



WILLIAM & MARY

CHARTERED 1693



OFFICE OF THE
UNIVERSITY OMBUDS

ANNUAL
REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR
2023-2024

Letter from the Ombuds

Dear William & Mary Community,

The William & Mary Ombuds Office Annual Report outlines activities of the office from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. We are honored by the trust members of the William & Mary community place in us to assist with their workplace concerns. We believe strongly in the power of the ombuds role to help William & Mary staff and faculty address challenges they face and work to improve the experiences of all staff and faculty at William & Mary.

The Ombuds Office had a busy year. We are pleased to report that Liz Cascone joined the Ombuds Office in November 2023. Liz is excelling in this role and has been a fantastic addition to our office upon Shylan Scott's departure. We want to thank Shylan for her dedication and skill in supporting faculty and staff at William & Mary. In addition to meeting with visitors and engaging in outreach across the university to educate about the ombuds role, we have sponsored two conflict resolution trainings for members of the campus community this year. Through a generous alumni donation, the Ombuds Office contracted with a talented dispute resolution professional to provide training for faculty and staff. The trainings were well-received and provided needed support for faculty and staff to manage conflict in productive ways. We are working to provide more training opportunities in the future.

As ombuds, we adhere to the standards of the International Ombuds Association (IOA). Our services are strictly confidential, independent, and impartial. We very much hope for your feedback and suggestions on how we can improve in our work and better assist members of the William & Mary community. We look forward to continuing to help community members in navigating workplace conflict as we strive to help make William & Mary a great place to work and learn.

Liz, Rick & Rebecca
University Ombuds



WILLIAM & MARY

UNIVERSITY OMBUDS

Informal · Independent · Impartial · Confidential

ANNUAL REPORT

for

Academic Year 2023-2024

Ombuds Overview

The Office of the University Ombuds at William & Mary serves as an independent and neutral resource where all categories of employees and faculty can seek confidential assistance with workplace concerns.

The Ombuds Office offers a unique mix of skills and tools to help you navigate work-related conflict. We ensure that all employees have access to a resource for informally addressing workplace concerns in a fair and equitable manner. The Ombuds Office is not affiliated with any W&M compliance function.

The University Ombuds is **confidential, independent, impartial, and informal.**

We provide consultations and serve as a neutral party in resolving workplace conflict. The University Ombuds supplements rather than replaces formal resources for grievances such as those of Compliance & Equity, Human Resources, and the Office of University Counsel. As an independent office, we do not serve as an agent of notice for William & Mary.

“Advancing equity and wellness for faculty and staff is one of the goals I committed William & Mary to under the pandemic. Building a team of ombuds professionals at William & Mary is an important step toward these goals.”

Katherine A. Rowe, Ph.D.
President

In a 2021 Statement about the Ombuds

The Office of the University Ombuds was restructured in 2021. Instead of a single Ombudsperson, W&M adopted a team-based collateral duty model consisting of a three-person University Ombuds Office.

The restructuring of the Office of the University Ombuds provides faculty and staff with a centralized place to consult on options with an aim to ensure that conflict is resolved in a swift and fair manner.

Who are the Ombuds?

The duties of the University Ombuds Office at William & Mary are fulfilled by three employees who serve as collateral duty ombuds. Combined, the Ombuds have broad expertise and diverse work experiences within W&M. Ombuds are dedicated facilitators and university professionals with a mission to provide confidential and impartial assistance to employees with workplace concerns.



Rebecca Green

Ombuds, Office of the University Ombuds

An expert in alternative dispute resolution and election law, Rebecca serves as an Associate Professor of Law at W&M Law School and co-directs the Election Law Program. She earned her J.D. from Harvard Law School.



Charles (Rick) Gressard

Ombuds, Office of the University Ombuds

Rick is Chancellor Professor Emeritus from the W&M School of Education. He is an expert in counseling and has served in a wide array of faculty leadership roles. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Iowa.



Liz Cascone

Ombuds, Office of the University Ombuds

Liz is the Director of The Haven in the Division of Student Affairs. Liz has extensive experience in sexual and intimate partner violence prevention, advocacy, and counseling and is training in restorative practices. Liz has a master's degree in social work from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Our Principles

At William & Mary, our office is dedicated to serving as an independent, confidential, neutral, and centralized resource for faculty and staff. We are an independent office and do not align ourselves with any organizational entity nor any W&M compliance unit.

