



**Faculty Ombuds Program
Annual Report 2017-2018**

**Prepared by
Dr. Eugene Moan, Program Coordinator**

May 11, 2018

Faculty Ombuds Program

Annual Report 2017-2018

Summary

Highlights This needs revision

- Interpersonal conflicts continue to be the most common presenting concern brought to the Faculty Ombuds Program (FOP). The FOP provides a valuable resource for those who want to address these concerns in a neutral, confidential environment.
- During the 2016-2017 academic year seventy-four (74) total contacts were made with the FOP representing thirty-eight (38) unique individuals. While the number of visitors to the FOP decreased during the past year, the number of contacts is an increase in the total number of contacts in comparison with the previous academic year.
- The number of contacts with the FOP coordinator has risen consistently since 2011.
- The largest category of visitors were full-time faculty. Forty-two percent (42%) of visitors to the FOP were tenure track faculty. Non-tenure track faculty comprise approximately 51% of the total faculty but only 32% of the visitors to the FOP. The status of six additional faculty visitors was not determined.
- Individual consultation was the primary intervention. In most cases, problem-solving strategies or clarification of university policies were the main forms of service offered. Referral to other campus resources was recommended in twenty-five (25) cases. In eight (8) situations a facilitated discussion was undertaken involving the original visitor and another party or parties with whom they were in conflict. These numbers are similar to those in previous Annual Reports.
- Key issues emerged during the past year regarding free speech on campus. Conflicts between faculty and students in this regard were exacerbated by the use of social media to subject faculty to harassment. Addressing and balancing the rights of all parties will be an on-going campus issue in the coming year.
- Collaborative efforts continue with the Faculty Professional Development Program to provide presentations on topics of interest including strategies for collaboration with colleagues in order to facilitate career advancement opportunities.
- Meetings were held with key persons in the university community to maintain personal contacts and to review services being offered through the Faculty Ombuds Program (FOP).

History of the Faculty Ombudsman Program at Northern Arizona University

Academic year 2017-2018 marks the continuation of services provided to faculty through the services of an Ombudsman. These services have been offered to various constituencies at Northern Arizona University for over twenty years. The initial program served faculty only but over time, the Ombudsman Office expanded to provide services to all segments of the university community. The scope of services offered eventually reached its apex during the 1999-2000 academic year when nearly 700 contacts were made with the office, which was staffed by two full-time ombudsmen, one full-time staff member, and a cadre of faculty volunteers who were trained in mediation techniques and who were assigned to mediate faculty disputes. During this time services were available to faculty, classified staff, students, and outside parties in their dealings with university personnel. Due to budgetary and other concerns, funding to the Ombudsman program was reduced which resulted in staff reductions and limits on the scope of services. Ombudsman services were not offered at all from 2004-2006. The Faculty Ombudsman Program in its present form was re-established in 2006 with a half-time position under the direction of Dr. Gary Buckley. The Faculty Ombuds Program (FOP) is funded through the Provost's Office. Dr. Phoebe Morgan served as the Coordinator of the program from 2008-2011, succeeded by Dr. Michael Ketterer who served as coordinator from 2011-2013. Dr. Eugene Moan, assumed the coordinator position in the summer of 2013 and served through the 2017-2018. Beginning with the start of the Fall 2018 semester Dr. Bruce Fox will take over the role of Coordinator of the program.

Present status of the Faculty Ombuds Program

The coordinator's position continues to be a half-time appointment. Services are available to all full-time and part-time faculty whether based on the Mountain Campus or at other locations. The program office is located in room 230 of Peterson Hall, a private location outside of the main flow of university traffic. For the past five years Dr. Eugene Moan served as coordinator of the Faculty Ombuds Program (FOP). With Dr. Moan's retirement, Dr. Bruce Fox became coordinator of the program. Dr. Fox is a tenured full professor in the School of Forestry in the College of Forestry, Engineering and Natural Sciences and has been employed in various teaching, administrative, and service roles at NAU since 1985. Dr. Fox has served in multiple administrative and service positions during his time at NAU. Positions that he has previously held include being chair of the School of Forestry, Director of the Honors Program, and Director of the Masters of Administration Program. He has been a member of the Faculty Senate and served as president of the group from 2015-2017. He is a current member of the Commission on the Status of Women. He has previous training in mediation and will complete Ombudsman training through the International Ombudsman Association in the summer of 2018.

