

**University of California, Santa Barbara
Office of the Ombuds**



**2006-2007
Annual Report**

**Priscilla Mori
Campus Ombuds**

I. ROLE OF THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDS

A. Mission Statement

The Office of the Ombuds is a *confidential, impartial, informal, and independent* resource for conflict prevention, management, and resolution that serves all members of the UCSB community, including faculty, staff, and students. The Office assists those who seek guidance with the resolution of academic or administrative issues and disputes that are not being adequately addressed through other University procedures. It is a safe, confidential, and impartial place to express concerns.

The Office advocates for fairness and works to ensure that all members of the University community receive equitable treatment. The Office serves the campus community by helping to resolve complaints, by providing information and referrals, and by making recommendations for constructive change when University policies or procedures generate conflicts or concerns. The Office adheres to professional standards of practice to create an environment where members of the UCSB community can obtain information, review options, and resolve problems. The Office is also committed to facilitating campus-wide conflict management with an emphasis on conflict prevention.

B. Standards of Practice

The Office seeks to accomplish its mission by applying four core tenets: independence, impartiality, informality and confidentiality. These are standards of practice established by the International Ombudsman Association (IOA).

Independence: The Office is independent. To ensure objectivity, it operates independently of usual administrative authorities. The Office reports to the Executive Vice Chancellor for administrative and budgetary purposes only, but not regarding the substance of matters discussed in the office.

Impartiality: The Office is impartial. The staff will not take sides in any conflict, dispute, or issue, but will consider the interests and concerns of all parties involved with the aim of achieving a fair and equitable outcome. If the Ombuds believes a university policy or procedure is unfair, the Office will advocate for fairness.

Informality: The Office is informal. The staff facilitates communication when conflict arises and provides the opportunity for informal dispute resolution. The Office does not arbitrate, adjudicate, or participate in any internal or external formal process.

Confidentiality: The Office will maintain strict confidentiality to the extent permitted by the law; the only exception to this confidentiality is when the Office determines that an imminent threat of serious harm exists. It is not an office of official university notice.

II. 2006-2007 OVERVIEW

In order to fulfill the role of the Office as effectively as possible, we have refined our administrative procedures and done outreach to the campus through presentations and meetings. We have upgraded our brochures, created various flyers, and updated our web site (www.ombuds.ucsb.edu). We have also undergone major staffing changes, have invested in staff training, and have received support and feedback from the Ombuds Advisory Committee, and ongoing support from the Executive Vice Chancellor.

A. Staffing

This has been a year of staff transition. In July 2006, Priscilla Mori joined the staff as Acting Assistant Ombuds for Program Development. Although she spent time becoming familiar with the role and was mentored by the Campus Ombuds, she also took on cases immediately and participated in training and publicity efforts on the campus.

Bill Forgie was again appointed as Faculty Ombuds at 25% time from October 2006 through June 2007 and was the primary Ombuds for twenty-four cases during the year. Bill's expertise as a faculty member who is very familiar with campus academic issues has been invaluable both to users of the office and to the staff of the office.

In November 2006, Judy Guillermo-Newton accepted a position off campus and retired from her position as Campus Ombuds. This was not anticipated in advance, and so required a readjustment of efforts on the part of the existing staff. Judy provided information to assist in the transition, and cases that were previously handled entirely by Judy were phased over to Bill and Priscilla.

During the period from January through May 2007, Andrea Briggs (former Ombuds at UC Riverside) assumed the role of Acting Campus Ombuds to help during the transition and the recruitment period for a permanent Campus Ombuds. Andrea's many years of expertise as an Ombuds and her fresh perspective of the UCSB campus enriched the office and provided information that was helpful to a wide range of users of the Office and campus colleagues. In May 2007, Priscilla Mori was hired as Campus Ombuds. The process of recruiting a permanent Associate Ombuds did not begin until the summer of 2007.

During this period of transition, Lainie Pascall continued to provide consistent, excellent service as Intake Coordinator and Office Manager.

B. Administrative Support

Lainie Pascall provided proactive support in upgrading our office tracking systems and providing administrative support in a variety of other areas including:

- Created new intake forms
- Created new statistics forms to accommodate the complexity of increased staff
- Created user data sheet to allow users to self-identify in certain areas
- Continuously improved and produced brochures and informational flyers
- Proactively made contacts for enhancing our publicity efforts on campus, provided drafts of documents for publication, and distributed new documents
- Coordinated visits of Ombuds staff to various campus locations
- Continuously upgraded website and Power Point presentations

- Established and maintained Filemaker database for improved tracking and statistical purposes
- Prepared statistical reports as needed
- Handled case intake for most of the 228 cases
- Provided service as primary Ombuds for 27 cases
- Provided travel arrangements for Ombuds training sessions and conference
- Coordinated arrangements for Ombuds Advisory Committee and prepared meeting minutes
- Coordinated Threat Management Team Focus Group session arrangements
- Prepared and coordinated usage of online department climate survey
- Completed automated online transactions and maintained appropriate departmental documentation

Lainie provided an exceptional level of service that was particularly important to the ongoing stability of the office during the time of staff transitions. As far as the campus was concerned, access to our services was seamless and uninterrupted, largely due to Lainie's efforts.