Any person who seeks the services of the Ombuds Office has the right to consult CONFIDENTIALLY with an ombuds without reprisal.

Ombuds from the Office of the University Ombuds at William & Mary are members of the International Ombuds Association ("IOA").

William & Mary **strictly prohibits retaliation** against **any** administrator, faculty, employee, or student for using the services provided by the University Ombuds.

Our Practice Statement

Consistent with IOA Standards of Practice, the William & Mary Ombuds Office serves as a confidential, independent, and neutral resource for faculty and staff members at William & Mary.

William & Mary Ombuds do not serve as advocates for individual visitors, nor for university leadership. We remain avowedly neutral; we are here as a resource for talking problems through, helping visitors gather information, and exploring potential options. Our office helps you understand and navigate University procedures and policies.

The William & Mary Ombuds Office operates within the ethical standards set forth by IOA. This means that William & Mary Ombuds will act in accordance with the principles mandated by the IOA: independence, neutrality, impartiality, confidentiality, and informality.

IOA Principles

We strictly adhere to the IOA Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice.

INDEPENDENCE

The ombuds is independent in structure, function, appearance, and decision-making. The ombuds reports to the highest possible level within the organization and does not report to a function or entity that could affect, or be perceived as affecting ombuds' independence.

IMPARTIALITY

The ombuds is a designated neutral and impartial resource who does not take sides or serves as an advocate for any person nor entity. The ombuds avoids conflicts of interest and conduct that could be perceived as a conflict of interest.

INFORMALITY

The ombuds does not participate in any evaluative, disciplinary, legal, or administrative proceedings related to concerns brought to the ombuds' attention. The ombuds is not authorized to make business and policy decisions or conduct formal investigations on behalf of the organization. The ombuds is not an agent of the organization for purposes of receiving notice of claims against the organization and is not authorized to be a formal reporting channel for the organization on matters brought to the ombuds' attention except when specifically, and expressly mandated by law.

CONFIDENTIALITY

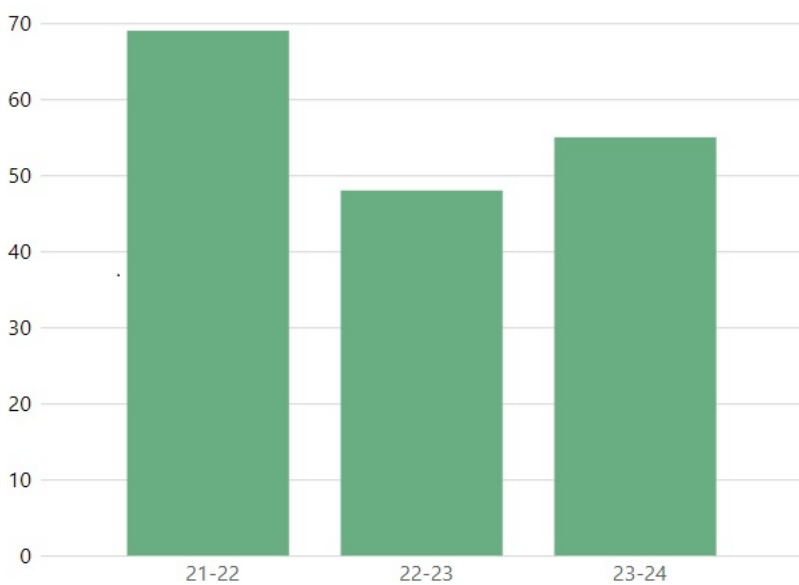
Confidentiality is the defining characteristic of ombuds practice. The identity of those seeking assistance from the ombuds and all communication with them are confidential to the maximum extent permitted by law. The ombuds may, at their sole discretion, disclose confidential information when the person seeking assistance gives permission to do so; when failure to do so might result in an imminent risk of serious harm; or as necessary to defend against a formal complaint of professional misconduct.



Data Analysis (Overview)*

Consistent with the IOA Standards of Practice to protect the confidentiality of visitors, the Office of the University Ombuds at William & Mary does not retain any records that would identify a specific individual visitor. We only use demographic and non-identifiable data that are captured in the aggregate to identify trends, systemic issues, and assess Ombuds services.

