



Office of the University Ombuds

2024-2025 Annual Report

Presented by

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and

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Room 4101 and 4102

Flagstaff, AZ 86011-5733

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Executive Summary: Highlights and Accomplishments

- There were **177 appointments** made with the Ombuds Office comprised of faculty, staff, and graduate students.
 - 74 faculty (55 faculty and 19 faculty administrators/supervisors) (41.8%)
 - 67 staff members (50 staff and 17 supervisory staff) (37.8%)
 - 28 graduate students (15.8%)
 - 8 visitors whose title did not correspond to the main categories (e.g., parent, outside NAU entity, etc.) (4.5%)
- The largest concern brought to the office involved **evaluative relationships (N=623, 70.6%)** followed by **peer relationships (N=113, 12.8%)**.
- The Ombuds Office conducted **8 formal mediations / facilitated conversations** with parties / offices interested in improving internal relations.
- The Ombuds provided **19 conflict and communication in-house workshops/trainings** both within existing programs (e.g., ASCEND) as well as unit area requests for training.
- The Ombuds Office conducted **4 consensus-building workshops** using the Technology of Participation (ToP) facilitation method for departments on campus.
- The Ombuds **gave 15 presentations about the office to college, department or institute** groups on campus, and met with numerous individuals across campus.
- Dr. Umphrey completed WordPress training and is the steward of the NAU Ombuds Program website pages.

Introduction

The purpose and mission of the NAU University Ombuds Program is to enhance an ethical, supportive, and responsive culture for faculty, staff, and graduate students by providing confidential, independent, impartial, and informal conflict resolution coaching services, mediation and group facilitation services, and tailored instructional workshops to address concerns affecting their work, life, or study at NAU.

The NAU Ombuds Program follows the [Standards of Practice](#) and the [IOA Code of Ethics](#) of the [International Ombuds Association](#).

Ombuds Professional Development Activities

During 2024-2025, the Ombuds engaged in the following professional activities:

- Both Dr. Umphrey and Dr. Thompson are active members of the International Ombuds Association (IOA).
- Dr. Umphrey attended the *International Ombuds Association conference* in Miami, FL in April 2025 and presented a workshop on passive aggressive behavior.
- Both Dr. Umphrey and Dr. Thompson have completed 6 IOA trainings and/or webinars (e.g., one with Dr. Gabor Mate).
- Dr. Umphrey has completed WordPress training and is the steward of the NAU Ombuds website pages.
- Dr. Umphrey was accepted into the International Ombuds Association Leadership Academy. This was a cohort program that met monthly to discuss different leadership themes.
- Dr. Umphrey attended the Technology of Participation (ToP) annual meeting and several ToP workshops.
- Dr. Thompson completed a three-day mediation training offered by the Arizona Attorney General's Office.

NAU Ombuds Activities

Visitor One-on-One Meetings

The Ombuds met in person with faculty (tenure-track and career track), graduate students, and staff in the HLC, room 4102. This room is accessible yet offers privacy and discretion. They also met with visitors on Zoom or by phone, if visitors requested to do so. These virtual meetings are necessary for visitors who work outside the Flagstaff Mountain campus, but also offer an additional option for Flagstaff employees and graduate students. Most meetings lasted

between one-to-two hours. Please see [Visitor Trends](#) for a confidential and broad overview of visitor characteristics.

Facilitated Conversations / Mediation (24-25)

When two or more individuals who work together are willing to talk, have a desire for a “reset” and want third party help, the Ombuds Office offers mediation or facilitated conversation services. Dr. Laura Umphrey facilitated **eight (8) mediations during 2024-2025**. These sessions last between 2-3 hours and are structured to explore issues and develop a collective plan to work together going forward.

Trainings / Workshops

Conflict and Communication training workshops were offered during 2024-2025. A total of **19 tailored workshops** were provided to areas across campus (including two days at PBC).

Team / Departmental Facilitations

Dr. Umphrey started offering **structured facilitation workshops for departmental groups** wanting to achieve specific program goals. In 2024-2025 there were **three (3) department facilitations** that took place.

Meetings Attended (Non-Voting)

In addition to offering services, the Ombuds attended the following committee meetings regularly during the year to understand current issues across campus.

- Academic Leadership Summit
- Faculty Senate
- Staff Advisory Council Meetings
- Campus Inclusion Team monthly meeting
- Professional Development Calendar Advisory Group
- Faculty Senate Executive Committee on Code of Conduct revisions

FY 2024-2025 Visitor Trends

This report includes data that was collected about visitors to the Ombuds Office between July 1, 2024 through June 31, 2025.

Number of Visitors / Repeat Visitors

For AY24-25 there were 177 visits to the Ombuds Office. There were 116 initial visits (65.5%) and 61 (34.4%) follow-up visits. There were 81 visits during Summer and Fall 2024 (45.8%) and 96 during Spring and Summer 2025 (54.2%).

Type of Visitors

The Ombuds met with a range of visitors—faculty, staff, and graduate students. Most visitors reside at the Flagstaff Mountain campus, but we also had virtual meetings with faculty, staff, and graduate students from NAU campuses across the state.

- 74 faculty (55 faculty and 19 faculty administrators/supervisors)
- 67 staff members (50 staff and 17 supervisory staff)
- 28 graduate students
- 8 visitors whose title did not correspond to the main categories (e.g., parent, alumni, outside NAU entity, undergraduate who contacted the office, etc.)