Services of the Faculty Ombuds Program will continue to be offered under the Standards of Practice of the International Ombudsman Association (IOA). These services follow the IOA tenets of being:

- **neutral**, that is not advocating for a person or outcome but rather advocating for a fair process in all situations

- **informal**, with concerns being addressed outside of other processes of record (such as the Equity and Access office, etc.)
- **confidential**, unless that confidentiality is waived by the party seeking services or if an eminent threat is being made that would disrupt the safety of the university community
- **independent**, in that the Coordinator functions outside of the usual university administrative channels

Recipients of services through the FOP come voluntarily. The Coordinator has no power to demand that any party participate in services offered. The FOP is not an office of record and no written notes concerning the issues presented by any visitor to the office are kept. The Annual Report is the only documentation of services provided through the FOP during a given academic year.

Faculty Ombuds Office activities 2017-2018

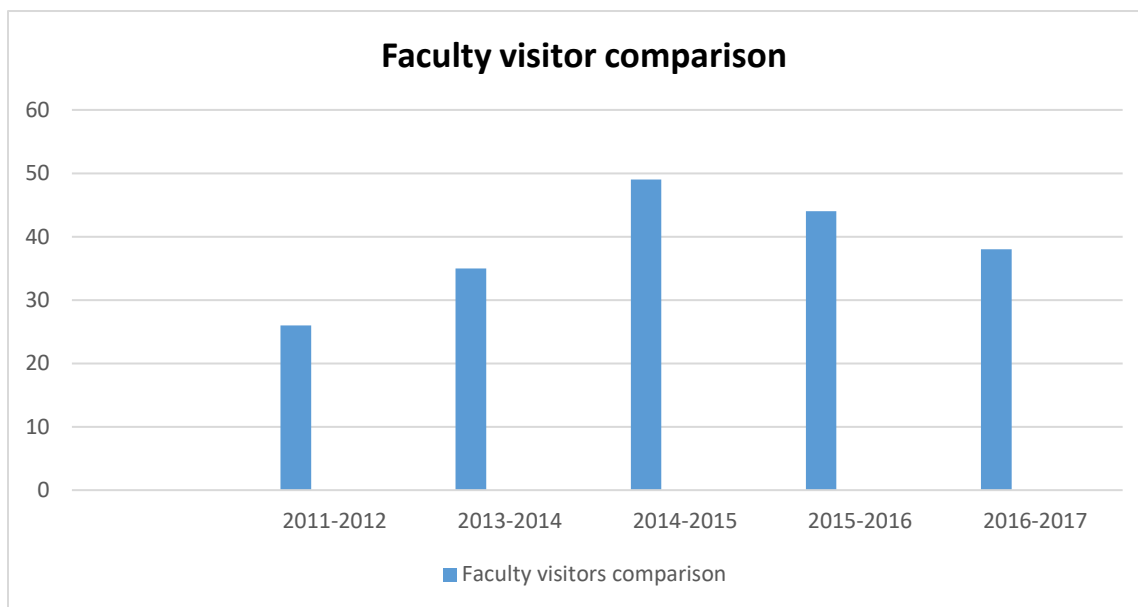
Since the effective operation of an Ombudsman program involves collaboration and referral to other resources on campus, effort is placed on establishing and maintaining direct personal contact with key persons on the Northern Arizona University campus. During the 2017-2018 academic year, in-person meetings were held with the following offices and persons:

Contacts with key parties 2017-2018
Meeting with then Vice Provost Roger Bounds to outline duties and expectations
Meeting with Equity and Access staff – Priscilla Mills, Pam Heinonen and Amanda Loveless
Meeting with Employee Assistance and Wellness director Betsy Kerr and staff
Meeting with former Human Resources director Diane Verkest
Meeting with Larry Gallagher, Program Director, Faculty Professional Development Office
Meeting with Diane Director of Human Resources hired ???????
Videotaped presentation to Faculty Senate on highlights of the Annual Report
Presentation to the Academic Chairs Council
Presentation to the Provost's Academic Leadership Council

Office hours were kept consistent with those established in the previous year. In addition, all calls are returned within 24 hours and individual appointments can be made at a time that is convenient for the faculty member seeking services. Over the course of the 2017-2018 academic year, seventy-four (74) total contacts were made with the FOP representing thirty-eight (38) unique individuals. Faculty members constituted the largest category of persons who contacted the FOP for assistance (34), followed by academic professionals/staff members (2), and students (2). Of the faculty members served, sixteen (16) were tenured/tenure track and twelve (12) were non-tenure track. Six (6) additional faculty visitors were served by the FOB during the past year but their status of tenure track vs. non-tenure track was not reported.

