings. (See figure – Type of First Meeting) Ombuds services include conflict coaching, providing information, reviewing and discussing policies, regulations, and rules, identifying NC State and other resources that may be helpful and making confidential inquiries post meeting. The office also works with groups as a meeting facilitator and has worked with units to build better teams.

With the shift to only virtual appointments in March, people became comfortable with phone and zoom. The zoom experience, in particular, was quite positive for faculty and staff and worked well from the ombuds perspective.

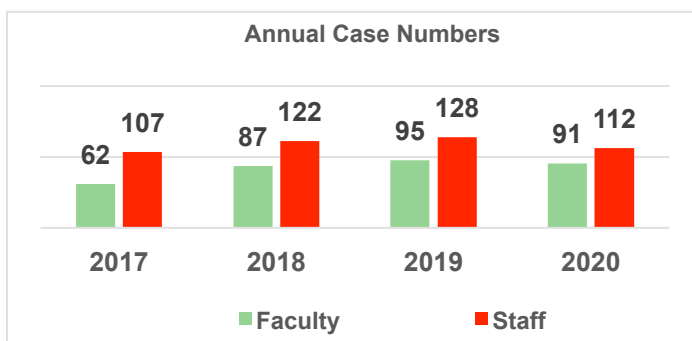


Office Information

The office collects a range of Case Data to inform ombuds work, identify themes and trends. The office also invites all who use services to provide anonymous feedback of their experience and the impact of the services. (Post Contact Survey)

Case Data (See Appendix A)

In 2020 the office opened a total of 203 cases - Faculty 91 / Staff 112 (9% decrease from 223 cases in 2019). It is believed that covid-19 aspects contributed to the reduced cases as faculty and staff focused on immediate health and remote work considerations. This decrease was also consistent (anecdotally) with other university ombuds' comments. NC State also provided significant resources and robust online material to explain covid-19 related information and procedures.

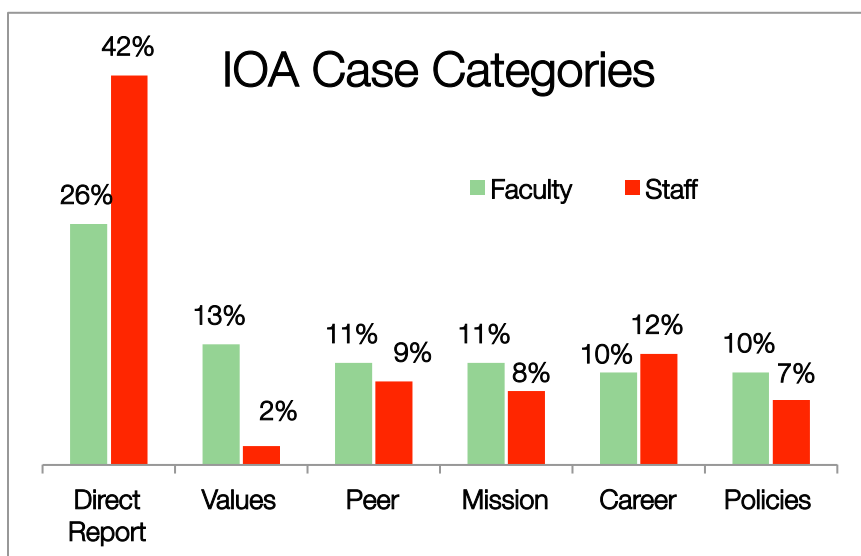


An ombuds meeting with a faculty or staff member typically lasts an hour or more. The ombuds listens, helps the visitor clarify the issues and then works with the person to develop and consider options for how to proceed. In almost every case the ombuds consults / coaches the person (in 98% faculty / 100% of staff cases) and helps identify resources (in 85% faculty / 92% staff cases). Another option unique to the ombuds office is to make a "confidential contact" (used in 24% faculty / 19% staff cases). This entails the ombuds office contacting university resources, inquiring on a particular topic without disclosing the specifics of the visitor contact or identifying the visitor, and then sharing the information with the visitor who can then decide how to proceed.