For Academic Year (AY) 2023-2024, the Ombuds Office had 55 visitors. At William & Mary, the Ombuds Office only serves members of faculty and staff.



While some visitors have straightforward issues and can be helped within a single visit, others require multiple visits and a substantial amount of work on the part of the Ombuds Office between sessions.

The total visitor count for AY 23-24 increased from AY 22-23 where we saw 48 visitors.

At William & Mary, our community knows the importance of quality leaders. With the rise in challenges and expectations found at an institution the caliber of William & Mary, effective leaders have never been more important.

For AY 23-24 about 22% of visitors held a supervisor, manager, or chair position. This represents nearly a 9% decrease in visitors who represent faculty and staff leaders from AY 22-23.

As an independent office and impartial resource, we do not serve as advocates for any visitor, including University leadership. Our focus as ombuds does include regularly helping faculty and staff who hold managerial, chair, or supervisor positions navigate issues, so they have the clarity necessary to improve and succeed.

22%

Visitors who identified as holding a supervisor, manager, or chair position.

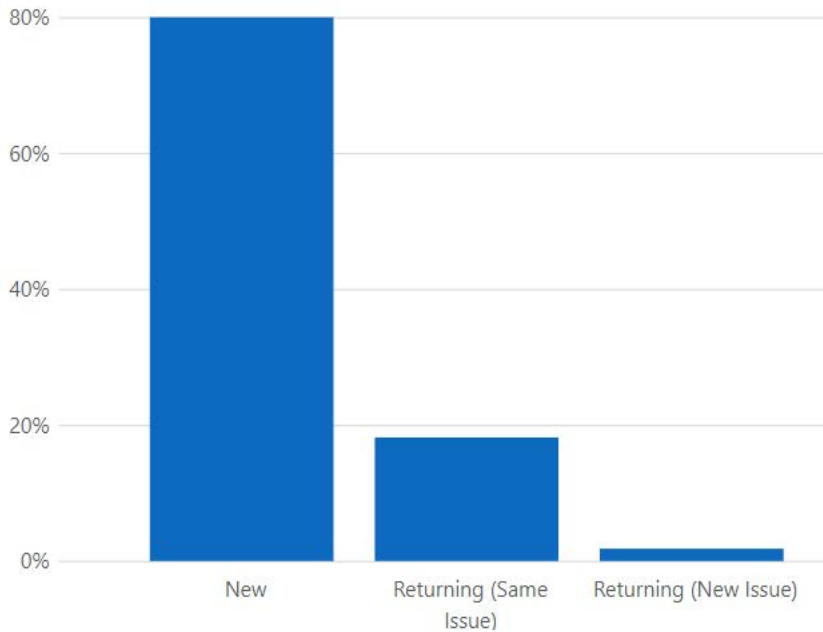


9%

Percent decrease from AY 22-23 to AY 23-24

Data Analysis (Visitor Type)*

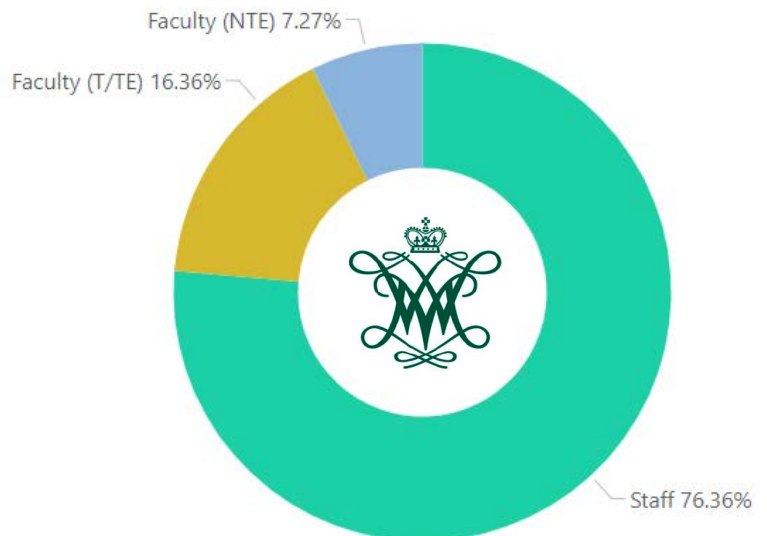
Visitor Interaction Type



The W&M Ombuds Office tracks several categories of visitor types. Since a key component of the ombuds is to understand systemic issues, it is essential to know whether visitors are new (first-time), returning with the same issue, or returning with a new issue. For AY 23-24, the ombuds saw 44 (80%) visitors who were new. Ten (12.5%) visitors were returning with the same issue and 1 (6.3%) returned with a new issue.