The decline in the total number of unique visitors to the FOP is partially explained by a drop in the number of group interventions undertaken by the coordinator during the 2016-2017 academic

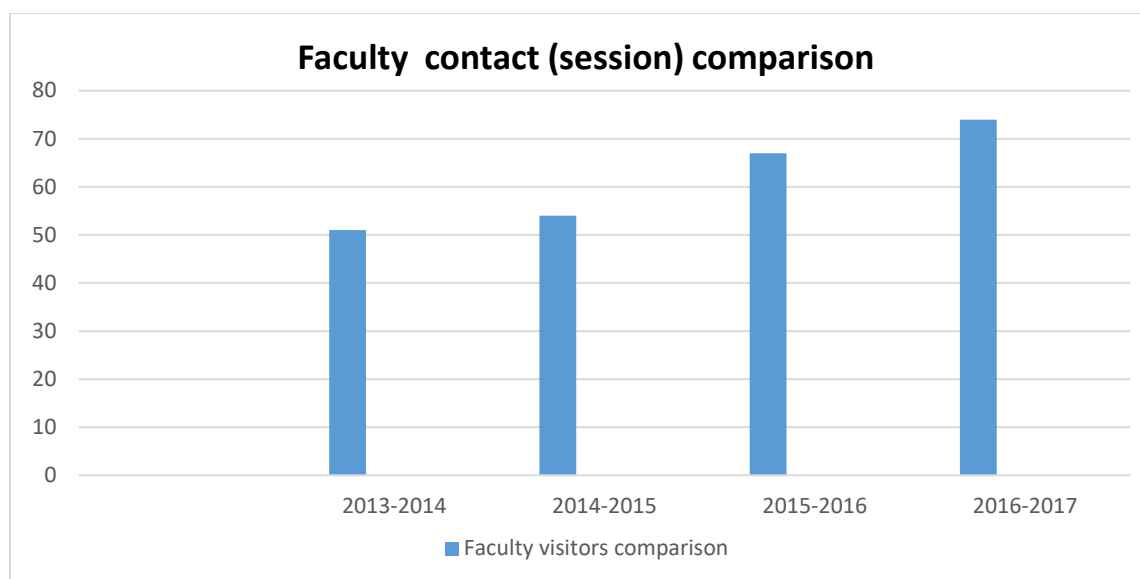
year. In the previous year, group interventions resulted in eighteen (18) faculty members receiving services in this format. While the number of unique visitors to the FOP decreased, the number of actual sessions increased during the 2016-2017 academic year. This suggests that issues brought to the Ombuds Office are more complex and require more meetings in order to fully address the concerns presented.



While the number of visitors has declined slightly over the past two years, the average of forty-one (41) visitors per year during the past three years (2014-2017) is higher than the average of thirty and one half (30.5) visitors during the previous two years (2011-2013).

As noted above, number of faculty contacts (actual sessions) increased over the numbers seen in the 2015-2016 academic year. During the 2015-2016 academic year, 89.4% of the faculty contacts involved full-time personnel. This represented a decrease in the percentage of part-time vs. full-time faculty visitors to the FOP. It was noted in the 2015-2016 Annual Report that while the number of part-time faculty visitors decreased, there may have been an increase in the number of non-tenure track vs. tenure track faculty visitors. To document this possible trend, data on the tenure status of full-time faculty visitors was kept for the 2016-2017 academic year.

