

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE
Office of the Ombuds

January 14, 2014

MEMORANDUM

To: Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

From: Sarah Miller Espinosa, Ombuds

Subject: Ombuds Update – Fall 2013 Overview

This memorandum provides a brief update with information about the number of visitors and types of concerns discussed with the Office of the Ombuds during the ombuds' inaugural semester, fall of 2013. It is intended to provide an overview of the information gathered while protecting the anonymity of the employee visitors who utilized the ombuds' services, and represents one part of the overall picture of employee engagement. An annual report for fiscal 2014 will be published in August with analysis and recommendations for positive change.

Background

The Office of the Ombuds was established by President DeRionne Pollard, after considering recommendations from the Employee Engagement Advisory Group, as well as the Integrated Conflict Management System workgroup, both of which include governance leaders and faculty and staff union leaders. Last August, the Office of the Ombuds began assisting faculty, staff, and administrators in resolving workplace concerns by helping to clarify issues, providing information, and identifying strategies and options that address workplace challenges.

The office's charter requires that the ombuds operate in accordance with the International Ombudsman Association's (IOA) Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. As such, the office is not affiliated with any compliance function and does not serve as an agent of notice for the College. The Office of the Ombuds adheres to IOA standards: employees' interactions with the office are **voluntary, informal, and confidential**; and the ombuds is **impartial and independent**. For additional information about the Office of the Ombuds and its responsibilities, please visit www.montgomerycollege.edu/ombuds.

Visitors

One IOA benchmark of a well established ombuds program is that it is likely to serve between three and five percent of the employee population each year. From August through December, the Office of the Ombuds served three percent of the Montgomery College employee population, 87 individual employees (also referred to as "visitors"). In regard to specific employee groups, the Office of the Ombuds served approximately two percent of the full-time faculty, five percent

of the staff, and eight percent of administrators.¹ The Office of the Ombuds served less than one percent of the part-time faculty.

After meeting with the ombuds, visitors are provided with a survey requesting feedback to determine what is working well and what areas need improvement. As of December, the survey response rate has been 40 percent. Please see Attachment A for a summary of survey results.

Concerns

The ombuds categorizes the concerns raised by visitors utilizing the IOA's uniform reporting categories, of which there are nine (see Attachment B):

- (1) compensation and benefits
- (2) evaluative (supervisory) relationships
- (3) peer and colleague relationships
- (4) career progression and development
- (5) legal, regulatory, financial, and compliance
- (6) safety, health, and physical environment
- (7) services/administrative issues/concerns
- (8) organizational, strategic, and mission related
- (9) values, ethics, and standards

In addition, there are specific sub-categories within each category.

Chart 1 reflects the categories of concerns seen to date by the ombuds. A majority of the concerns raised by visitors—54 percent—dealt with the evaluative (supervisory) relationship category. Chart 2 provides additional detail regarding these concerns. Forty-one percent of the issues identified in the evaluative (supervisory) relationship category are related to supervisors' respect and/or treatment of subordinates, including concerns related to demonstrations of inappropriate regard for people, not listening, rudeness, inequity of treatment, lack of trust/integrity, bullying, and retaliation.

Chart 3 reflects the concerns identified by category as a percentage of overall issues in a particular employee group. These employee groups, specifically and respectively, are full-time faculty and staff. For instance, of the concerns discussed with staff visitors, 58 percent were related to evaluative relationships. In contrast, of the issues discussed with full-time faculty visitors, 38 percent were related to evaluative relationships.²

Annual Report – August 2014

As previously mentioned, updated information, analysis, and recommendations for change will be included in the Office of the Ombuds fiscal year 2014 annual report to be published in August 2014. Given the data already collected, the annual report will devote attention to at least three topic areas: (1) College's level of commitment to develop and support model leaders/supervisors; (2) the advisability of promulgating standards of conduct and a code of ethics for all employees to promote a common understanding of obligations and responsibilities throughout the organization; and (3) trends related to specific units within the organization.

If you would like to schedule a confidential appointment, please e-mail ombuds@montgomerycollege.edu or call 240-687-6188.