C. Training Attended

Priscilla Mori attended "Ombuds 101," a two and a half day class offered by the International Ombuds Association (IOA) which covered in detail the basic functions and skills of the Ombuds profession. She also attended an additional day-long session on Bullying and Mobbing, also presented by IOA, which provided information very relevant to the academic environment in which we work.

Bill Forgie plans to attend Ombuds 101 in the Fall of 2007.

Priscilla Mori, Bill Forgie, and Lainie Pascall attended the IOA Annual Conference held in St. Louis in April 2007. The conference offered them the opportunity to hear speakers on topics relevant to the role of the Ombuds, and to make connections with colleagues from around the world doing similar work in educational institutions, government institutions, and in the corporate world. One session was particularly helpful as a model seminar in dealing with individuals with strong emotions, with ideas for helping people through those difficult situations. Another session provided specific information about tracking of statistics, with ideas for breakdown of cases into meaningful categories.

In addition to IOA training opportunities, the one or more of the Ombuds staff members have attended various local community and on-campus training sessions including the following:

- *On Campus*
 - UC Investigation Policies
 - FlexCard Training
 - Access Database Training
 - Accounting: Travel and Entertainment Workshop
 - Civility and Restorative Justice – Learn at Lunch and Focus Group
 - Student Suicide Prevention Webcast
 - LGBT Ally Training
 - Vice Chancellor Young's presentation on "Generations"
 - Unraveling Racism
 - Sexual Violence and Oppression
 - Cultures Colliding – Learn at Lunch
 - Prevention Strategies – Office of General Counsel

- ADA Training
 - Communication and Distressed Students
 - Anti Defamation League “Campus of Difference”
 - PWA Conference
- *Off Campus*
 - Santa Barbara Restorative Justice group
 - Mediation Training with Ken Cloke
 - Interpersonal Communication – SBCC

D. Training and Outreach Provided to the Campus

As part of an effort to provide outreach to the campus, members of our office met with individual administrators, whole departments, or representatives of offices or groups throughout the year. We have outlined our services, provided training on topics such as civility, listening, diversity, and communication. We have attended departmental meetings to make presentations or facilitate discussions. These meetings typically do not appear in our case statistics, but take a significant amount of time both in preparation and in presentation. At times, individuals who have been introduced to our office through these presentations decide to visit us on an individual level for help with their own issues.

Bill Forgie wrote an article about the role of the Faculty Ombuds for the *Faculty Association Newsletter*, published during the Winter Quarter.

The Spring 2007 edition of *Diversity Forum* included an informative article about the Office of the Ombuds.

An article published in *93106* in May 2007 announced the appointment of Priscilla Mori as Campus Ombuds. This article served as an outreach tool because the article contained information about the role of the Ombuds and some individuals on campus decided to visit the office in response to the article.

E. Office Location

The Office has been located in 1205-K Girvetz Hall since May 2005. This location is a four-room suite of offices, including a conference which has also served as an office for Bill Forgie. This central campus location is ideal; it is accessible for most campus members, yet fairly private.

We have continued to use the “white noise” system to deal with acoustic issues related to confidentiality. It provides the necessary privacy enhancement that allows us to maintain our standard of confidentiality in a limited amount of space.

Space continues to be a challenge when we are dealing with groups of multiple users. Two of our offices are fine for one-on-one meetings, but often we have groups meeting with us. A more ideal situation would be one in which we have a separate space for the Faculty Ombuds, and a separate space for intake sessions that are often long and involved, and need to be conducted in private space. We hope to augment our space in the future by extending our hallway into the adjacent space if that becomes available.

F. Professional Affiliation

The International Ombuds Association (IOA) is the professional organization of which we are members as Ombuds on our campus. This organization provides professional affiliation and

training opportunities as well as ongoing discussions on challenging topics relevant to the profession. Our office operates consistent with the IOA standards of practice, including the tenants of confidentiality, informality, independence, and impartiality. Our credibility as an office and as members of the profession is tied directly to adhering to these tenets tenaciously.

The UC system-wide Ombuds group has been active during this year in ongoing conversations and meetings. The group met together physically once during the year and met together via conference calls a number of times. The members have provided ongoing advice and support to one another, and have used one another as resources for multiple issues, sometimes one-on-one, and sometimes in the larger group setting. The group, composed of seven UC campuses and two lab facilities, drafted a UC Ombuds Best Practices document which was finalized this year and has been presented to each of our campuses as a document which represents appropriate practices that tie our UC Ombuds practices to IOA standards of practice, thus solidifying the credibility of our operations across the UC system. The document also provides guidelines for UC campuses that may be creating Ombuds Offices in the future.

Our office also participated this year in a meeting of the Southern California Ombuds Caucus which is composed of educational, governmental, and private sector Ombuds who meet together to share best practices and share resources and issues relevant to the profession.

G. Ombuds Advisory Committee

The Ombuds Advisory Committee met four times in the course of the academic year. The terms of service of committee members are established with the possibility of individuals serving two consecutive terms, and are staggered to ensure continuity. The undergraduate student representative each year is the Goodspeed intern, an internship coordinated by Vice Chancellor Michael Young.