Case Categories

The office uses the IOA Uniform Reporting Categories with each case assigned a

primary and secondary category by the ombuds (there are often multiple issues presented in each case). The primary case categories for 2020 were widely distributed while issues with Direct Report's continued to lead. Faculty and staff shared that the first order of "business" as covid-19 struck was to deal with the day-to-day aspects of shifting to virtual platforms where possible and dealing with exposure issues when working on campus.



Overall, these categories are to be expected as visitors brought issues focused on their department or unit management, their jobs and future as well as policy, regulation or rule related considerations. The uptick on Values and Mission fit with covid-19 concerns vis a vie university needs.

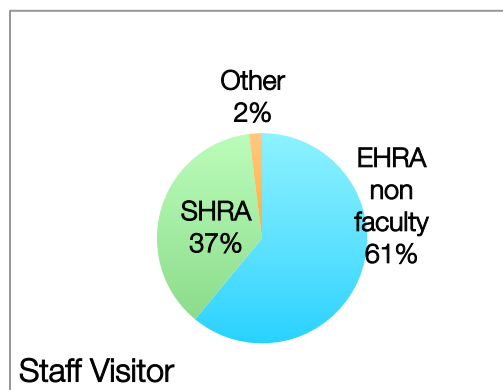
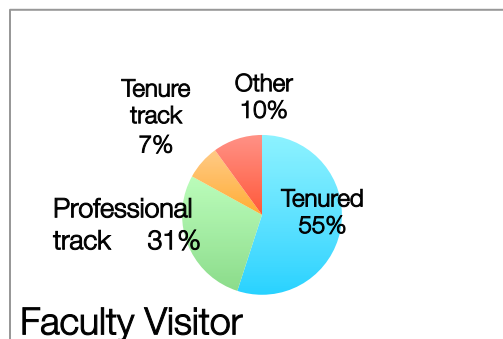
Much of the ombuds' work is to help visitors develop informal options for how to address a situation. Sometimes it also includes identifying and helping a visitor connect with existing university services. The goal is for the visitor to consider as many options as possible from which to develop an action plan.

Visitor Demographics

A range of data is collected in terms of who seeks help from the faculty and staff ombuds. It includes status, role, gender, length of service, ethnicity and age. (See Appendix A.)

For faculty visitors, the primary status was tenured (55%) while gender was 42% female / 58% male closely matching current NC State faculty demographics (40% female / 60% male). For length of service, 54% of faculty members contacting the office served for 10 years or less.

For staff, 37% were SHRA and 61% EHRA non-faculty. Gender was 76% female to 24% male while current demographics are 56% female. This may demonstrate how the office can be a resource for those in protected groups. For length of service, 64% who contacted the office served for 10 years or less and most (56%) were employees with no supervisory duties.



Post Contact Survey Information

(See Appendix B)

To gain feedback on operations and to learn about the impact of ombuds services, the office provides a Post Contact Survey to those served by the office. The survey is voluntary, anonymous and provided via an online link. The survey seeks information on the following topics: Contacting - Visiting the office / Contact with the Ombuds / Actions taken if the Ombuds Office not contacted / Actual actions taken post ombuds contact.

Overall, the results based on a 13% response rate were very positive. The ombuds was easy to contact, responded timely and quickly set up meetings (96% Strongly Agree). Interaction with the ombuds was also quite positive although several responses highlight limitations in terms of perceived impact on the issue presented. For example, people felt “better able to handle the situation after talking to the ombuds” (72% Strongly Agree / 20% Agree / 4% Disagree). That some “disagreed” this is not unexpected as the ombuds role, particularly, its role as impartial, means the office is supportive, yet not an advocate for specific outcomes and situations are not always resolved.

At the same time, in terms of office impact, multiple responses indicate that visitors found contacting the ombuds to be helpful. Question 4 asked (among other queries) if “the ombuds helped identify and consider options to address concerns” with 80% Strongly Agree and 16% Agree. Additionally, 72% Strongly Agree and 16% Agree, that “I felt better about the situation after discussing with the Ombuds.”