Chart 1: Categories of Concerns Expressed by Visitors

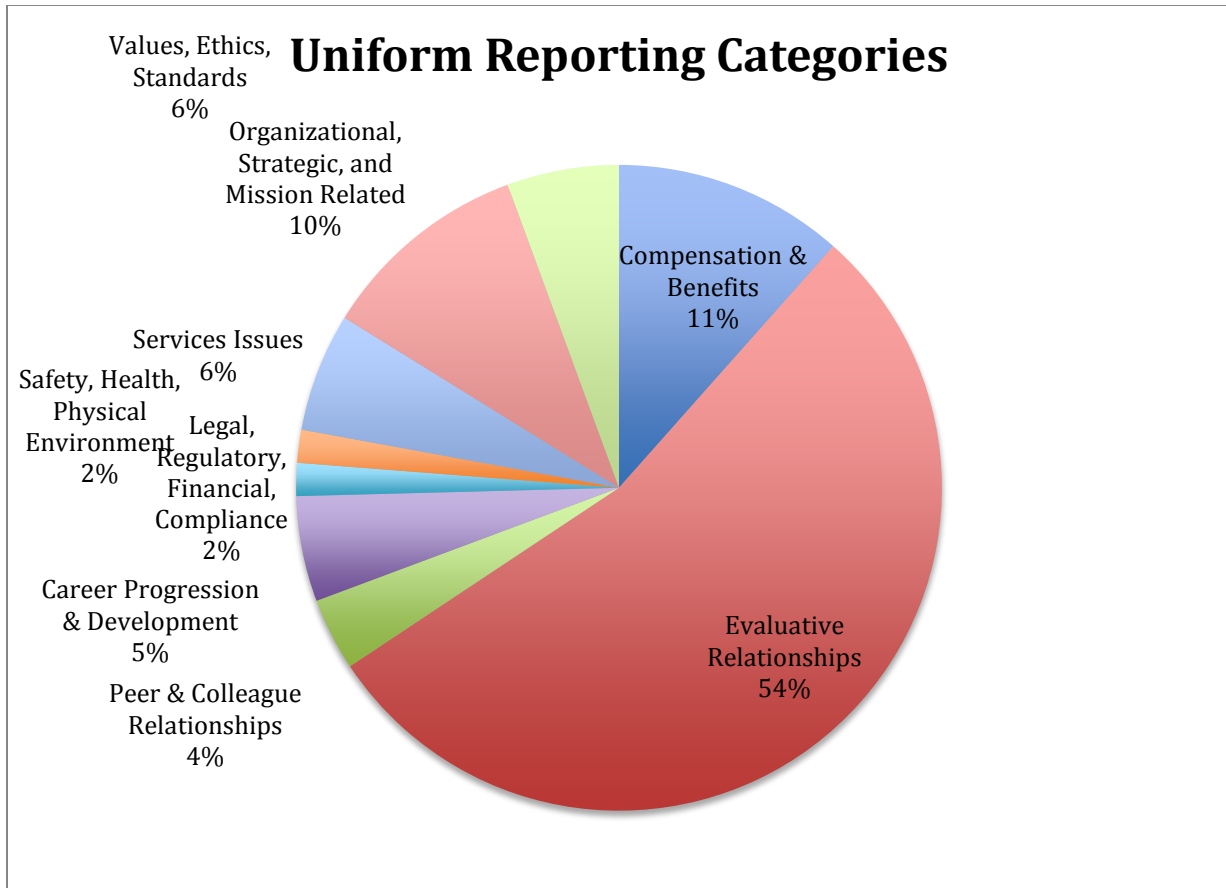


Chart 2: Subcategories of