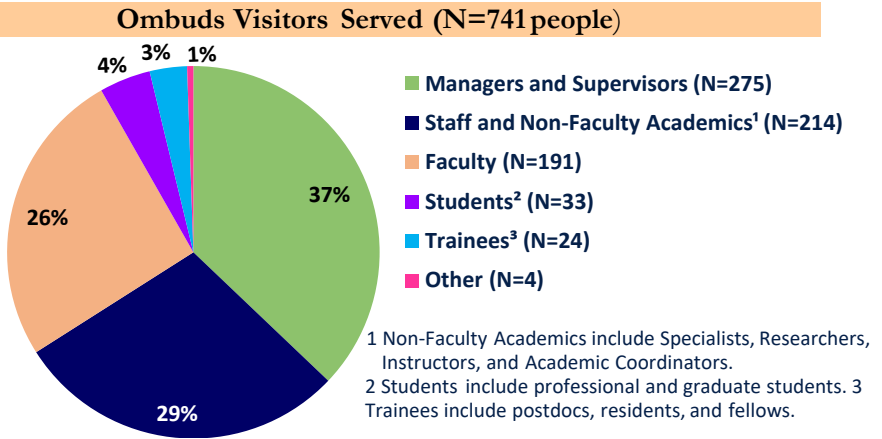




Ombuds Services Provided

Services Provided 2023-2024 (N=741)		
Service	Services Provided	Number Served
Individual Ombuds Consults	741	741
Mediations, Group Conflict, Facilitations	58	217
Trainings	55	1,394

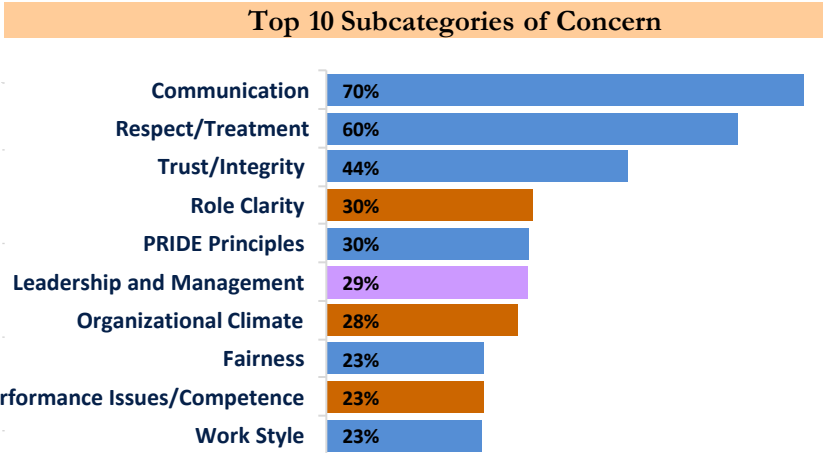
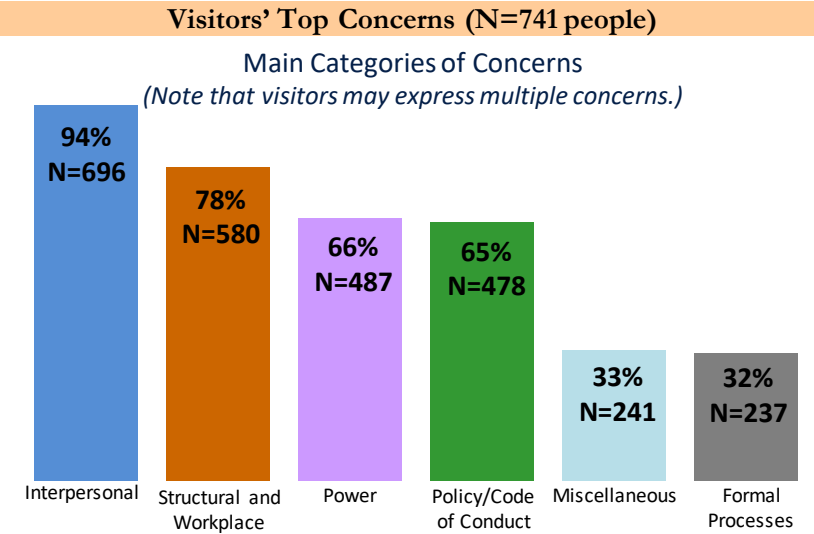
Visitor-Expressed Risks (N=815 Risks)

Risk	Total
Unwarranted attrition/transfer	199
Potential for internal/external grievances	191
Loss of department productivity due to pervasive conflict	177
Significant violation of policy/Code of Conduct	146
Negative publicity	41
High-risk safety issue	33
Litigation potential	28

These are the risks that visitors expressly state. Of the 741 Ombuds visitors, 462 (62%) identified at least one associated risk. Unresolved conflict creates both risk and cost.

Our Mission: To humanize the experience of working and learning at UCSF by providing a voluntary confidential, neutral, informal, and independent problem-solving resource that includes individual consultation, mediation, and group facilitation services to members of the diverse UCSF community predicated on the principles of fairness, equity, and respect.

For more information about the Office of the Ombuds services, call (415) 502-9600 or visit ombuds.ucsf.edu



The most common concerns for all visitors were very similar, primarily challenges with interpersonal dynamics. However, when comparing themes of the Top 5 concerns, there were several differences based on visitor status. Concern about *Leadership and Management Competence* was a Top 5 concern for faculty and for staff/non-faculty academics. (*Leadership and Management Competence* is defined as the “quality/capacity of management”.) *Coping and Work-Life* balance was in the Top 5 concerns for 36% of staff and non-faculty academic visitors. These differences may tell a story about how various components of the UCSF community are experiencing their work-life challenges.