Finally, two direct impact questions provide interesting data. Question 5 - “If you had not contacted the Faculty / Staff Ombuds Office, what do you think you would have done?” Question 6 – “After contacting the Faculty / Staff Ombuds Office, what did you actually do?” These questions, even with small numbers, highlight that contact with the office had a range of significant impacts (see partial results below).

Action	Q5 – if not contacted ombuds office	Q6 – after contacting ombuds office
Contacted other university resources	8	4
Filed grievance or other administrative action	3	-
Consulted private attorney to consider lawsuit	3	-
Left the university	8	1

Observations

Based on the day-to-day work of the office various observations emerge. At the same time, it should be noted that the number of cases present a small “slice” of the university so all observations should be considered with that in mind.

The observations for 2020 include:

1. **Covid-19 / Work location flexibility** – both faculty and staff expressed concerns about working on campus due to covid-19. Some of the early issues were about safety on campus with offices and sometimes buildings mostly empty. Other issues stemmed from a perceived lack of flexibility by local managers and supervisors while senior leadership encouraged such flexibility. The university

exceptions policy was deemed by some to be too narrow. At the same time, within these discussions, visitors also expressed appreciation for NC State's efforts to provide information about the pandemic and its impact of the university.

2. **Diversity Equity Inclusion Belonging** – NC State begin thinking more about these issues as it started a new Strategic Planning effort in early 2020 and then we had the events of the summer of 2020. As a result many visitors came to the ombuds office to process how to address diversity in the workplace. One theme that surfaced is that in many units efforts were underway; however, they were “do it yourself” (being led by the unit leadership) and while well intentioned, the efforts were causing more harm than good (according to the visitors). Visitors reported use of email to respond, that people were “shaming” others when someone made a “mistake” and that approaches felt punitive.
Recommendation: Get experienced and knowledgeable help (like NC State OIED) to guide these efforts and, instead of being reactive, put a supportive process in place to address “mistakes” ahead of time so people know how such situations will be handled.
3. **New staff position creation** – several visitors expressed concerns about taking a position at NC State where there wasn't full existing staff stakeholder buy-in, there was lack of clear scope, local onboarding and support. In sum, this caused turf issues, co-worker conflict and productivity problems. (Note: most of these positions were developed and managed by faculty.) **Recommendation:** Create a new staff position checklist for faculty that outlines steps including stakeholder analysis and attention, clear scope, onboarding, and ongoing support structure.
4. **Career advancement** – (carryover from 2019) staff want defined paths to advance and want to be rewarded for expanded scope of work. People both understand that they may be asked to do “more” during the pandemic; however, they also want to be appreciated and rewarded. Career path concerns also remain a challenge within the State, the UNC system and university structures.
Recommendation: Units are encouraged to determine if promotion paths exist within the unit, and, if so, communicate these to staff. Demonstrate appreciation and support staff development.

Conclusion

For the faculty and staff ombuds office, 2020 was a storm of outside events that impacted the university community and the ombuds office itself. The office successfully shifted to a virtual platform with the support of leadership and these services will continue in 2021. The ombuds office will continue to serve as a zero-barrier resource for university employees to bring concerns and receive confidential, independent, informal and impartial support to navigate issues and seek solutions.

Appendix A

Case Data

The Faculty & Staff Ombuds Office collects information in aggregate form to describe cases and obtain feedback from people using its services. This compilation includes case data, post contact survey responses and comments for calendar year 2020. (NCSU* - comparison data where available from Fall 2019.)

