

FY 2020-2021 Services Update

A New Normal

In FY 2020-21, the Office of the Ombuds team continued working remotely for all individual consultations, coaching, mediation, group facilitation and training sessions. Individual appointments (with the attendant cats, kids, delivery people) continued, and the flexibility of Zoom allowed for meeting with people easily. Facilitated meetings and trainings by Zoom were challenging, but continued throughout. The overall number of people served dipped slightly, similar to other Ombuds offices across the country.

In the 2019-2020 FY Ombuds report, analysis revealed differences between concerns that visitors reported pre-COVID (7/1/19-3/31/20) vs. early months of addressing COVID (4/1/20-6/30/20), likely resulting from the shift to working remotely or working onsite with a changed environment. This year’s analysis extends that to concerns noted pre-COVID, in the early months of COVID, and now a full year of working in COVID conditions. The chart to the right notes the Top Ten concerns raised by Ombuds visitors during these three periods. Current 12-month concerns are further grouped into three categories: those which ranked similarly over the three time periods, those which reverted to pre-COVID ranking in importance, and those which shifted once COVID working conditions hit and became the new normal. Overall, the concerns were similar, but their relative positions shifted.

Concerns which remained relatively stable – **Communication, Respect/Treatment, Trust/Integrity, Role Clarity** - are the most commonly cited concerns underlying workplace conflict. Addressing these early and skillfully can prevent many negative consequences of conflict in the work and learning environments.

Concerns which reverted to pre-COVID rankings – **Leadership, Positional Power/Authority, Retaliation** - cluster around perceived and experienced abuses of power. These can be addressed by clear expectations, 360° feedback, and humanistic leadership training for leaders and managers.

Mission: To humanize the experience of working and learning at UCSF by providing a 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

Subcategory Concern	Pre-COVID ranking (7/1/19-3/31/20)	Early-COVID ranking (4/1/20-6/30/20)	12-month ranking (7/1/20-6/30/21)
Communication	1	3	2
Respect/Treatment	2	1	1
Organizational Climate	3	5	6
Work Style	4	7	9
Trust/Integrity	5	2	3
Leadership	6	10	5
Role Clarity	7	6	7
Harassment/Bullying/Mobbing	8	*	*
Positional Power/Authority	9	4	10
Performance Issues	10	*	*
Fairness	*	8	8
Retaliation	*	9	*
COVID-19	*	*	4

* Not in top 10

Stable Pre/Post-COVID	Pre-COVID-like	Post-COVID-like
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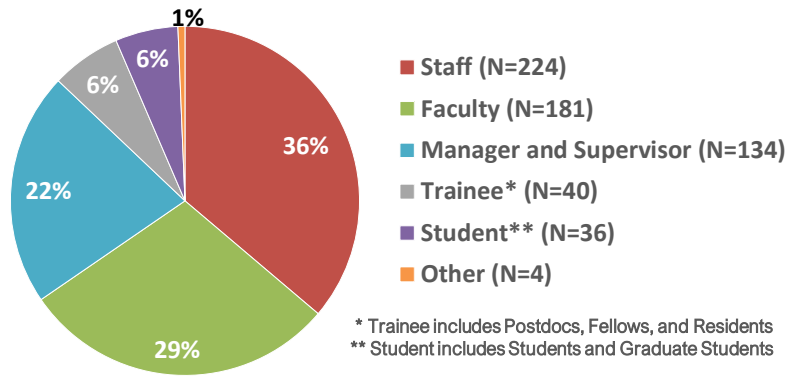
Concerns which have continued with their relative rankings post-COVID focus on the working environment and team dynamics, which have been interrupted from remote work and/or changed staffing and workplace realities. These are: **Organizational Climate, Harassment/Bullying/Mobbing, Performance issues, Work style, and Fairness**. We refer to and collaborate on initiatives with three primary UCSF offices that address these matters-- Learning and Organizational Development, HR, and the Office of Diversity and Outreach.