This year we are newly reporting a **Formal Process Cluster**. This cluster combines concerns named by 197 (27%) of the visitors to our office and describes consultations about:

- Verbal or written counseling/PIP/Expectations
- Investigations/Investigatory Meeting/Disciplinary Leave
- Termination/Intent to Terminate/Non-renewal/Skelly
- Initiated formal process on behalf of another (responsible employee)
- Faculty misconduct

Visitors had questions about due process, how to report a perceived policy violation, how to prepare for a formal meeting, and how to respond after a formal action. We fielded many questions about how these processes ensure fairness, as well as questions from “responsible employees” who were trying to understand their responsibility. One challenge is the lack of consistency across cases in the formal processes as well as the sometimes-protracted time of the investigations. Our recommendation for more transparency in how the processes are conducted continues from the previous two annual reports; leaders from these complaint and grievance procedures are actively working to create additional materials to be responsive.

Themes

Consistently, the primary concerns brought by visitors are communication, respect/treatment, and trust/integrity. Fully 39% of ombuds visitors expressed concerns about abusive conduct, including misuse of positional power, bullying, and retaliation, and 20% expressed concerns about discrimination based on a protected category. The challenges faced this year reflect the impact of financial scarcity, national and international crises, and the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. These all have exacerbated the intensity of interpersonal conflicts at work and the challenges faced by ombuds visitors. UCSF, like many institutions of higher education, is experiencing heated exchanges about the war in the Middle East, increasing stress for many in the UCSF community. With each visitor, the ombuds explores options, skills, and strategies based on the visitor's goals and situation, using the tools of consultation, coaching, mediation, facilitation, and training.

Previously, the Office of the Ombuds recommended 1.) structural strategies to reduce burnout, 2.) focus on procedural fairness in formal processes, and 3.) the need for conflict management skills-building for managers. We continue to hear strong concerns about the first two. Burnout remains higher than the national healthcare average, based on Gallup Engagement scores (thirty-four percent of UCSF survey respondents experienced burnout "always/very often" vs 29% reporting high levels of burnout nationally). We continue to have ombuds visitors who report a lack of due process or confusion about formal policy procedures. An effort to develop "Frequently Asked Questions" for these processes and a mapping of formal resources is in the works.

The Office of the Ombuds is pleased to report progress on the final recommendation. In March 2024, UCSF launched the first cohort of Conflict Competence Training for Managers (CCTM), an intensive professional development opportunity for managers and supervisors.

Conflict Competence Training for Managers (CCTM)

In the [2021-2022 Annual Report](#), the Office of the Ombuds asserted that an investment in conflict de-escalation skills for supervisors is "an intervention that can reduce burnout and the abusive behavior that leads to complaints and grievances." Fortuitously, this recommendation coincided with a proposed design for a conflict competence training for managers by Maga Jackson-Triche, MD (UCSF Health Executive Advisor, Organization Culture & System Level Design.) By partnering on the vision and content for the training and joined by Calvin Chou, MD, PhD (Academy of Communication in Healthcare), we collaboratively launched the first training cohort of managers. This intensive training was sponsored by UCSF Health and Human Resources and included multiple components (see box).

An evaluation was conducted after each session. Additionally, a series of focus groups conducted by external evaluator, Sonya Dublin, revealed additional themes. The opportunity to connect with other managers and supervisors was seen to be as important as the training content. The textbook and role-plays were useful, and the most valued topics were the self-assessment, ladder of inference, and active listening skills. Participants universally recommended making this a mandatory training for all new managers. Additional feedback and recommendations are being analyzed. Currently, a comparison group is being finalized to assess quantitative HR metrics between the CCTM managers and similarly placed managers who haven't yet had the training.

Evaluation findings and resources will inform plans to continue the CCTM and bring it to scale. The vision is to support all managers with conflict competence skills-development training. Conflict is normal in the workplace, and we support managers and supervisors to have the ability to de-escalate and manage workplace conflicts effectively on their teams.

CCTM Program Components:

- A stable cohort of managers and supervisors (N=28)
- Individualized conflict style assessment (Thomas Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument)
- Textbook: [Harvard Business Review Guide to Dealing with Conflict](#) by Amy Gallo
- Handouts and links to additional resources
- 10 in-person and hybrid sessions with didactic content, facilitated scenario role plays, and group discussion
- Coach-facilitated small group cohorts for peer support and learning
- Guest presenters from Disability Management and Access; Office of Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination; and Labor and Employee Relations
- External evaluation

CCTM Participant Quotes:

- *"Practice makes perfect! Role play is helpful in practicing the words before getting into a real situation."*
- *"One of the lessons that I took away from this group was the active listening. As managers we are often looked to for solution-driven responses. 'How do we fix the problem?' Whereas in some cases, some team members may really just want an opportunity to be heard."*
- *"I wish I had this class years ago in my beginning stage in management. It's never too late to learn new things."*
- *"It's great to see how all lessons are coming together to help with developing conflict management skills."*
- *"I like that we have gotten to know each other in a way that we can bounce a situation off each other. I feel my BFF circle at work has grown, and I am no longer isolated as a manager when faced with challenging situations. Plus, the resources are great reference tools."*