2020 Case Totals		Total Case Contacts
Faculty	91	567
Staff	112	553
Total	203	1120

Initial contact	Faculty	Staff
Email / text	55%	451%
Phone	40%	43%
In person	5%	6%

Referred by	Faculty	Staff
Presentation	47%	36%
Colleague / Co-worker	32%	34%
Other (internal / external)	11%	9%
Visitor (self)	6%	6%
Website / E-news / Print	4%	15%

Type of first meeting	Faculty	Staff
Phone	44%	51%
Zoom	28%	28%
In person	20%	18%
Email	8%	3%

Ombuds activity (each case)	Faculty	Staff
Consultation / Information	98%	100%
Identify resources	85%	92%
Confidential contact	24%	19%
Communication support	14%	6%
Review written material	-	5%
Other (group / unit process)	-	1%

Primary Case Categories	Faculty	Staff
Direct Report Relationships	26%	42%
Values / Standards	13%	2%
Peer relationships	11%	9%
Organizational Mission	11%	8%
Career Progression	10%	12%
Legal / Regulatory	10%	7%
Safety / Environment	7%	6%
Compensation / Benefits	6%	7%
Services / Administrative	6%	7%

Faculty Visitor Demographics		
Status	Ombuds	NCSU*
Tenured	55%	43%
Professional track	28%	42%
Tenure track	7%	15%
Other (Post doc / Grad student)	10%	-

2020 Calendar Year Summary

Role		
Professional tracks	21%	43%
Professor	24%	29%
Associate Professor	20%	15%
Leadership	17%	-
Assistant Professor	5%	13%
Other (Post doc / Grad student)	13%	-
Gender		
Female	42%	40%
Male	58%	60%
Ethnicity		
African American / Black	5%	5%
Asian American / Asian	6%	10%
Hispanic / Latinx	10%	4%
White	77%	73%
Multi-cultural / Not known	2%	8%
Years of Service		
Less than 5 years	34%	25%
5+ - 10 years	20%	17%
10+ - 15 years	14%	14%
15+ - 20 years	9%	19%
20+	22%	25%

Staff Visitor Demographics		
Status	Ombuds	NCSU*
EHRA non-faculty	61%	38%
SHRA	37%	62%
Other (temp / resident)	2%	-
Role		
Employee (no supervision)	56%	-
Director / Associate Dir.	26%	-
Supervisor / Manager	17%	-
Gender		
Female	76%	56%
Male	24%	44%
Ethnicity		
African American / Black	13%	16%
Asian American / Asian	-	3%
Hispanic / Latinx	5%	6%
White	82%	68%
Multi-cultural / Not known	-	7%
Years of Service		
Less than 5 years	46%	36%
5+ - 10 years	18%	22%
10+ - 15 years	16%	15%
15+ - 20 years	11%	14%
20+	9%	12%

Want help and not sure where to turn? Go Ombuds !

Appendix B Post Contact Survey 2020 Calendar Year Summary

The Post Contact Survey is provided in paper form and online. Participation is voluntary and anonymous. Selected responses listed below. (response rate 13%)

Contacting / Visiting the office	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Easy to contact office	96%	4%			
Timely returned contact	96%	4%			
Timely spoke/met ombuds	96%	4%			

Contact with the Ombuds	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Was courteous / respectful	96%	4%			
Explained role	84%	16%			
Comfortable discussing issue	92%	8%			
Ombuds listened carefully	96%		4%		
Helped identify / consider options	80%	16%		4%	
Provided useful / helpful information	80%	16%	4%		
Better able to handle situation after discussing with ombuds	72%	20%	4%	4%	
Issue/concern now resolved or closer to resolution	32%	28%	28%	4%	4%
Felt better about issue/situation after discussing with ombuds	72%	16%	8%	4%	
Recommend others to ombuds	88%	8%	4%		

Q5 – If you had not used the ombuds office, what do you think you would have done? Q6 – After using the ombuds office, what did you do?	Q5	Q6
Not done anything / Did not do anything	1	-
Not brought the issue up as quickly	3	-
Not talked to anyone about the issue	3	-
Continued to struggle on my own with the issue/concern	18	-
Used contact with ombuds to move my situation forward	-	18
Contacted other university resources for assistance	8	4
Filed a grievance or other administrative action	3	-
Consulted with private counsel about filing a lawsuit	3	-
Left the university	8	1

What people are saying about the ombuds - - -

I'm so grateful that STAFF have access to this service. Many thanks to Roy for his assistance.