The appointed members for 2006-07:

- Robin Rogers, Chair, Staff Representative, 1-year term
- Amy Van Meter, Staff Representative, First year of a 2-year term
- Ann Plane, Faculty Representative, Second year of a 2-year term
- Jon Cruz, Faculty Representative, Second year of a 2-year term
- Alison Borek, Graduate Student Representative, 1-year term
- Tim Finney, Undergraduate Student Representative, 1-year term

Ex-Officio Members during 2006-07:

- Judy Guillermo-Newton, Campus Ombuds
- Andrea Brings, Acting Campus Ombuds
- Priscilla Mori, Acting Assistant Ombuds for Program Development and (later) Campus Ombuds
- Bill Forgie, Faculty Ombuds
- Lainie Pascall, Office Manager and Intake Coordinator

The Committee has two main functions:

- To act as a sounding board and advisor to the Office in regard to such matters as the Annual Report and its distribution, promotion and marketing of the office, hiring and firing of staff, additional duties, professional development plans, the annual budget, and so on;
- To receive and respond to comments or complaints about the Office and to convene the Committee should such concerns arise.

Due to the nature of the year involving staff transitions, the Ombuds Advisory Committee played an active role in advocating for permanent staffing of the Associate Ombuds position during the Fall Quarter and in the recruitment efforts for the Campus Ombuds during the Winter and Spring Quarters. The committee also provided useful input on possible outreach efforts of the office for the future.

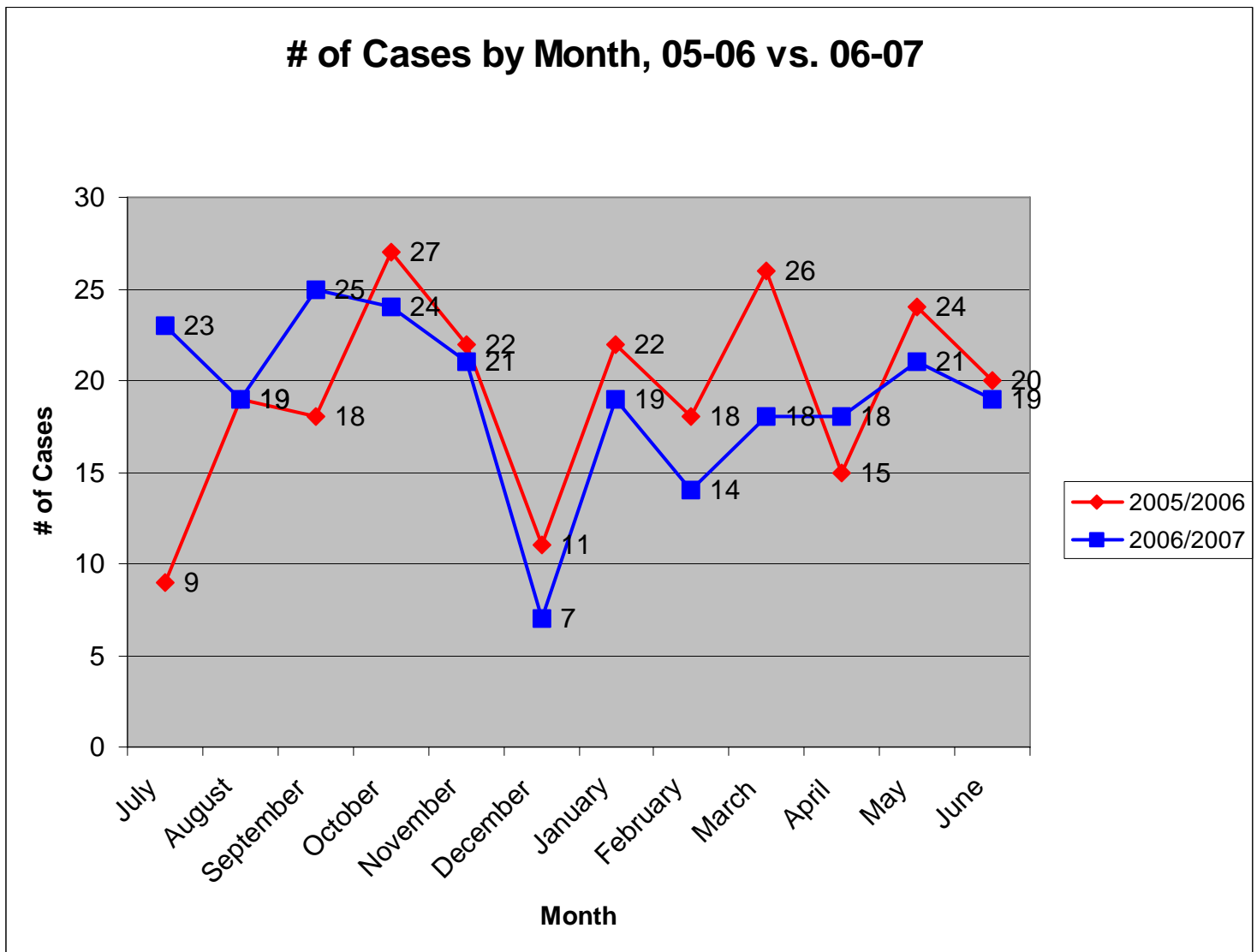
H. Other Campus Issues

Over the course of the year, Judy, Andrea, and Priscilla have each played a role in the ongoing development of a Threat Management Team (TMT) on campus. This team is actually a broadened version of the Civil and Responsible Environment (CARE) Team that has been existence on campus for a number of years. Together with Farfalla Borah, John Berberet, and Burt Romotsky, we have helped to move forward the development of the TMT. As the TMT concept was developed, we met with focus groups to describe the process of communication around threatening behaviors, and gained insight in developing strategies to handle these challenges effectively. We will be involved further in the next academic year in working with a campus committee to develop a Zero Tolerance for Violence policy that can be proposed to the campus for implementation so that the TMT can function in collaboration with the campus community most effectively.