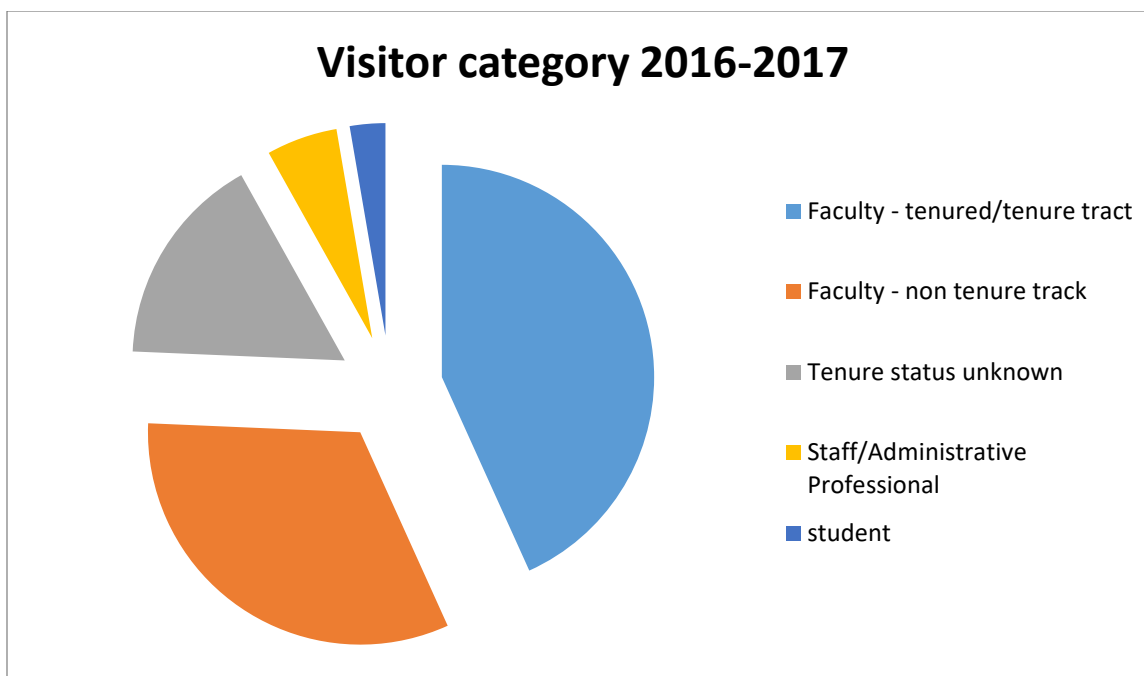
The following chart shows the number of faculty contacts with the FOP over the past four years.



In past reports, full time vs. part time faculty status was tracked. With changes in the demographics of the faculty, tenure status appeared to be a more important consideration. Tenured/tenure track faculty comprise 49% of the Fall 2016 faculty. Non-tenure track faculty comprise 51% of the faculty at the current time (Northern Arizona University Fact Book 2016-2017). While part-time faculty continue to contact the FOP for services, the number is very small and has declined over the past several years. In 2013 there were 639 part-time faculty but this number dropped to 569 for the current year (Northern Arizona University Fact Book 2016-2017). The decline in contacts from part-time faculty may be due to a reduction in the overall number of part-time faculty or due to their lack of awareness of the FOP services. Many part-time faculty teach in locations other than in Flagstaff or in online courses.

Although services are not provided to parties other than faculty, contacts continue to be made with the FOP from various concerned parties. This is consistent with observations made in previous annual reports. In cases of contact from persons who were not faculty, the concerns of the visitor were noted and referrals to other resources were made. There were two contacts from classified staff members during the 2016-2017 academic year and one contact from a student.

A chart depicting the composition of visitors to the FOP is shown below.



Comparison to other institutions

Information regarding the scope of ombuds services and utilization patterns at other academic institutions can be difficult to obtain. Such information may be contained in the annual reports of the Ombuds offices but direct comparisons are difficult to make due to a number of factors. Some university Ombuds offices serve only faculty while others serve the entire university community. Some offices operate on a full-time basis and have multiple staff while others such as ours at NAU have only one part-time ombudsman.

Despite these limitations, the Ombudsman's Office of the University of South Carolina has conducted an informal survey of ombuds programs at Carnegie Foundation Tier I institutions for the past ten years. Their report states that in the sample of thirty-six schools the number of faculty visitors per year to the ombuds offices averages forty-nine. (University Ombudsman Annual Report-University of South Carolina. Retrieved September 12, 2016 at: <http://www.sc.edu/ombuds/doc/2014-2015NinthAnnualReportUniversityOmbudsUSC.pdf>). NAU data for the 2014-2017 time period reveals an average of forty-one (41) visitors per year, a number lower than Ombuds office visitation compared to other institutions. Recommendations for increasing faculty awareness of the FOP are included in the goals for the coming year shown at the end of this report.