Each year concerns cited by visitors are reviewed and new themes compel the addition of new codes for the next fiscal year. Last year, the added codes were “Structural Racism” and “COVID”. 18% of visitors cited Structural Racism specifically, and 20% cited discrimination or harassment based on protected class. 37% of visitors identified COVID as an element of their conflict. Both new codes help describe the impact of broader environmental contributors to workplace conflicts. In recognition of new themes, our office has added subcategory codes “Procedural Fairness,” “Remote Work,” and “Scheduling” for 2021-2022.

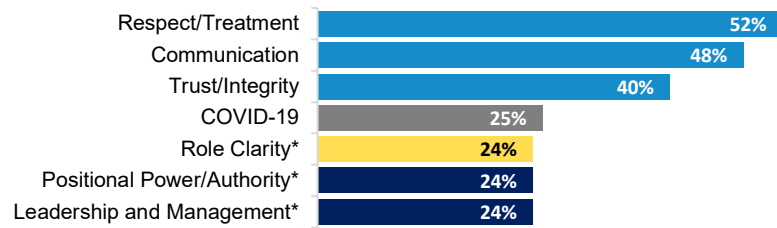
The overarching concerns continue to center on “The Big 6,” dynamics which underlie most conflict issues: **Communication, Respect, Recognition, Role Clarity, Work Style, and Trust**. These themes contribute to many of the other concerns noted (i.e. organizational climate, leadership). Our institutional recommendations remain consistent: transparency in decision-making and grievance/complaint/disciplinary procedures, training for leadership on conflict management skills, and fairness in treatment. To support these goals, we offer the following resources, along with others on our website ombuds.ucsf.edu:

- [Brave Conversations](#)
- [Anatomy of an Apology](#)
- [Universe of Options](#)
- [Conflict Competence Model \(video\)](#)
- [Johari Window \(video\)](#)

2020-2021 Ombuds Visitors Served (N=619 people)



Top 5 Faculty Concerns (N=181 people)

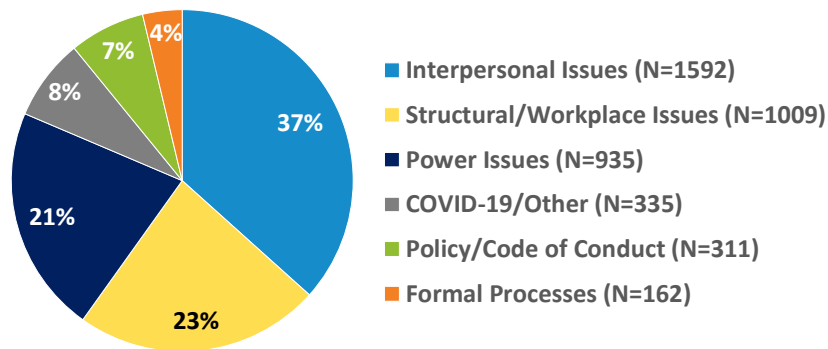


This chart reflects concerns reported by faculty members. In addition to noting when our visitors are members of the faculty, we also note when a visitor's concerns involve a faculty member (e.g. they are in conflict with a faculty member) whether or not the faculty member uses Ombuds services. While faculty members constituted 29% (181) of our visitors, 54% of total cases involved faculty. Given the leadership role held by many faculty members, it is reasonable to expect that conflict management would bring faculty members into problem-solving conversations.

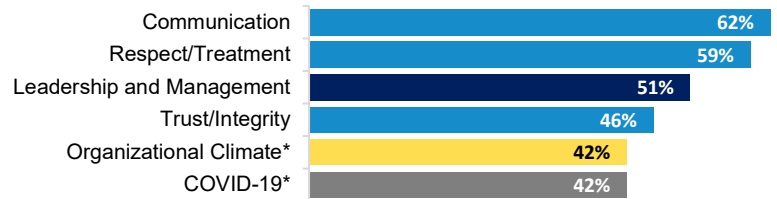
The Office of the Ombuds identifies the risks that visitors expressly state in their confidential meetings. In 2020-2021, of the 619 Ombuds visitors, 61% identified at least one associated risk. Unresolved conflict creates both risk and cost.