Table 1: Type of Visitor (24-25)

Type of Visitor	Number	Percentage
Faculty	74	41.8%
Staff	67	37.8%
Graduate Students	28	15.8%
Other	8	4.5%
	177	100%

Medium

The Ombuds Office offers a variety of ways to meet with an Ombuds. During 24-25, visitors opted for In-person (N=88, 49.7%), Zoom/Teams (N=69, 38.9%), phone calls (N=18, 10.1%) or email (N=2, 1.1%).

Table 2: What Medium Was Used for the Appointment (24-25)

Medium	Number	Percentage
In-person	88	49.7%
Zoom/ Teams	69	38.9%
Phone call	18	10.1%
Email	2	1.1%
	177	100%

Nature of Concerns

The International Ombuds Association (IOA) provides standard Uniform Data Reporting Categories for Ombuds Offices (see Table 4 for those broad categories). This document lists those broad categories and subcategories of common visitor concerns. After each meeting with visitor(s), the Ombuds tracks the concerns brought forward to identify trends in requests for services. Often, visitors expressed multiple concerns during our conversations and each individual concern was reported. For example, a visitor might bring up “departmental climate” and “communication” as issues of concern in the same visit. Therefore, each individual topic was recorded for each visit.

The largest broad concern brought to the office involved **evaluative relationships (N=623, 70.2%)**. In terms of **sub-categories** within this category (Table 5), visitors most often expressed having difficulties communicating with their supervisor or supervisee, felt a lack of respect by their supervisor or supervisee, and expressed issues of trust or integrity and effectiveness.

The second largest broad concern brought to the Ombuds Office involved **peer relationships**. (N=113, 12.8%). Specific sub-concerns expressed were **Communication** (quality and/or quantity of communication, N=34, 19.2%), **Respect/Treatment** (demonstrations of inappropriate regard for people, not listening, rudeness, crudeness, etc., N=25, 14.1%), and **Trust/Integrity** (suspicion that others are not being honest, whether or to what extent one wishes to be honest, etc., N=20, 11.3%).

Table 3: IOA Uniform Data Reporting Category Frequency and Percentage 24-25

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	N	%
(1) Evaluative Relationships (See Table 5 for a breakdown of these ratings)	Questions, concerns, issues, or inquiries arising between people in evaluative relationships (i.e., supervisors, chairs or directors, deans, etc.).	623	70.6%
(2) Career Progression and Development	Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about administrative processes and decisions regarding entering and leaving a job, or what it entails, (i.e., recruitment, nature and place of assignment, job security, and separation).	19	2.1%
(3) Peer and Colleague Relationships	Questions, concerns, issues, or inquiries involving peers or colleagues who do not have a direct supervisory relationship (e.g., two faculty members within the same department or conflict involving faculty members of the same college or unit).	113	12.8%
(4) 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.	30	3.4%
(5) Compensation & Benefits	Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about the equity, appropriateness and competitiveness of employee compensation, benefits, and other benefit programs.	9	1%
(6) 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.	29	3.2%
(7) Safety, Health, and Physical Environment	Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about Safety, Health, and Infrastructure	10	1.1%
(8) Services / Administrative Issues	Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about services or administrative offices.	18	2%
(9) Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related	Questions, concerns, issues, or inquiries that relate to the whole or some part of an organization.	31	3.5%
		882	100%

Table 4: Frequency and Percent of Evaluative Relationship Sub-Categories Reported by Visitors 24-25

Evaluative Relationship Sub-Categories	N	% of the 177 visitors reporting in the category
Communication (Quality and/or quantity of communication)	107	60.5%
Respect or Treatment (Demonstrations of inappropriate regard for people, not listening, rudeness, crudeness, etc.)	87	49.2%
Trust / Integrity (Suspicion that others are not being honest, whether or to what extent one wishes to be honest, etc)	55	31.1%
Supervisory Effectiveness (management of department or classroom, failure to address issues)	52	29.4%
Departmental Climate (prevailing behaviors, norms, or attitudes within a department for which supervisors or faculty have responsibility)	46	26%
Assignments/Schedules (appropriateness or fairness of tasks, expected volume of work)	46	26%
Feedback (feedback or recognition given, or responses to feedback received)	44	24.9%
Priorities, Values and Beliefs (Differences about what should be considered important; often rooted in ethical or moral beliefs)	33	18.6%
Consultation (requests for help in dealing with issues between two or more individuals they supervise/teach or with other unusual situations in evaluative relationships)	27	15.3%
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)	22	12.4%
Performance Appraisal (job performance in formal or informal evaluation)	21	11.9%
Equity of Treatment (favoritism, one or more individuals receive preferential treatment)	19	10.7%
Bullying, Mobbing (abusive, threatening, and/or coercive behaviors)	15	8.5%
Retaliation (punitive behaviors for previous actions or comments, whistleblower)	13	7.3%
Other (any other evaluative relationship not described by the other sub-categories)	0	0%
Reputation (possible impact of rumors and/or gossip about professional or personal matters)	13	7.3%
Insubordination (refusal to do what is asked)	23	13%
Physical Violence (actual or threats of bodily harm to another)	0	0%
	623	