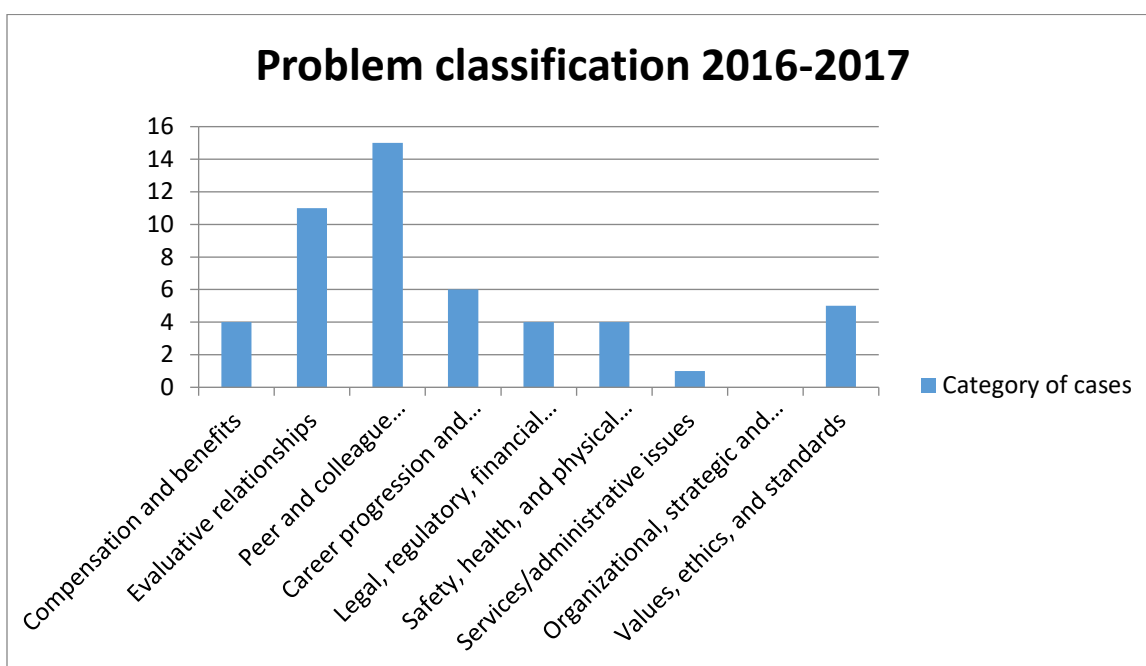
Issues of Diversity

Nearly all initial contacts with the FOP are made by telephone and a portion of these visitors are only provided services (including follow-up) through telephonic communications. No demographic information or any other form of written record is made of their contact with the FOP. Therefore, no data is obtained. This is in keeping with the confidential provisions of the

Standards of Practice of the International Ombudsman Association (IOA). Faculty are only asked about their status as a faculty member to ensure that those receiving services fall within the charge of the program.

Presenting issues

The presenting issues of faculty and administrators who made contact with the FOP were recorded using the standardized classification system of the International Ombudsman Association. A comparison of presenting concerns is seen in the graph on the next page. The numbers in this chart exceed the total number of visitors because many visitors mention multiple concerns during the contact with the office.



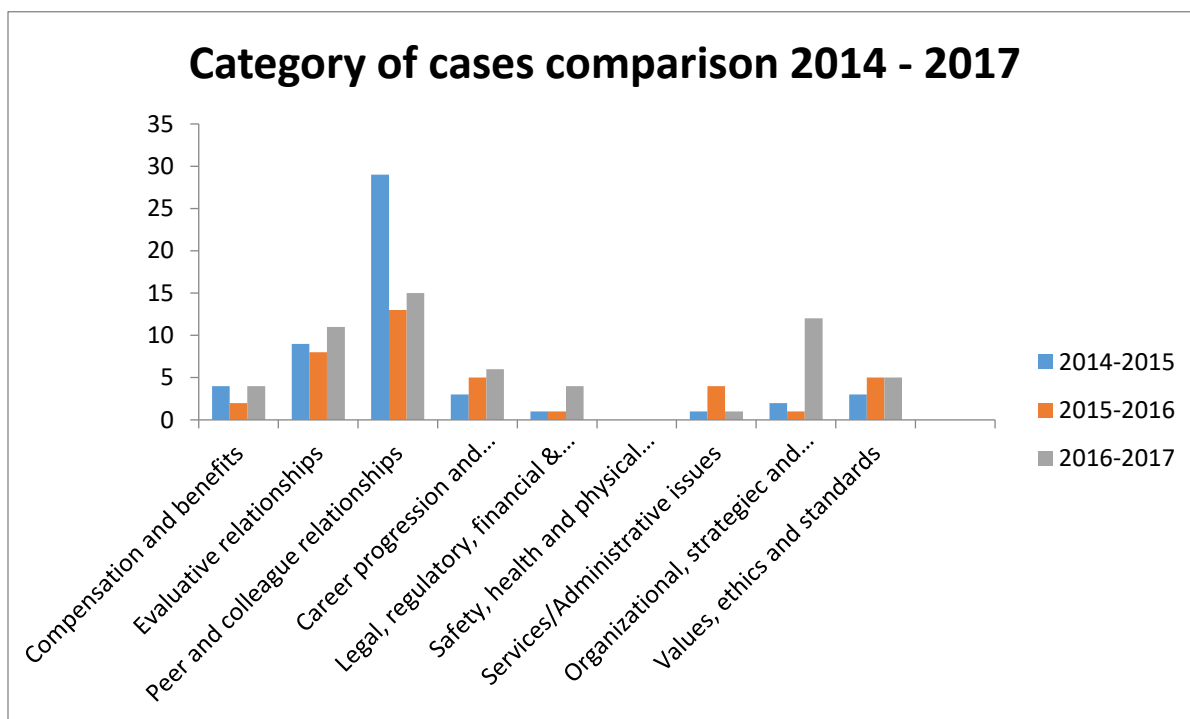
The largest category of concern continues to involve peer and colleague interactions. The majority of these concerns involved the visitor's perception that they were being treated in an uncivil manner by another member of the university community. These concerns were usually addressed by either a problem-solving session involving the visitor who could then decide on a course of action or a facilitated conversation between the visitor and the other party. These sessions were always conducted in the privacy of the Ombuds office and each party was a voluntary participant. It is interesting and encouraging to note that over the past four years only one person who was invited to participate in such a discussion refused to be involved. This is interpreted to represent the kind of good will generally found on the NAU campus, even among persons who may be in disagreement with one another. It also supports the hypothesis that many persons would prefer to solve issues in an informal and confidential manner and not through the use of more formal processes.

