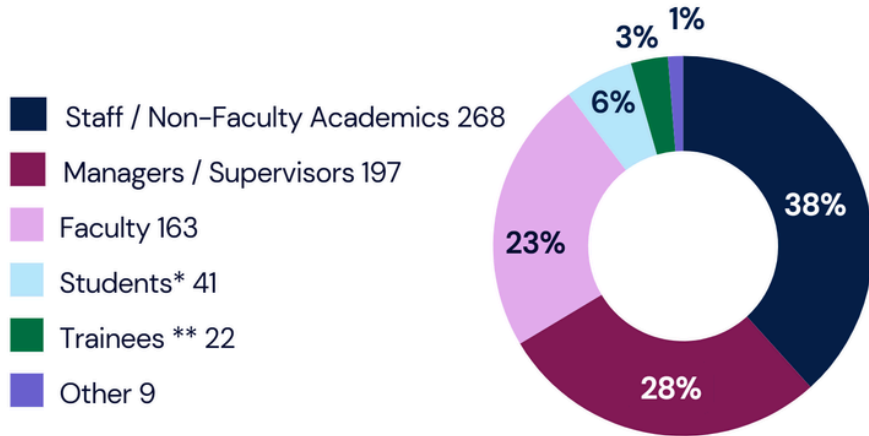




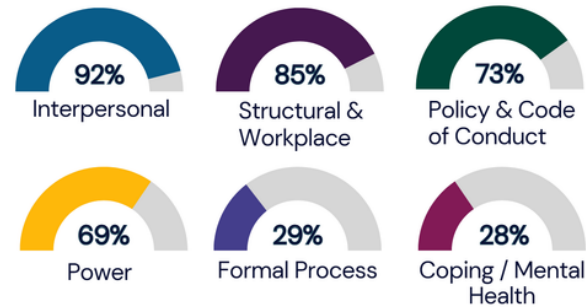
Ombuds Visitors Served



* Students category includes both Professional Students and Graduate Students
 ** Trainees category includes Fellows, Postdocs, and Residents

Visitors' Top Concerns

Main categories of concern



Note: Visitors may express multiple concerns.

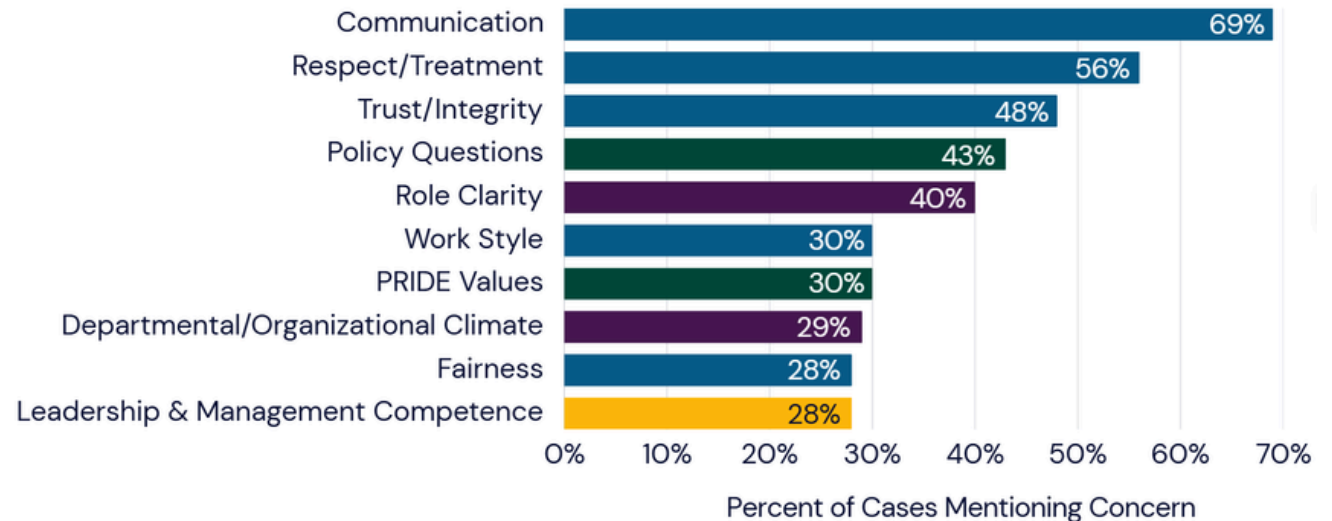
"Thank you so much for your **listening, resources, and a safe space** for us to talk about this situation at hand. I **feel much more confident** going into the resolution of this matter."

Services Provided (N=706 people)

Service	Services Provided	Total People Served
Intake / Consult	706	706
Individual Coaching	682	682
Mediations, Group Conflicts, and Group Facilitations	34	140
Trainings	29	742

Note: "Services Provided" are per person. Coaching and mediation are often provided through multiple sessions over time.

Top 10 Subcategories of Concern





Visitor-Expressed Risks (N=706 cases)

These risks are ones visitors expressly state. Of the 706 Ombuds visitors, 398 (56%) identified at least one associated risk. Unresolved conflict creates both risk and cost.