It was very helpful to have a confidential person to talk to about the situation. While I was already pursuing all paths discussed, it was helpful to clarify I was on the right path and to get an outside perspective on the situation.

I was impressed with the professionalism of Mr. Baroff and he came up with some suggestions that I had not considered. I discussed both of these ideas with my Department Head and followed through with one of them. I felt that the university contact who he recommended might be helpful was – that it made a difference in resolving the situation. It also gave me some comfort during a stressful time, as it gave a feeling of support from a university provided resource.

I appreciated the quick response and courtesy. The Ombuds was an excellent listener and helped me tease out the situation into manageable chunks to think about. The Ombuds was clear in explaining university processes and procedures and what I could expect from the situation at hand. I recommend speaking with the Ombuds to help with organizing your thoughts about how to face a difficult situation. Not only did the Ombuds give me some answers about ways I could think through the issues or resources I could use going forward, but importantly helped in alleviating some of the stress and fears in a highly tense context.

The fact that it was confidential was a major reason I reached out to the office.

Roy was a huge help in my situation. I was able to talk through my issues with my supervisors and come to a clear understanding of where to put our energy into making things better. I feel like the issue I had has been resolved with the help of Roy's kind and sensitive responses and recommendations. We now use Roy-isms regularly in the workplace (ie: fight problems, not people.) Thanks for your help!

The Ombuds was very helpful. He helped me clarify my concerns, and helped me determine options and find resources. I found meeting with him very beneficial.

This was my first time consulting with the ombuds office. Roy is very personable, listens well, is responsive, and very timely in providing follow-up information with resources. I appreciate his attention to detail while looking holistically at the situation. After this experience, I think this is truly a valuable resource for faculty and staff that provides a safe, confidential way to sort through issues at NC State.

Very professional – extremely helpful.

Very helpful resource and support to have available for NCSU staff members. I would have quit my job, if it weren't for Roy.

Case Narratives 2020 (calendar year)

Staff

Staff member contacted the ombuds office to discuss interactions with direct supervisor. At times the supervisor was supportive; however, the staff member was also concerned about what they believed was harassing behavior. The staff member was quite upset when first talking with the ombuds describing the situation and lack of trust felt toward the supervisor; however, after several phone meetings over a week, the staff member and ombuds were able to identify and explore options. These ranged from direct communication with supervisor, to meeting with another unit director, to information about the Equal Opportunity and Equity office, and information about the Faculty and Staff Assistance Program.

At the conclusion of this series of meetings the staff member felt empowered to make decisions about how to proceed. They connected with resources within their unit as well as multiple on campus resources. In a follow up call, the ombuds learned that while there was some discussion of shifting the staff member to another supervisor, this was not done. The staff member was continuing to work remotely and would decide what to do once work moved back on campus. The staff member remarked that while they wanted a shift in supervisor, they still felt better about the situation. They felt people had listened, had been supportive, and they were now better able to make decisions.

Staff member contacted ombuds to discuss the idea of “too much” work and not enough support. Staff was student facing often supporting, directing and collaborating with students. As such, work flow was sometimes hard to predict and the job became a 60+ hours per week. Staff member felt overwhelmed by the volume and when they asked for help, it did not come. Staff member also felt that unit environment was not open to this type of feedback/requests. With the ombuds, the staff member planned discussions with various members of the unit in order to reframe options from “you versus me” to “us against the problem.” A strategy of building relationships and engagement with leaders and colleagues was also planned. In follow up, ombuds learned that strategy had been helpful to frame conversations and seek assistance. Staff member reported better support and engagement by leadership and was hopeful as to the future.

Staff member in small unit contacted ombuds to discuss strategies around a co-worker situation. The co-worker was a long time employee that also had developing health issues. Over time more responsibility was shifted to staff member; however, without support and acknowledgement or recognition from leadership and the co-worker. Expectations created ongoing conflicts and a lack of communication further exacerbated the situation. The staff member sought resources for both the co-worker (health issues) and themselves to address the situation. In talks with the ombuds, the staff member developed multiple paths including direct conversation with leadership and their co-worker.