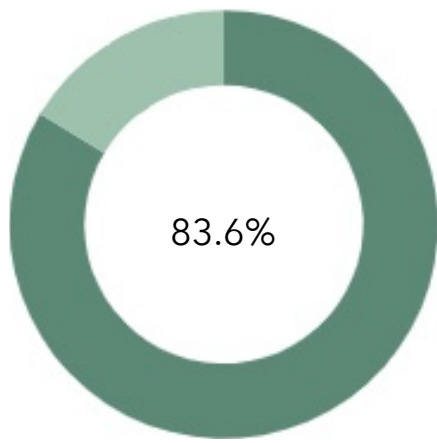
The University Ombuds Office tracks employee classification as a category of visitor type to analyze potential or existing trends among different employee types. Our data protocols separate faculty into Non-Tenure Eligible (NTE) and Tenured or Tenure-Eligible (T/TE).

For AY 23-24, we saw 42 staff members (76.36%), 9 T/TE faculty members (16.36%), and 4 (7.27%) NTE faculty members.

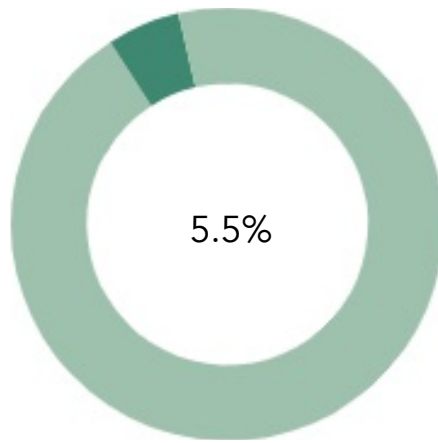


Visitor Employee Classification

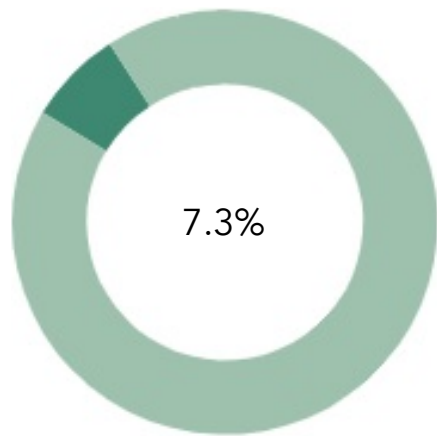
Data Analysis (Demographics)



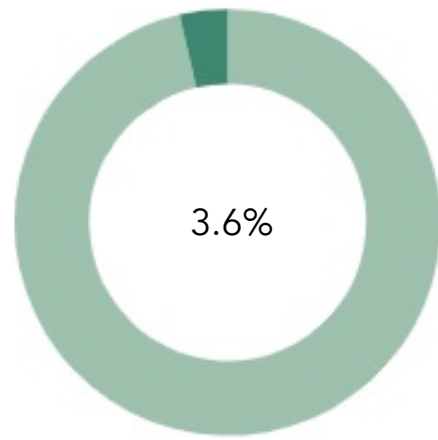
White



Black or African American



Asian



Prefer not to say

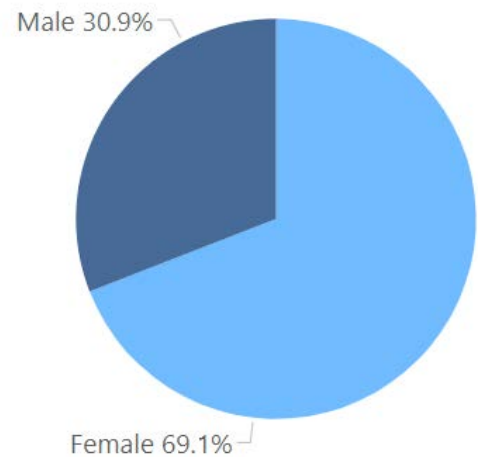
The Ombuds Office tracks demographic data that does not contain identifiable data, ensuring full confidentiality of all our visitors.