“Evaluative processes and relationships,” was once again the second largest category of concerns presented to the FOP. As with previous years, many of these cases involved faculty who, although full-time employees, were not in tenure-track appointments. Issues pertaining to retention and salary were the most common concerns. Resolution of these cases generally involved clarifying personnel policies and procedures.

Concerns regarding institutional values, professional ethics, and standards of conduct emerged as the fourth most common reason for contacts with the FOP in 2016-2017. Conflicts regarding academic freedom and free speech contributed to this increase. Compensation and benefits, while of little concern in the previous year, re-emerged as a presenting concern. Some of this was attributable to non-tenure track faculty uncertainty over promotion criteria and some was due to faculty concerns about how merit pay eligibility was determined. These concerns were generally addressed by review of the COFS document with the visitor and discussion of the time period for response in the evaluation cycle.

Prior years comparison

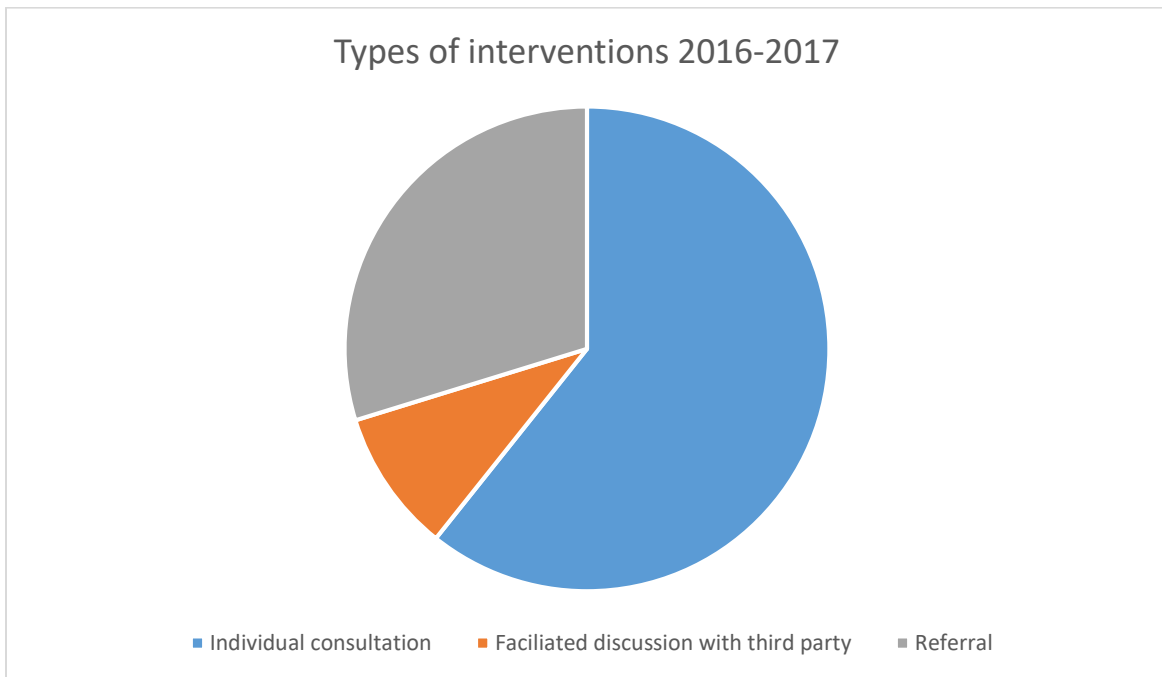
The following chart compares the distribution of problem classifications during the 2014-2015, 2015-2016 academic year and the present reporting year.