Concerns Related to Evaluative Relationships

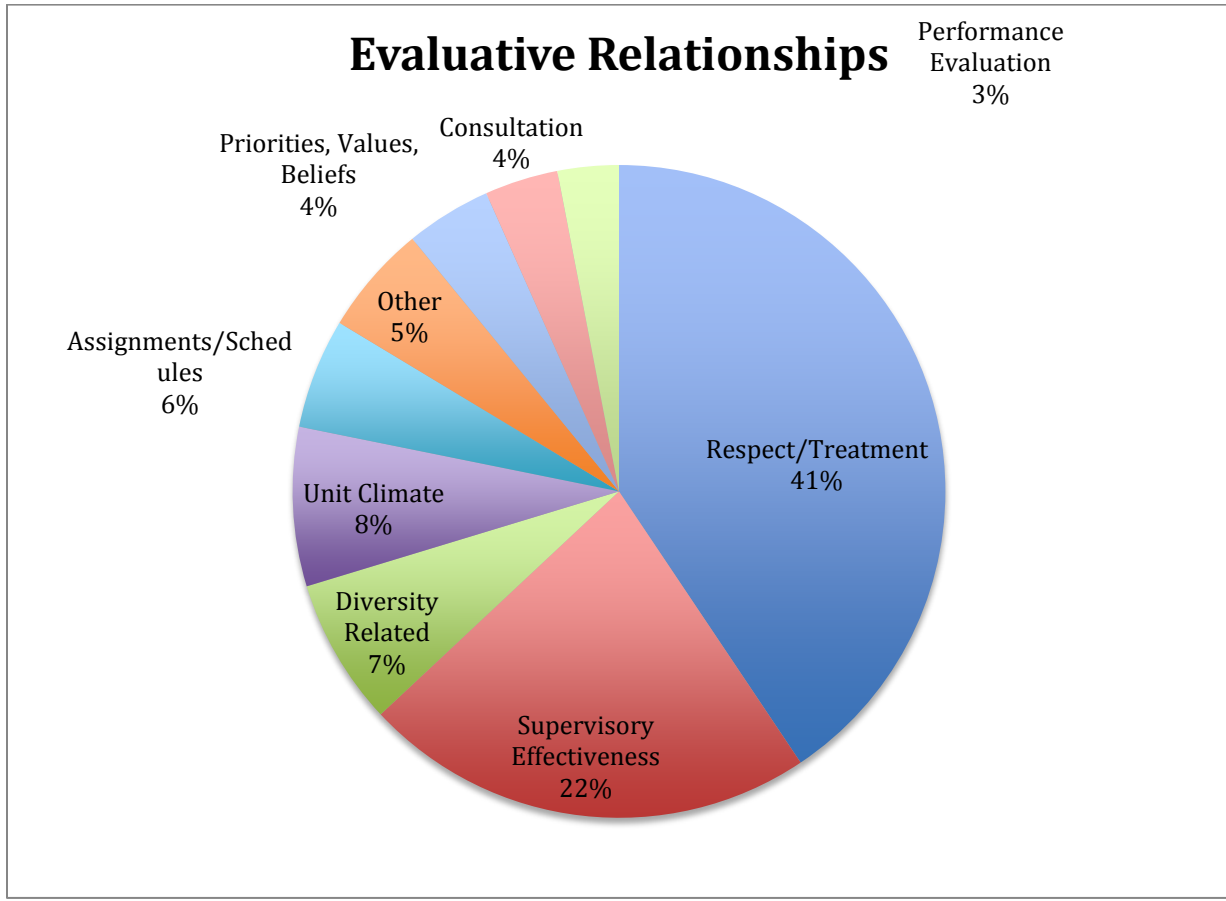
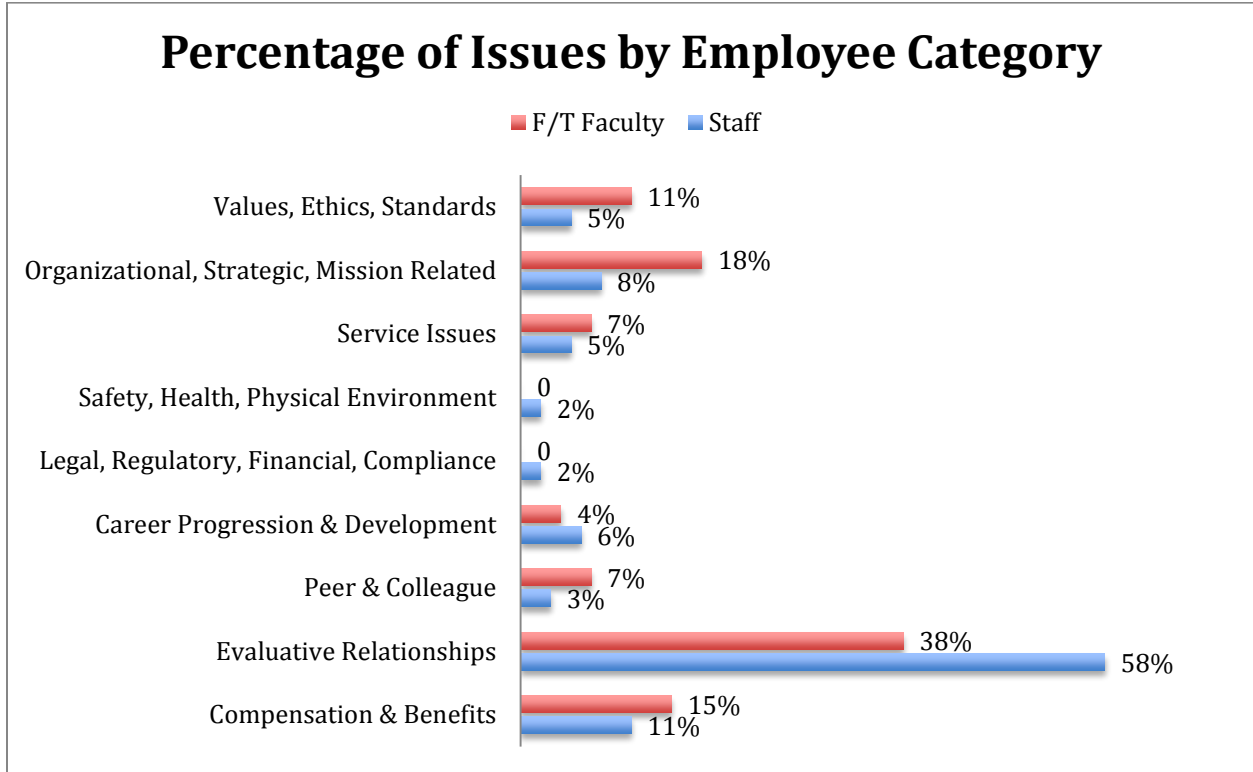