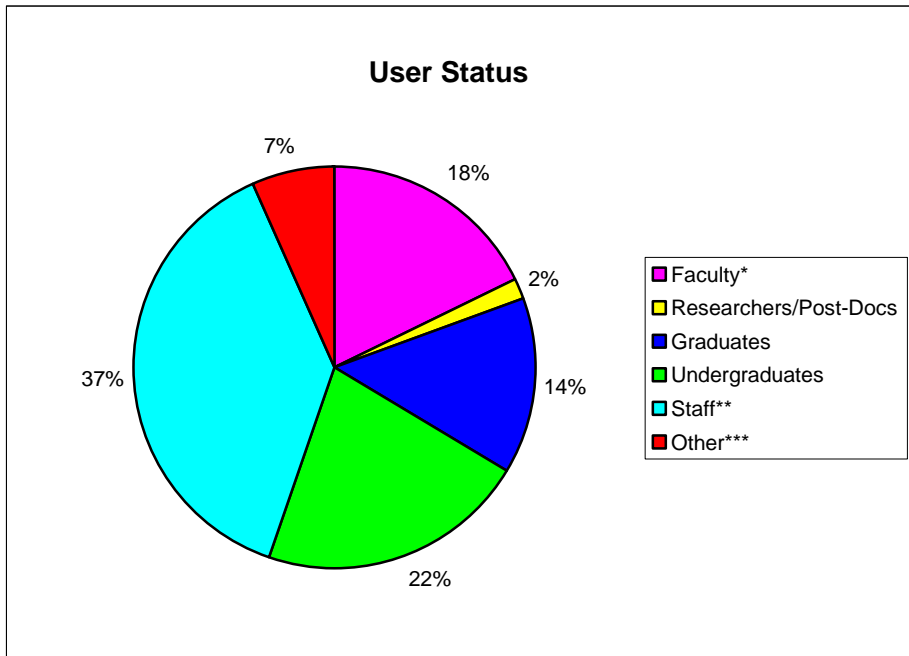
III. CONTACTS BY UCSB COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The Office of the Ombuds is a resource to all members of the UCSB campus community, including faculty, staff, students, parents, researchers, and visitors.

There were 228 cases during the period from July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007, only three less than during the previous fiscal year, so there has been no significant change in usage of the office, although the staff to handle the cases fluctuated over the course of the year due to staff transitions and turnover. The timing of the visits was also similar to the 2005-06 year with the exception of the summer months. (The higher number of visitors in July 2006 was related to the addition of Priscilla Mori to the office at that time.) The ebb and flow of visitors during the remainder of the year is predictable and is at least somewhat related to the academic calendar.



Staff members comprised 37% of our visitors, followed by undergraduate students at 22%, faculty members at 18%, graduate students at 14%, a category of “other” at 7%, and 2% researchers and post-doctoral scholars.