Student staff member contacted ombuds for assistance with a paycheck issue. The student had completed the work and was now located outside the US and not able to complete the necessary paperwork. With permission, the ombuds contacted the Payroll office to share the issues and seek assistance for the student. After review and discussion the Payroll office was able to resolve the issue.

Several female director level staff came to the ombuds office with concerns about treatment in the workplace by their next level report. Concerns were gender based and information about the Equal Opportunity and Equity office was presented and discussed. Other communication channels were explored and the visitors decided to take a couple of weeks to consider next steps. At a follow up meeting the visitors expressed a sense of connection and support from each other. They appreciated the opportunity to share their concerns and both individually and together they decided not to take any formal steps at the time. They would continue in their work while paying attention to behaviors in the workplace and raise with each other as needed. They also, decided to look for work outside NC State. One of the ideas shared with the ombuds centered on the idea that at senior levels, when it comes to hiring, to consider national searches rather than internal hiring of the interim. This would expand the diversity of the hiring pool and also move away from “like hiring like.” After this case closed, this idea of broader searches rather than internal hires has been shared by the ombuds with various campus leaders.

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Staff member using the employee tuition waiver benefit to continue education; however, their position was scheduled to end due to grant completion. They were also seeking a new position outside the university and wanted to understand the impact of leaving their NC State position. Employee was trying to calculate when they could/should provide notice in order to maintain employee status during the semester. Ombuds contacted benefits office to learn more about the tuition waiver and how the timing of employment related to retaining the waiver. Ombuds provided information to staff so that plans could be developed.

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Staff member in long time unit leadership role anticipated being asked to step down and was trying to determine how to address the situation. Sought ombuds as sounding board to explore various scenarios and to also obtain discontinuation versus resignation information via confidential contact.

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Staff member of color contacted office seeking information and discussion about whether they would sign a petition supporting the change of name for an on campus building. The concern was whether there would be retaliation and/or job risk if signing. Based on discussion, ombuds and staff member reviewed free speech policy along with university guidelines. Another option was to contact their direct report along with other colleagues within the college to seek advice. The ombuds then made confidential contacts with the Equal Opportunity and Equity office, the office of General Counsel, and Employee Relations to learn more about potential impacts of signing a petition.

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In a second meeting information was relayed including that it is an individual decision about signing and that doing so as a private individual, not public employee, makes it a private matter even if it had to do with a public concern. Further, that there should not be retaliation from an employment perspective. The staff member also shared information from colleague discussions suggesting concern with any signing. The ombuds and staff member discussed that there were aspects of any private signing that could potentially shift beyond the control of the staff member. Staff member decided, primarily based on colleague discussion, to not sign the petition.

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Staff member contacted ombuds to discuss issues related to a newly created position. Staff had started work under the direction of a leader who was now planning to retire. The position had not been fully developed or merged into existing structures and there appeared to be overlap with other roles that caused “turf” issues.

Additionally, it was unclear if new leadership would support the role. The staff member and ombuds discussed strategies to explore the issues including direct conversation with leadership, seeking assistance from faculty and staff that supported the position and work being done.

Staff member on good terms with direct report sought ombuds assistance to discuss resignation due to a job offer at another university. Staff member wanted to better understand their employment status (EHRA non faculty / at will) and implications of disclosing the new position. Ombuds and staff member reviewed policy for EHRA employees including discontinuation at will and how this could/might play into timing of resignation as connected to start date of new position. After discussing the various factors the staff member decided to plan a call to their direct report to disclose the new position and plan a transition.

Staff member contacted ombuds office after seeing a university bulletin referencing copyright issues. The staff member was very upset with a concern that downloading some ebooks may have been a university copyright policy violation. Staff member was concerned that their continued employment was at risk. Ombuds discussed options including staff member discussing issue with direct report; however, it was determined that ombuds would seek additional information about the potential impact of the described actions.

Ombuds then spoke with Employee Relations and Office of General Counsel and learned more that, while potentially a serious situation, it was not likely to put employment at risk. Information was shared with staff member who planned to discuss the situation with spouse and then determine how to proceed.