Chart 3: Concerns Expressed by Employee Categories



¹ The employee population of 2,757 was derived from the October 14, 2013, Human Resources, Development, and Engagement employee report, which listed 597 full-time faculty, 846 part-time faculty, 1,229 associate and support staff (including temporary with benefits employees), and 85 administrators.

² Given the relatively low number of part-time faculty and administrator visitors, as well as the number of concerns identified by those groups, and to preserve the anonymity of these visitors, no information is presented in regard to these employee groups.

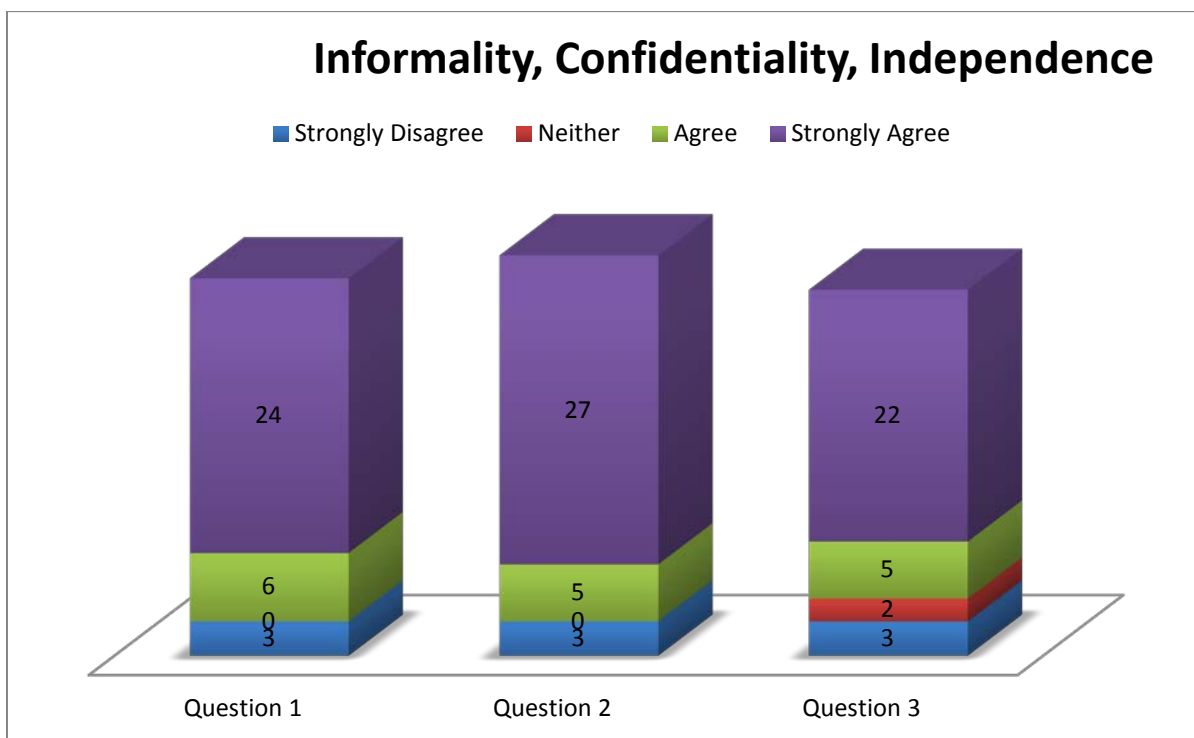
Attachment A

**OFFICE OF THE OMBUDS
Visitor Feedback – Fall 2013**

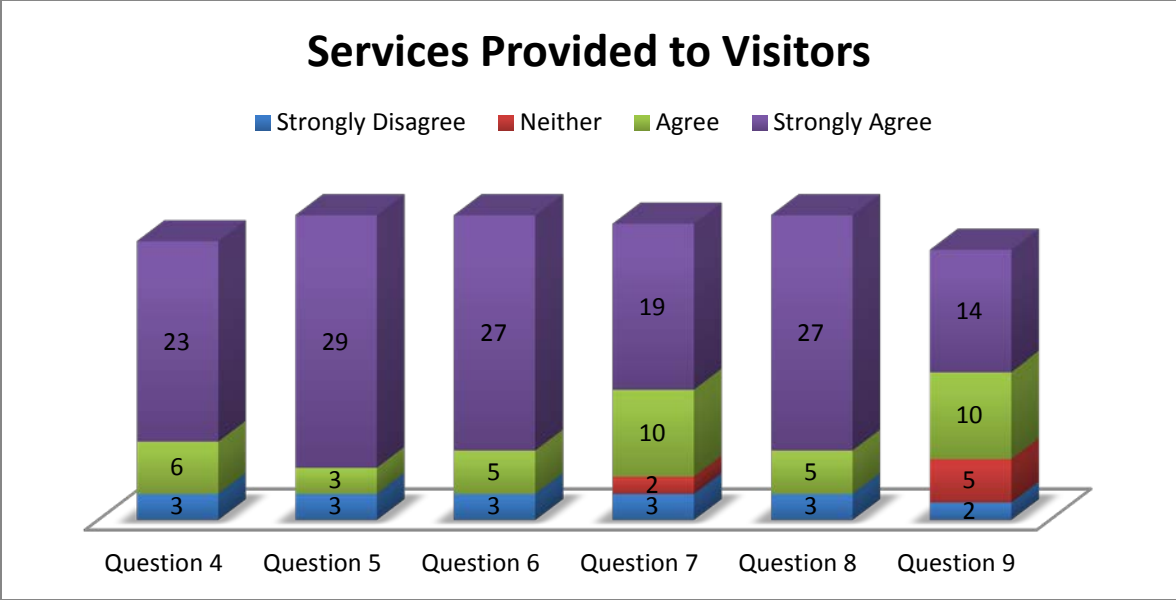
January 6, 2014