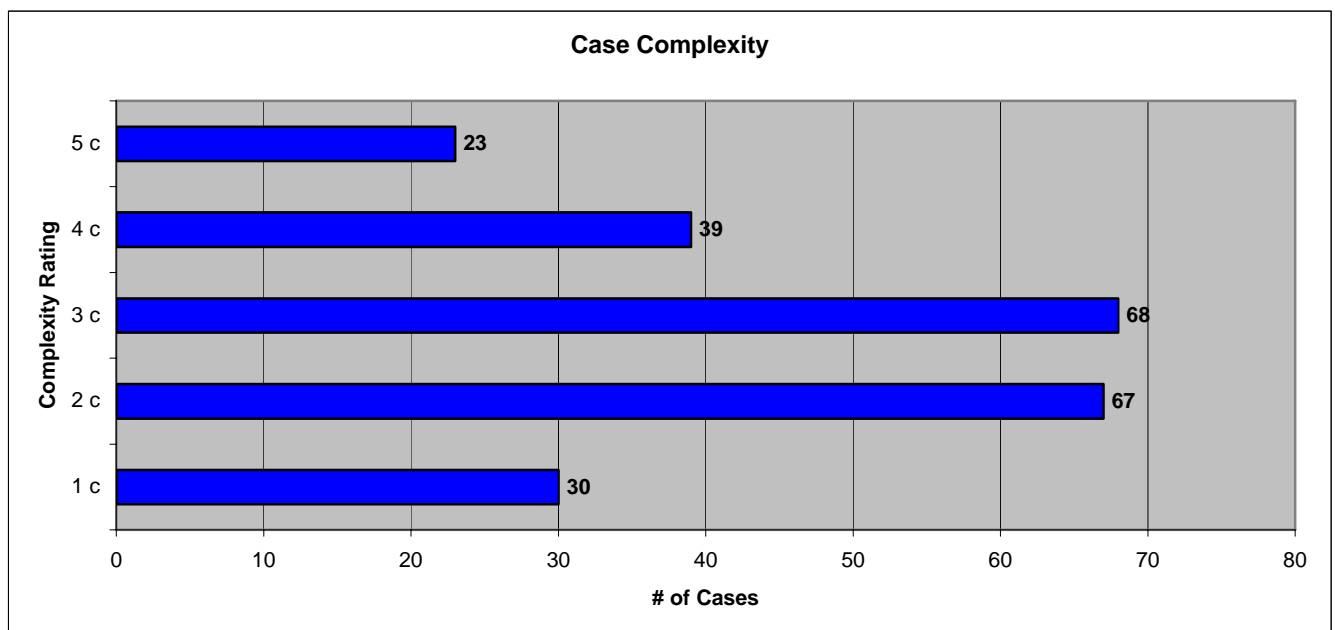


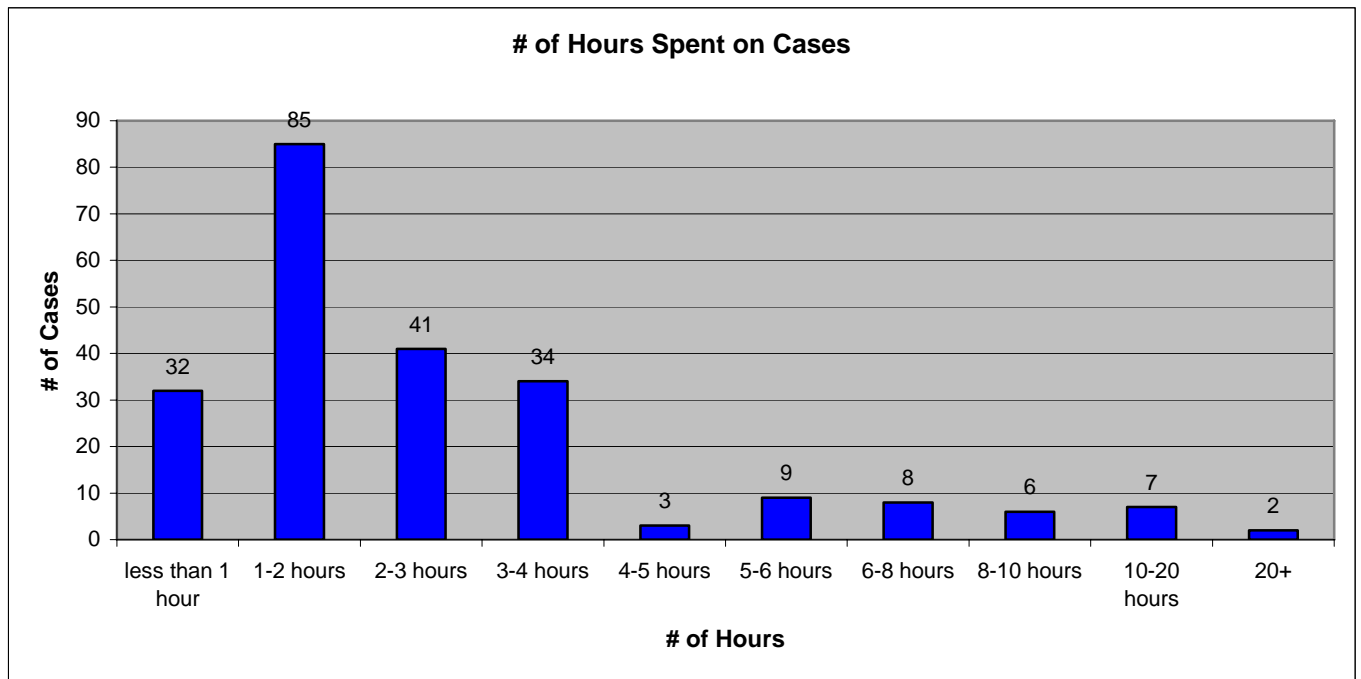
*"Faculty" includes ladder-rank faculty, chairs, lecturers, and administrators