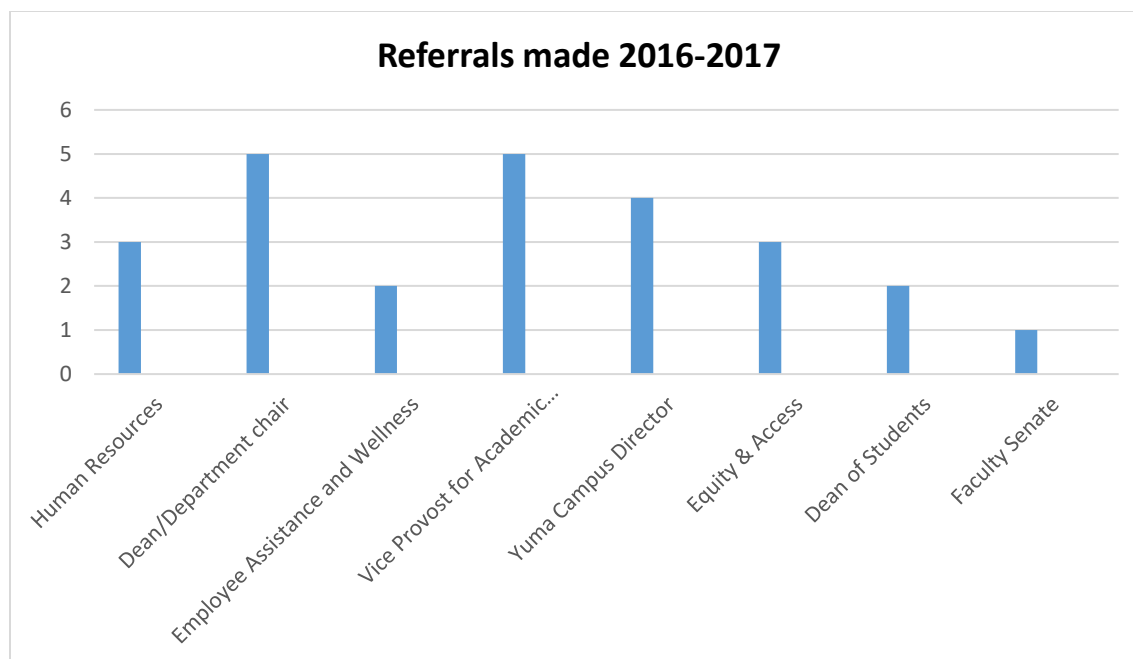
In the 2016-2017 academic year individual consultation was the primary intervention. This occurred in fifty-one (51) cases. In most cases, problem-solving strategies or clarification of university policies were the main subject of the consultation. The total number of interventions

exceeds the number of visitors because in some cases multiple means of addressing the issues presented by the visitor were utilized. For example, after an individual consultation, a referral to another campus resource may have been made.

The types of interventions provided by the FOP during the past year are in the chart below.



Referral to other campus resources was recommended in twenty-five (25) cases. In seven (7) situations a facilitated discussion was undertaken involving the original visitor and another party or parties with whom they were in conflict. The chart below depicts offices to which faculty were referred.



Other activities of the FOP coordinator

In cooperation with the Faculty Professional Development Program and the Productive Beginnings program, efforts continued on presenting workshops on topics relevant to new faculty. The topics of Colleagues and peers as allies in achieving your career goals and Maintaining appropriate boundaries in the workplace had previously been well received and the presentation on Colleagues as allies was done again during the past academic year.

During the 2017-2018 academic year a video-taped presentation on the activities of the FOP was made for the Faculty Senate followed by an in-person question and answer session. This is done annually to help keep faculty informed about the services offered through the program.

In addition to the outreach activities, periodic meetings between the Faculty Ombudsman and the directors of other campus resource offices (Employee Assistance and Wellness, Equity and Access, Human Resources) and Vice Provost Kain were held to informally discuss issues that were being brought to the attention of each office. Rules of confidentiality were always followed in these meetings. This allows for identification of emerging issues that affect the university community and the opportunity to implement some advanced planning to address these concerns. This also provides an opportunity for the involved parties to discuss resources and services that may be needed to address emerging campus issues.