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDS Visitor Feedback – Fall 2013

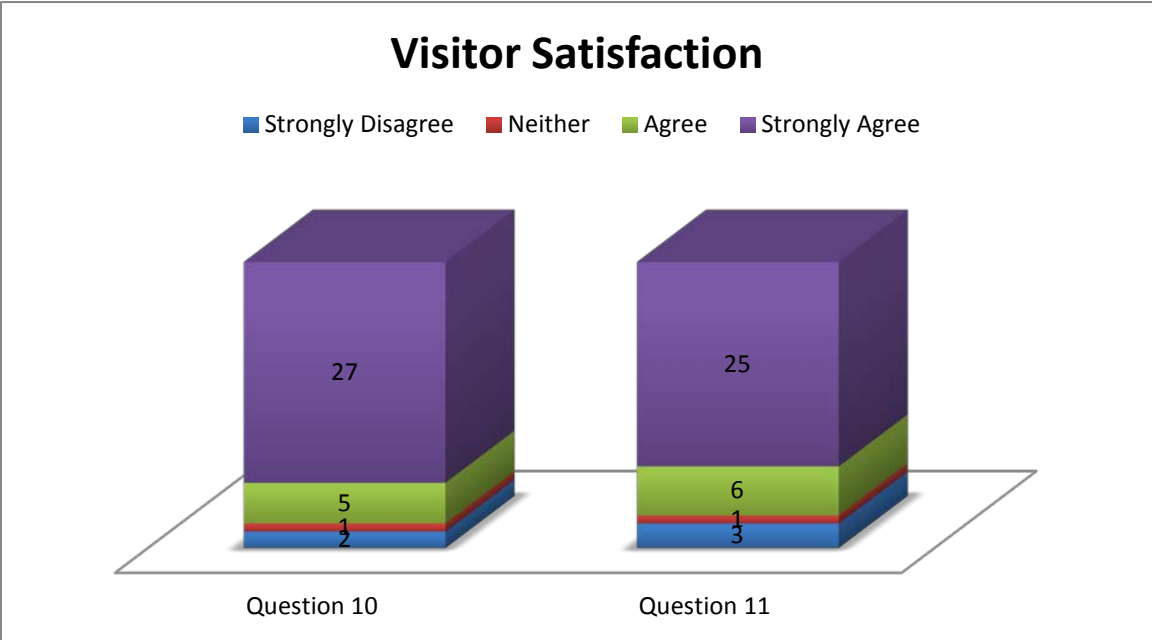
This information was compiled from the 35 completed evaluations that were returned to the Office of the Ombuds as of December 20, 2013¹. Currently, comparing the number of returned surveys and the overall number of employee visitors, there is a 40 percent rate of return. Please note that not every visitor provided responses to every question on the survey. Please also note that five possible responses were provided for questions one to eleven: “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “neither”, “agree”, and “strongly agree”. No respondent provided a response of “disagree” to any question. Up to three respondents provided responses of “strongly disagree”.