**"Staff" includes supervisors and business officers

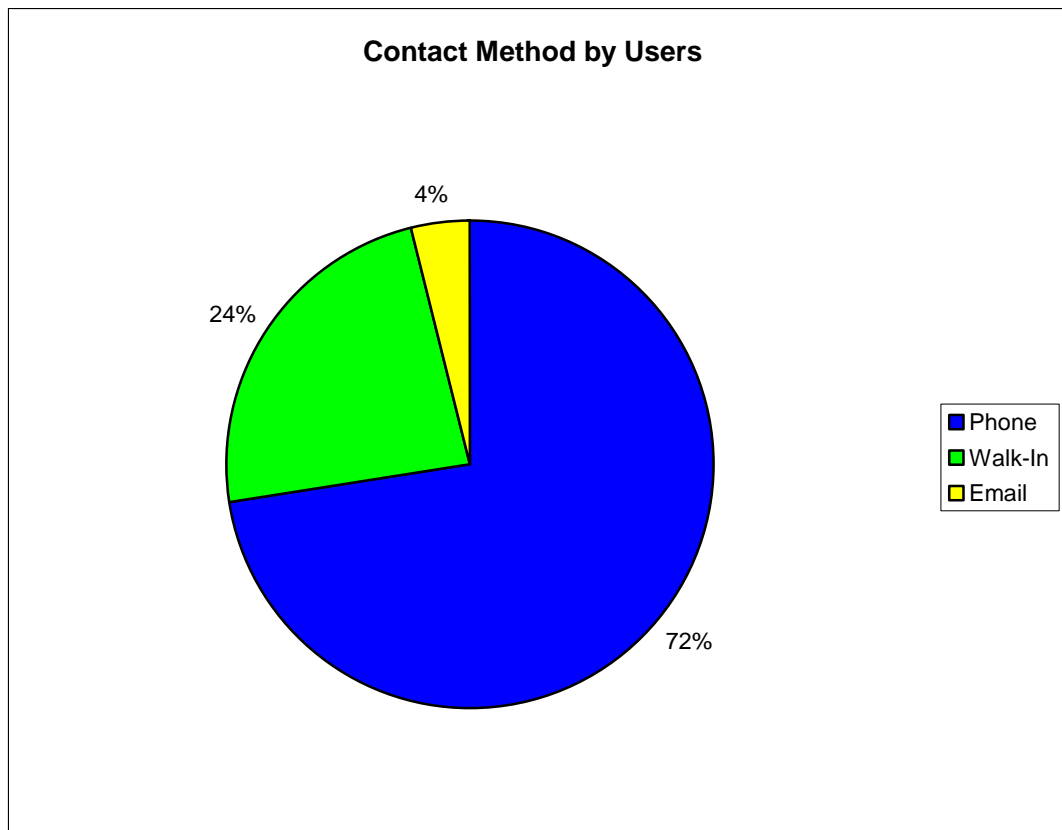
***"Other" includes parents, community members, and other visitors to the office

The complexity of cases is based on a combination of factors including risk level, impact on the organization or impact on others, perceived impact on the individual, and effort by the Ombuds. It is based on a judgment call made by the Ombuds who is primarily responsible for the case. The number of hours spent on each case is not necessarily comparable to the complexity of the case.