Trends and implications

As has been the case in the past, the majority of visitor concerns are in regard to issues that involve interactions with others in the work setting. This includes both peers and those to whom

the faculty member reports such as department chairs and deans of colleges. The FOP has been an effective tool for addressing these concerns and providing assistance in undertaking difficult conversations between parties who are in conflict with one another. The continued willingness of persons to work toward finding a fair and just resolution to the issues before them is commendable. This supports the need for an on-going and vibrant Faculty Ombuds Program.

The issue of career progression is an increasingly cited reason for faculty visitors to seek services of the FOP. Non-tenure track faculty appear to be less knowledgeable about career advancement paths. The criteria for advancement and process for applying for reclassification and promotion do not seem to be as well delineated for them as they are for the tenure track faculty. As the number of non-tenure track faculty continues to increase, these processes are expected to become more defined and better understood by the faculty members affected.

Contact with the FOP by non-faculty members of the university community continue to be made. In these cases referral to other appropriate offices is made. Follow-up appointments are not provided.

As with previous years a small number of contacts with the FOP were made outside of the academic year. While the number is minimal in comparison to the school year, these contacts should not be ignored as they represent issues that faculty want to address before too much time has passed. During the immediate past summer, services were provided to these visitors on an as-needed basis. Consideration of a partial stipend for the Coordinator over the summer should be considered. Perhaps an hourly wage could be established and implemented for these services.

The FOP continues to be a valuable resource to the university. Utilization of the services of the program has risen moderately but consistently over the past several years. The majority of the faculty visitors are full-time faculty.

Goals for the 2018 – 2019 academic year

Ongoing goals for the FOP include:

- Successful transition of Dr. Bruce Fox into the role of coordinator of the FOP. This work began immediately after the announcement of his appointment during the Spring, 2018 and included a campus wide announcement, a brown bag lunch open to faculty to meet Dr. Fox and discuss their views of how the FOP can be of assistance to faculty, and a brief appearance before the Faculty Senate to announce his appointment.
- Continue to provide high quality services to members of the NAU faculty. Messages left with the Office will be returned within 24 hours except on weekends and holidays.
- Updating the FOP website to reflect the change in coordinator and for any other revisions that may be necessary.

Goals for 2017-2018 included:

- Continue to provide high quality services to members of the NAU faculty. Messages left with the Office will be returned within 24 hours except on weekends and holidays.
- Outreach activities to inform faculty about the services of the FOP will continue to be conducted. Regular activities include a presentation to the Faculty Senate, distribution of this report as appropriate and posting of the report on the Ombuds homepage, brown bag presentations on issues of importance to faculty at least once each semester, and continued coordination with other campus resources to ensure effective referral to the FOP when an appropriate service can be provided.
- Increased workshop presentations, in part through collaboration with the Office of Faculty Development and the New Beginnings program, will be conducted during the coming year. The goal is to have at least two workshop presentations during each semester of the coming year.
- Continued involvement with both the statewide Ombuds group and the International Ombuds Association (AOI) will provide for networking, consultation, and support from Ombudsmen at other institutions. This is especially important to the operation of the NAU Faculty Ombuds Program since there is no direct colleague or associate in the present organizational structure of the FOP.

Assessment

- During the past year, messages were returned within 24 hours and appointments were usually scheduled within 1-2 days.
- Presentations to those in the New Beginnings program were conducted in line with the topics presented in previous years.
- Continued involvement with the International Ombudsman Association was achieved through continued affiliation of the coordinator as an associate member and through subscription to the IOA listserv to monitor current developments in the field.
- The on-going goals of the FOP were achieved during the past year with the exception of having two public presentations per semester which was only partially met. One presentation was conducted during the past academic year.

A goal from the previous year was to track tenure/tenure track vs. non-tenure status. This information is now included in the Annual Report.

Summary

It has been my honor and pleasure to serve as the coordinator of the FOP for the past five years. Having the opportunity to assist faculty in finding solutions to complex problems is a challenging and rewarding task. As coordinator, I would like to express my appreciation for the cooperation and support of faculty and administrative leaders in the university who have participated in discussions of issues brought to their attention. I am especially appreciative of the administration's willingness to support the work of the FOP without violating the independence, neutrality, informality or confidentiality of the ombuds process. The support of the Provost's office in making this service available to faculty is an important investment in providing an avenue for addressing and potentially resolving problems without going through formal and

often adversarial channels. I wish Dr. Bruce Fox all the best as he assumes this role and am confident that he will fulfill the duties of coordinator in an exemplary manner.