1. The Office of the Ombuds provides an informal, off-the-record resource for all employees.
2. I trust the ombuds to maintain confidentiality.
3. The Office of the Ombuds acts independently from other organizational units and management.



4. The ombuds responded to my email(s)/phone call(s) in a timely manner.
5. The ombuds listened carefully to my concerns.
6. The ombuds treated me fairly, without prejudice or bias.
7. The ombuds helped me identify and evaluate the options available to address my concerns.
8. I found the ombuds to be knowledgeable about relevant institutional policies and procedures.
9. The ombuds provided coaching to assist me in resolving workplace issues.



10. I would refer others to the Office of the Ombuds for assistance.
11. Overall, I was satisfied with the assistance I received from the Office of the Ombuds.

Attachment B

**INTERNATIONAL OMBUDSMAN ASSOCIATION
Uniform Reporting Categories**

1. Compensation & Benefits

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about the equity, appropriateness and competitiveness of employee compensation, benefits and other benefit programs.

- 1.a **Compensation** (rate of pay, salary amount, job salary classification/level)
- 1.b **Payroll** (administration of pay, check wrong or delayed)
- 1.c **Benefits** (decisions related to medical, dental, life, vacation/sick leave, education, worker's compensation insurance, etc.)
- 1.d **Retirement, Pension** (eligibility, calculation of amount, retirement pension benefits)
- 1.e **Other** (any other employee compensation or benefit not described by the above sub-categories)

2. Evaluative Relationships

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries arising between people in evaluative relationships (i.e. supervisor-employee, faculty-student.)

- 2.a **Priorities, Values, Beliefs** (differences about what should be considered important – or most important – often rooted in ethical or moral beliefs)
- 2.b **Respect/Treatment** (demonstrations of inappropriate regard for people, not listening, rudeness, crudeness, etc.)
- 2.c **Trust/Integrity** (suspicion that others are not being honest, whether or to what extent one wishes to be honest, etc.)
- 2.d **Reputation** (possible impact of rumors and/or gossip about professional or personal matters)
- 2.e **Communication** (quality and/or quantity of communication)
- 2.f **Bullying, Mobbing** (abusive, threatening, and/or coercive behaviors)
- 2.g **Diversity-Related** (comments or behaviors perceived to be insensitive, offensive, or intolerant on the basis of an identity-related difference such as race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation)
- 2.h **Retaliation** (punitive behaviors for previous actions or comments, whistleblower)
- 2.i **Physical Violence** (actual or threats of bodily harm to another)
- 2.j **Assignments/Schedules** (appropriateness or fairness of tasks, expected volume of work)
- 2.k **Feedback** (feedback or recognition given, or responses to feedback received)
- 2.l **Consultation** (requests for help in dealing with issues between two or more individuals they supervise/teach or with other unusual situations in evaluative relationships)

2.m Performance Appraisal/Grading

(job/academic performance in formal or informal evaluation)

- 2.n **Departmental Climate** (prevailing behaviors, norms, or attitudes within a department for which supervisors or faculty have responsibility.)
- 2.o **Supervisory Effectiveness** (management of department or classroom, failure to address issues)
- 2.p **Insubordination** (refusal to do what is asked)
- 2.q **Discipline** (appropriateness, timeliness, requirements, alternatives, or options for responding)
- 2.r **Equity of Treatment** (favoritism, one or more individuals receive preferential treatment)
- 2.s **Other** (any other evaluative relationship not described by the above sub-categories)

3. Peer and Colleague Relationships

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries involving peers or colleagues who do not have a supervisory-employee or student-professor relationship (e.g., two staff members within the same department or conflict involving members of a student organization.)