Risk	Total
Loss of department productivity due to pervasive conflict	213
Unwarranted attrition/transfer	150
Potential for internal/external grievances	145
Significant violation of policy/Code of Conduct	69
Negative publicity	56
High-risk safety issue	26
Litigation potential	20

All Visitor Concerns: Main Categories (N=4,344 concerns)



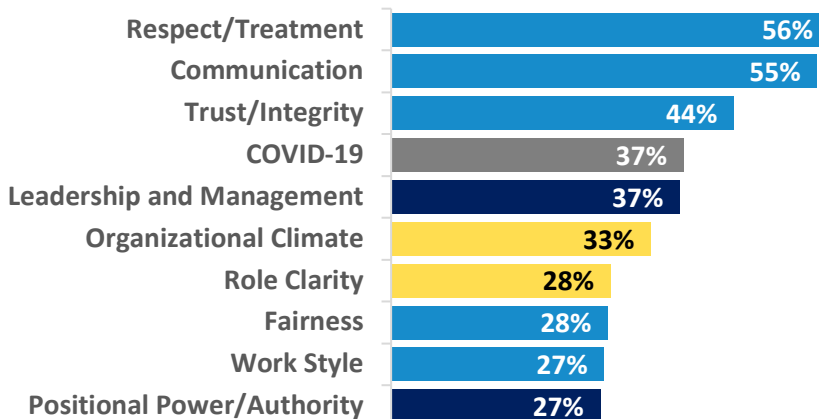
Top 5 Staff Concerns (N=224 people)



Top 5 Manager and Supervisor Concerns (N=134 people)



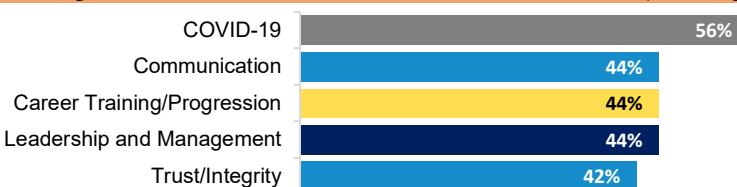
All Visitor Concerns: Top 10 Subcategories (N=619 people)



Top 5 Postdoc, Resident and Fellow Concerns (N=40 people)

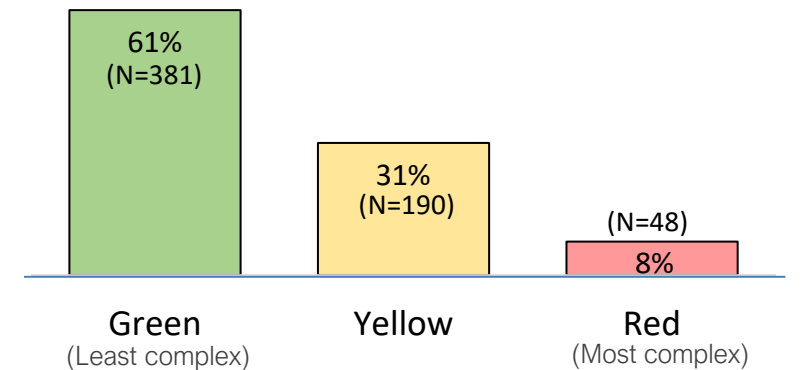


Top 5 Student and Graduate Student Concerns (N=36 people)



*= these concerns are tied.

Ombuds Services Case Complexity (N=619)



The office of the Ombuds classifies the complexity of visitors' concerns into 3 categories: Green (least complex, usually involving 1 or 2 people); Yellow (moderately complex, usually involving more than 4 people and/or multi-unit concerns); and Red (most complex, usually involving many people and/or units with high-stakes concerns.) The chart above shows the distribution of complexity over the 2020-21 fiscal year.