Staff member concerned about how leadership was handling a diversity related incident. Unit members had been encouraged to post comments and responses via email that the staff member felt had only worsened the situation. Ombuds identified resources at OIED that could perhaps provide unit assistance and guidance as to best practices for addressing such an event / issues.

Staff member visited ombuds office concerned about opportunities for advancement and compensation differences identified due to a relatively new hire in the unit. While market considerations were considered, and the staff member had received support for an equity increase from direct leadership, to date, there was no movement toward a raise. Additionally, given a relatively small unit, there did not appear to be any avenue for promotion. Together these aspects were pushing the staff member to consider employment elsewhere. Discussed additional strategies as well as identified raise information from University HR that related to the situation.

Athletics coach met with ombuds as sounding board to discuss career considerations. Explored strategies to address departmental interactions as well as potential advancement opportunities.

Senior staff member concerned about use of materials they developed by another senior staff member without attribution. Sought ombuds as sounding board to consider how to address the situation. Was planning to contact staff member directly as had prior positive relationship and used ombuds discussion to strategize and plan the contact.

Faculty

Senior faculty member was navigating the Post Tenure Review process and wanted to discuss certain aspects. Met with the ombuds to review the process and discussed information from the Provost office and Department Head that addressed the situation. Faculty member was considering retirement and / or phased retirement along with continuing work on a Professional Development Plan (PDP). Financial concerns were present along with faculty member trying to decide how they wanted to spend their remaining time at the university. Faculty member stayed in contact with ombuds to discuss ongoing developments.

Faculty member with start up package logistics concerns as was “bumping” up against college guidelines that were not the same as start up package description in contract. Discussed strategy to address at first department and then college level if needed. Considered multiple levels of contact as faculty member saw this as an issue beyond their own situation.

Faculty member contacted ombuds to discuss options and resources for a student who had left North Carolina for what seemed to be safety reasons. The faculty member was uncertain how to manage and in discussions with the ombuds identified University Risk Management as a potential resource for both the faculty member and the student.

Faculty member with issues around start up package as the “rules” for how the funds could be used seem to change on a regular basis making it difficult to get lab fully up to speed. Faculty member was asked to divert funds for other use or track funds differently than expected. Discussed strategies to further engage with department leadership along with other resources including Internal Audit if concerned about accounting issues.

Faculty in department leadership position concerned about compensation level in comparison to others. Talked with ombuds about issue and together reviewed available salary information. Discussed differences and concerns and developed a strategy for seeking additional compensation.

Faculty member involved in on campus situation that raised bias considerations and sought help to explore options. Ombuds identified resources at OIED including the Bias Impact Response Team and training group.

Faculty member was concerned that student in honors program was not preparing a final project up to standards. Faculty member had communicated concerns and a range of support; however, the student had “lashed” out at the faculty member. Faculty member contacted ombuds to discuss situation and consider strategies and resources to address student communications and level of academic work. Faculty member developed multi-prong approach including discussion with other faculty also part of the student project, department leadership, and student conduct. Ombuds provided ongoing coaching to faculty member and the student was able to complete the work in order for submission for honors review.

Faculty member was concerned about student safety. A colleague had contacted them and shared information of concern about the physical safety of a student. The faculty member contacted the ombuds office to determine how to proceed. Discussion with the ombuds identified resources including the Department leadership, student ombuds, the Cares Program, the Department of Risk Management and University Police if there was an immediate concern. The faculty member also determined that a report was required and completed a Title IX report. Ombuds later learned that student was safe and receiving a range of support from the University and that a faculty member felt they had appropriately handled the situation.

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Group

Ombuds asked to help department plan a retreat discussion about issues of concern. Ombuds met with leadership team to provide meeting facilitation ideas including agenda development and also planned to share information on building teams at the retreat session.

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Ombuds worked with department leadership to plan and facilitate a faculty discussion about diversity, equity and inclusion. Leadership wanted to create a space for faculty to share ideas so that actions could be developed and implemented.