- 3.a **Priorities, Values, Beliefs** (differences about what should be considered important – or most important – often rooted in ethical or moral beliefs)
- 3.b **Respect/Treatment** (demonstrations of inappropriate regard for people, not listening, rudeness, crudeness, etc.)
- 3.c **Trust/Integrity** (suspicion that others are not being honest, whether or to what extent one wishes to be honest, etc.)
- 3.d **Reputation** (possible impact of rumors and/or gossip about professional or personal matters)
- 3.e **Communication** (quality and/or quantity of communication)
- 3.f **Bullying, Mobbing** (abusive, threatening, and/or coercive behaviors)
- 3.g **Diversity-Related** (comments or behaviors perceived to be insensitive, offensive, or intolerant on the basis of an identity-related difference such as race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation)
- 3.h **Retaliation** (punitive behaviors for previous actions or comments, whistleblower)
- 3.i **Physical Violence** (actual or threats of bodily harm to another)
- 3.j **Other** (any peer or colleague relationship not described by the above sub-categories)

4. Career Progression and Development

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about administrative processes and decisions regarding entering and leaving a job, what it entails, (i.e., recruitment, nature and place of assignment, job security, and separation.)

- 4.a **Job Application/Selection and Recruitment Processes** (recruitment and selection processes, facilitation of job applications, short-listing and criteria for selection, disputed decisions linked to recruitment and selection)
- 4.b **Job Classification and Description** (changes or disagreements over requirements of assignment, appropriate tasks)
- 4.c **Involuntary Transfer/Change of Assignment** (notice, selection and special dislocation rights/benefits, removal from prior duties, unrequested change of work tasks)
- 4.d **Tenure/Position Security/Ambiguity** (security of position or contract, provision of secure contractual categories)
- 4.e **Career Progression** (promotion, reappointment, or tenure)
- 4.f **Rotation and Duration of Assignment** (non-completion or over-extension of assignments in specific settings/countries, lack of access or involuntary transfer to specific roles/assignments, requests for transfer to other places/duties/roles)
- 4.g **Resignation** (concerns about whether or how to voluntarily terminate employment or how such a decision might be communicated appropriately)
- 4.h **Termination/Non-Renewal** (end of contract, non-renewal of contract, disputed permanent separation from organization)
- 4.i **Re-employment of Former or Retired Staff** (loss of competitive advantages associated with re-hiring retired staff, favoritism)
- 4.j **Position Elimination** (elimination or abolition of an individual's position)
- 4.k **Career Development, Coaching, Mentoring** (classroom, on-the-job, and varied assignments as training and developmental opportunities)
- 4.l **Other** (any other issues linked to recruitment, assignment, job security or separation not described by the above sub-categories)

5. Legal, Regulatory, Financial and Compliance

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries that may create a legal risk (financial, sanction etc.) for the organization or its members if not addressed, including issues related to waste, fraud or abuse.

- 5.a **Criminal Activity** (threats or crimes planned, observed, or experienced, fraud)
- 5.b **Business and Financial Practices** (inappropriate actions that abuse or waste organizational finances, facilities or equipment)
- 5.c **Harassment** (unwelcome physical, verbal, written, e-mail, audio, video psychological or sexual conduct that creates a hostile or intimidating environment)
- 5.d **Discrimination** (different treatment compared with others or exclusion from some benefit on the basis of, for example, gender, race, age, national origin, religion, etc.[being part of an Equal Employment Opportunity protected category – applies in the U.S.])
- 5.e **Disability, Temporary or Permanent, Reasonable Accommodation** (extra time on exams, provision of assistive technology, interpreters, or Braille materials including questions on policies, etc. for people with disabilities)
- 5.f **Accessibility** (removal of physical barriers, providing ramps, elevators, etc.)
- 5.g **Intellectual Property Rights** (e.g., copyright and patent infringement)
- 5.h **Privacy and Security of Information** (release or access to individual or organizational private or confidential information)
- 5.i **Property Damage** (personal property damage, liabilities)
- 5.j **Other** (any other legal, financial and compliance issue not described by the above sub-categories)
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6. Safety, Health, and Physical Environment

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about Safety, Health and Infrastructure-related issues.