Risk	Times Expressed
Potential for internal/external grievances	174
Attrition/transfer	133
Violations of policy/Code of Conduct	125
Loss of dep't. productivity due to pervasive conflict	107
Negative publicity	31
Litigation potential	23
High risk safety issue	17

Special Topics of Interest (N=706 cases)

The Office of the Ombuds also confidentially combines “clusters” of concerns to capture important dynamics. These clusters are:

Abuse of Power Cluster:

42% of all visitors raised at least one abuse of power concern, making it a **top 5 concern**

This cluster includes: abuse of positional power/ authority, harassment/ bullying/mobbing, and retaliation

Discrimination Cluster:

31% of all visitors raised at least one discrimination concern, making it a **top 7 concern**

This cluster includes: discrimination due to sexual/gender orientation, race, disability, and other classes

“Thank you for creating space for me to **explore different approaches** and articulate what I’m finding difficult.”

Ombuds Standards of Practice: The Office of the Ombuds operates within University policy and follows the International Ombuds Association Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics. Our services are: confidential, impartial, informal, and independent.

About the Office: To schedule an appointment, call **(415) 502-9600**. Our Office hours are 8:30am to 5pm. Learn more at our website: www.ombuds.ucsf.edu. Our office address is: 490 Illinois Street, 6th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94158.



2025 in Review

2025 was filled with challenges, uncertainty, and change.

National and Institutional Changes: At a national level, research and health care funding were in jeopardy, and shifts in policies regarding DEI initiatives necessitated revisiting how inclusion initiatives were described. International conflicts became local, affecting unit dynamics and policies.

At an institutional level, Hyde Hospital (Saint Francis Hospital) and Stanyan Hospital (St. Mary's Hospital) were integrated into UCSF Health, strengthening UCSF's ability to serve patients across the City while also changing the workplace context for staff and providers. Flexible work schedules emphasized a return to onsite work, which posed challenges, especially for those hired during the COVID pandemic and who had planned for remote positions. Parking restrictions for staff were enforced, and new shuttles and parking options were put in place to support patient access to medical care. Construction cranes became part of the Parnassus landscape. New systems, including MyTime, were initiated. Several strikes stressed services and relationships. Reductions in force destabilized teams, leading to short staffing or closure of units, and job descriptions were changed as a result.

These changes have been challenging, and visitors to the Office of the Ombuds reported working to address challenges productively while also struggling with the limitations and restrictions of the new climate.

Visitor Concerns: Sixty-five ombuds visitors were either complainants or respondents in a formal process, and just under 20% brought a question or concern about a UCSF policy. 29% asked for support in navigating formal processes, either as managers or as direct reports. And while 23% of direct ombuds visitors were faculty members, an additional 18% of non-faculty visitors sought assistance working with a faculty member, bringing the total of "faculty-involved" conflicts to 41% of total cases.

Overall, the concerns brought to the Ombuds office remained similar to previous years, with interpersonal issues remaining the primary reason for seeking information about options. Notably, nearly one third of all ombuds visitors expressed concerns about their own ability to cope with the changes or dynamics, or shared their mental health struggles.

Ombuds Insights Newsletter: Our Office launched a quarterly newsletter with communication and conflict resources. The first volume discussed how complexity combats polarized dynamics. Learn more: <https://ombuds.ucsf.edu/content/newsletter-ombuds-insights>.

Addressing Conflict Competence through Training: The Office of the Ombuds continued co-teaching the 7-session Conflict Competence Training for Managers (CCTM), and developed a version tailored to faculty Principal Investigators in partnership with the Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs office. This tailored training launched in January 2026, and, like the training for managers, received very positive feedback. As one participant wrote: "The training equipped me with the skills and strategies to address disagreements more constructively, help clarify expectations, and manage power dynamics responsibly." A new cohort has already been recruited for a third CCTM series to begin in March 2026. A facilitator manual is in development, to be published this year.

These multi-session, competency-based trainings are designed to work at a systems level, with managers and faculty each building a learning community and developing skills to de-escalate conflict, thereby having an impact on full units and teams. We recognize that formal processes have an important role in addressing workplace conflict, but that conflict dynamics that can be addressed and resolved early can restore a productive, more humane workplace. A person-centered approach is often more effective than a policy-centered approach.

Theme: Managing Uncertainty: Certainty helps people plan, make decisions, and feel anchored. Given the number of global, national and institutional changes, it's not surprising that our Office has supported people coping with uncertainty. Uncertainty orients people to protect and defend, making it difficult to slow down, consider options, and help each other.⁽¹⁾ Uncertainty increases stress, and stress reduces a person's capacity to manage conflict. The challenge before us is to create a culture of courageous conversations, especially in a period of uncertainty.⁽²⁾ The Office of the Ombuds is here to help navigate these challenges.

(1) Stephen Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (2004).

(2) *Leadership in a (Permanent) Crisis* by Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Marty Linsky. *Harvard Business Review* July–August 2009, pg 62–69.