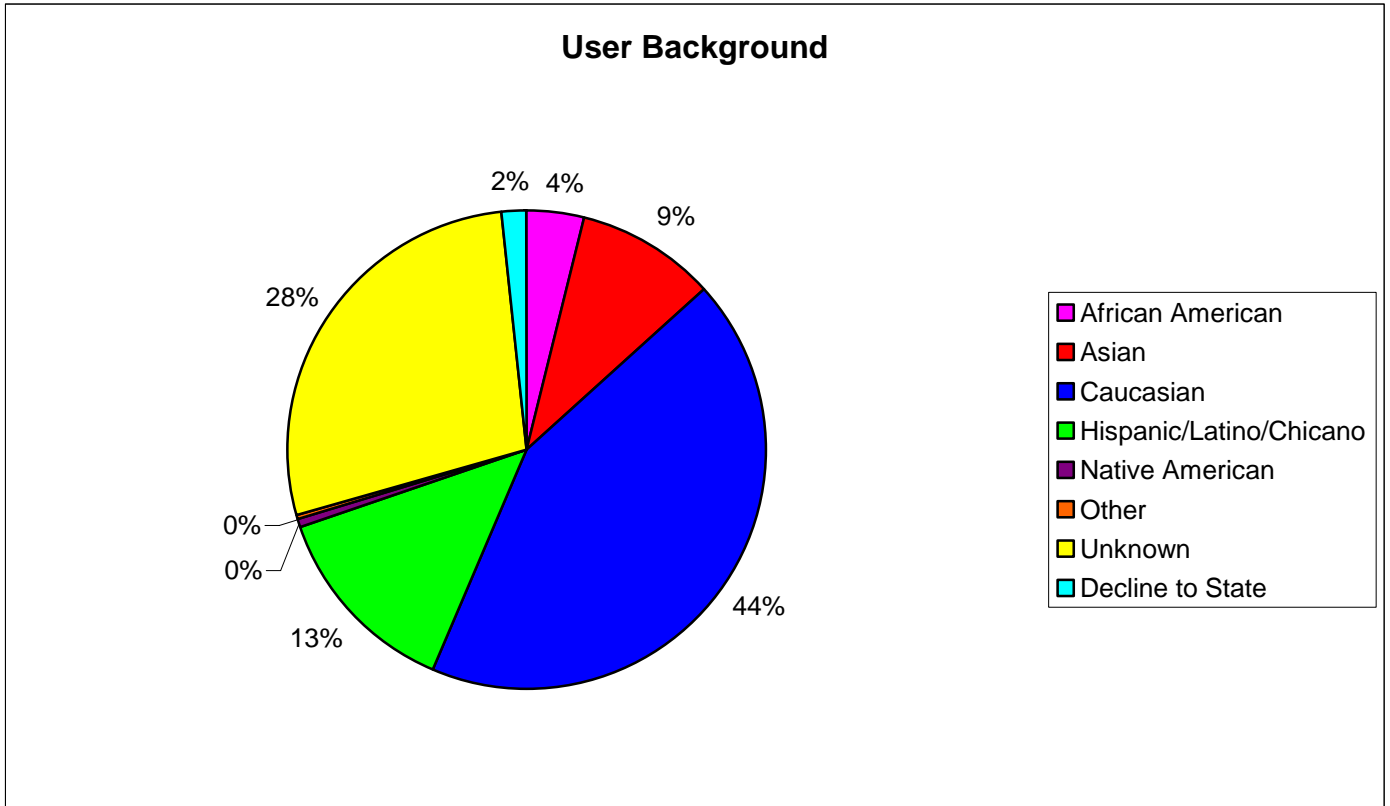




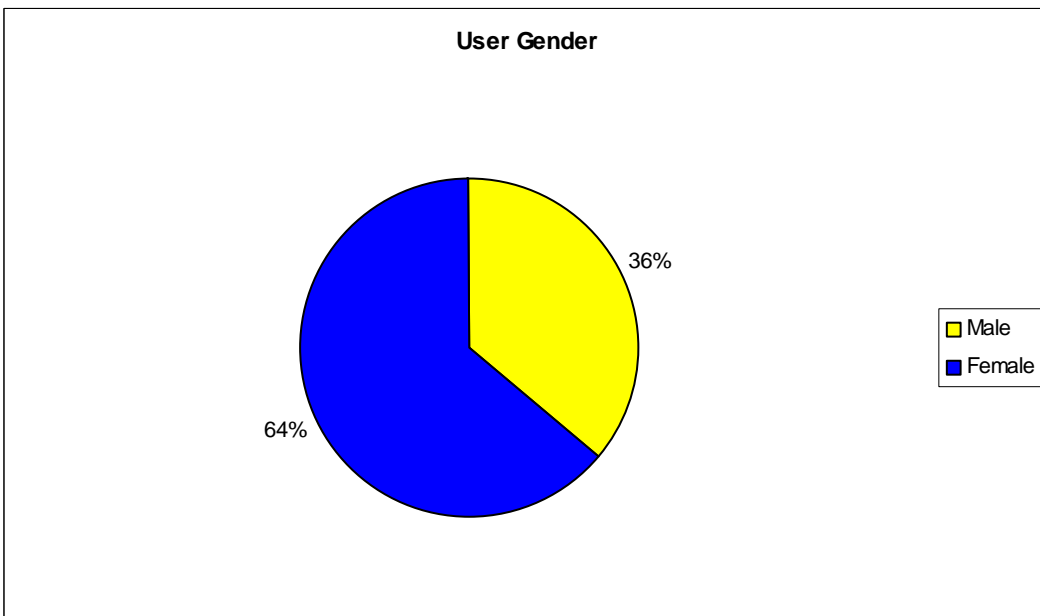
The large majority of visitors contact us by telephone, with about a quarter of our visitors being “walk-in” cases. We strongly discourage the use of email for confidentiality reasons, so only 4% of our visitors this year contacted us first by email.



The background of the users of our office is described in the following graph. Toward the end of the 2006-07 year we started using a different tool to determine the user background of our visitors, asking visitors to self-identify. This may affect our demographics in the future.

