



Interim Summary Report of the Chair of the Ombuds Committee

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I. Introduction

From July 1, 2022, through March 31, 2023, the Ombuds Committee (the “Committee”), consisting of eleven members, has been meeting with “visitors,” the label attached to people reaching out to the Committee. The Committee members received training in August of 2022. Along with seeing visitors, the Committee has conducted a significant amount of outreach to many colleges and committees within those colleges. This is an interim report of the activities of the Committee from July 1, 2022, through March 31, 2023.

II. Composition of the Committee

The Committee members come from diverse perspectives and backgrounds: Of the eleven members, two are staff members, three are students (both undergraduate and graduate students), five are professors (both tenured and continuing status eligible), and one is a designated campus colleague.

III. Breakdown of Type of Visitor, Number of Visits, and Colleges Where Visitors are From

The Committee has seen 62 visitors through March 31, 2023 and has handled 116 total visits. There was an equal distribution of issues relating to education, such as issues in a class, on the one hand, and job-related issues, on the other hand. Approximately 41% of the visitors were staff members, approximately 35% were students (of these, almost all were graduate students), and approximately 23% were faculty members. The visitors were from a variety of colleges, including the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, the College of Science, the College of Education, and the College of Medicine in Tucson.¹

¹ If the number of visits from a college is below five, they are not reported here. However, the ombuds has seen visitors from many other colleges and units within the University, including, without limitation, the College of Veterinary Medicine, the College of Law, the College of Engineering, the College of Fine Arts, the Graduate College, the College of Humanities, the College of Management (Eller), Health Sciences, and the College of Medicine (Phoenix).



IV. Emerging Themes from Discussions

Issues emerged regarding the following:

- Treatment of international graduate students.
- Timely payment of graduate assistants' stipends and other costs.
- Graduate assistants not understanding their rights and receiving inconsistent treatment upon termination.
- Posting of information about controversial issues on listservs.
- Inconsistent and sometimes incomplete procedures when onboarding new employees.
- Non-responsiveness of both central and embedded human resources units.
- Lack of clarity of roles in labs between lab managers and Ph.D. students.
- Inconsistent treatment of employees in terms of which employees are allowed flexible work arrangements and which employees are not allowed such arrangements.
- Trouble communicating with respect when the people involved are from different generations, different cultures, or hold different political views.