- 6.a **Safety** (physical safety, injury, medical evacuation, meeting federal and state requirements for training and equipment)
- 6.b **Physical Working/Living Conditions** (temperature, odors, noise, available space, lighting, etc)
- 6.c **Ergonomics** (proper set-up of workstation affecting physical functioning)
- 6.d **Cleanliness** (sanitary conditions and facilities to prevent the spread of disease)
- 6.e **Security** (adequate lighting in parking lots, metal detectors, guards, limited access to building by outsiders, anti-terrorists measures (not for classifying “compromise of classified or top secret” information)

- 6.f **Telework/Flexplace** (ability to work from home or other location because of business or personal need, e.g., in case of man-made or natural emergency)
- 6.g **Safety Equipment** (access to/use of safety equipment as well as access to or use of safety equipment, e.g., fire extinguisher)
- 6.h **Environmental Policies** (policies not being followed, being unfair ineffective, cumbersome)
- 6.i **Work Related Stress and Work-Life Balance** (Post-Traumatic Stress, Critical Incident Response, internal/external stress, e.g. divorce, shooting, caring for sick, injured)
- 6.j **Other** (any safety, health, or physical environment issue not described by the above sub-categories)
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7. Services/Administrative Issues

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about services or administrative offices including from external parties.

- 7.a **Quality of Services** (how well services were provided, accuracy or thoroughness of information, competence, etc.)
- 7.b **Responsiveness/Timeliness** (time involved in getting a response or return call or about the time for a complete response to be provided)
- 7.c **Administrative Decisions and Interpretation/Application of Rules** (impact of non-disciplinary decisions, decisions about requests for administrative and academic services, e.g., exceptions to policy deadlines or limits, refund requests, appeals of library or parking fines, application for financial aid, etc.)
- 7.d **Behavior of Service Provider(s)** (how an administrator or staff member spoke to or dealt with a constituent, customer, or client, e.g., rude, inattentive, or impatient)
- 7.e **Other** (any services or administrative issue not described by the above sub-categories)
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8. Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries that relate to the whole or some part of an organization.

- 8.a **Strategic and Mission-Related/ Strategic and Technical Management** (principles, decisions and actions related to where and how the organization is moving)
- 8.b **Leadership and Management** (quality/capacity of management and/or management/leadership decisions, suggested training, reassignments and reorganizations)

- 8.c **Use of Positional Power/Authority** (lack or abuse of power provided by individual's position)
- 8.d **Communication** (content, style, timing, effects and amount of organizational and leader's communication, quality of communication about strategic issues)
- 8.e **Restructuring and Relocation** (issues related to broad scope planned or actual restructuring and/or relocation affecting the whole or major divisions of an organization, e.g. downsizing, off shoring, outsourcing)
- 8.f **Organizational Climate** (issues related to organizational morale and/or capacity for functioning)
- 8.g **Change Management** (making, responding or adapting to organizational changes, quality of leadership in facilitating organizational change)
- 8.h **Priority Setting and/or Funding** (disputes about setting organizational/departmental priorities and/or allocation of funding within programs)
- 8.i **Data, Methodology, Interpretation of Results** (scientific disputes about the conduct, outcomes and interpretation of studies and resulting data for policy)
- 8.j **Interdepartment/Interorganization Work/Territory** (disputes about which department/organization should be doing what/taking the lead)
- 8.k **Other** (any organizational issue not described by the above sub-categories)
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9. Values, Ethics, and Standards

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about the fairness of organizational values, ethics, and/or standards, the application of related policies and/or procedures, or the need for creation or revision of policies, and/or standards.

- 9.a **Standards of Conduct** (fairness, applicability or lack of behavioral guidelines and/or Codes of Conduct, e.g., Academic Honesty, plagiarism, Code of Conduct, conflict of interest)
- 9.b **Values and Culture** (questions, concerns or issues about the values or culture of the organization)
- 9.c **Scientific Conduct/Integrity** (scientific or research misconduct or misdemeanors, e.g., authorship; falsification of results)
- 9.d **Policies and Procedures NOT Covered in Broad Categories 1 thru 8** (fairness or lack of policy or the application of the policy, policy not followed, or needs revision, e.g., appropriate dress, use of internet or cell phones)
- 9.e **Other** (Other policy, procedure, ethics or standards issues not described in the above sub-categories)
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