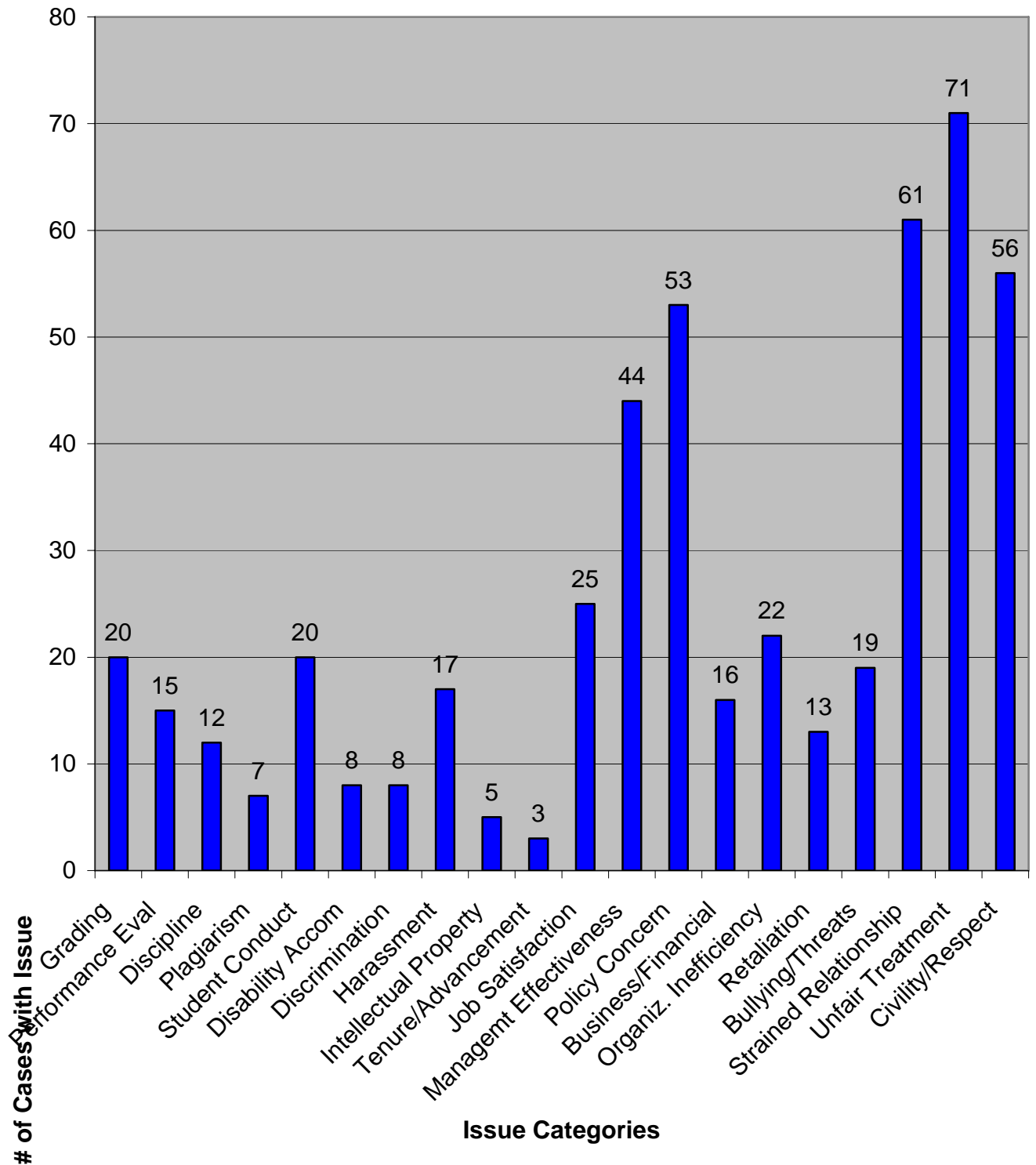


The gender of our visitors is illustrated below.



Case categories are identified by the primary Ombuds responsible for the case. One case may involve more than one category, since many visitors come with multiple issues on their minds, or may have issues that are extremely complex.

Campus-Wide Issues



IV. OBSERVATIONS AND INTERPRETATION

In an attempt to understand the needs of our visitors in the aggregate, we have visually grouped the issues in sections that are often interrelated. It is interesting to note that the top issues campus-wide include:

- Unfair Treatment
- Strained Relationship
- Civility/Respect
- Policy Concern
- Management Effectiveness

We believe these top categories demonstrate the way the visitors see us in terms of our usefulness, and perhaps how we have advertised our services to the campus.

These issues are among the top concerns of faculty and staff visitors and, with the exception of management effectiveness, are also the top concerns of graduate students. The majority of these issues are related, at least in part, to interpersonal relationships. The three groups (faculty, staff, and graduate students) represent those who tend to be longer-term residents of the campus who are more closely tied to departments with affiliations that are on-going.

Undergraduate students, on the other hand, primarily have issues about policy concerns, grading, unfair treatment, and student conduct. Their concerns are primarily related to processes and policies, and the interpretation of rules, and are less related to interpersonal relationships. This is not to imply that interpersonal relationships are less important to undergraduates; it is most likely that the undergraduate students use other resources to deal with relationship issues, and use our office to deal with their dilemmas related to their dealings with the regulations, the faculty, and the administration of the institution.

Predictably, issues around retaliation and bullying are more prevalent among graduate students than undergraduates. Issues related to grading are more prevalent among undergraduates than graduate students.

Amongst staff users of the office, those who have used our office to deal with issues related to performance evaluations, discipline, job satisfaction, management effectiveness, or policy concerns, are primarily non-supervisors.

Approximately fifty percent of cases involve issues that have something to do with faculty, either directly or indirectly. In some cases, the faculty member initiated the contact with our office; in other cases, a faculty member was contacted either as a resource or as a relevant party; in other cases, a faculty member was not contacted, but the presenting issues involved the faculty in some way.

What are the implications of the statistics? What can we learn from them? How could this affect our outreach efforts in the future? What are patterns and trends that seem to be significant?

- We can focus additional efforts on facilitating communication between faculty mentors and graduate students, especially around fair treatment in a relationship of unequal power.
- Civility seems to continue to be an issue of concern among faculty, staff, and graduate students, which may present opportunities for us to talk about communication and community-building efforts in departments where relationships tend to be long-standing and where there is need for investment of effort in relationships.

- We can do more to train supervisors to be more pro-active in dealing with performance-related feedback, possibly in an effort coordinated with Human Resources
- We have brainstormed about possibilities of reaching out to faculty proactively, perhaps in a role doing consultations rather than training sessions or seminars. Often there might be a need among members of a department for better ways to deal, for example, with conflict, but when we make presentations about our services or offer skill building sessions, it often feels like we are “preaching to the choir.” In other words, those who could benefit most are least likely to attend. We have determined that having the “blessing of the Deans” would be important for any training or consultation activity with faculty. We will continue to pursue new possibilities for reaching out to faculty, which might include panel discussions with experienced faculty or small group discussions around topics of interest. We will offer our services at a break-out session of the College of Letters and Science Quarterly Chair/Business Officer briefing to address faculty issues.
- As of July 2007 we have begun the process of tracking more detail about the types of cases brought to our office. We have adopted these tracking categories from IOA colleagues who have found such breakdowns useful for analytical purposes. We anticipate that the additional detail will help us in the future to determine how we could be more effective in meeting the needs of the campus community.