AY 23-24 saw an increase in visitors identifying as Asian compared to AY 22-23. Last academic year, Black or African American visitors made up 14.6% of all visitors while they represented 5.5% of visitors during AY 23-24.

The W&M Ombuds Office continues to serve as an impartial resource while making strides to ensure an inclusive and welcoming environment.

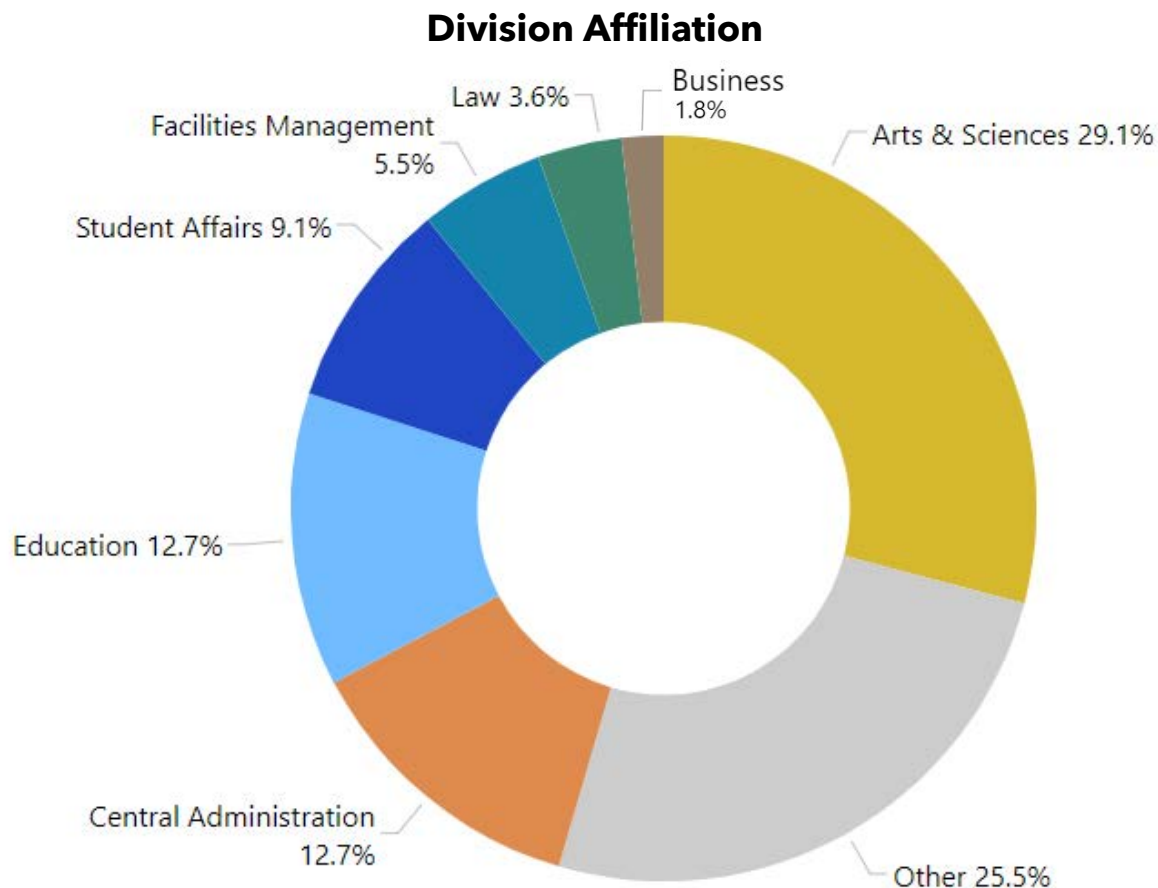
During AY 23-24, the University Ombuds Office saw 38 (69.1%) female visitors and 17 (30.9%) male visitors.

The Ombuds Office continues to promote the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion by serving all faculty and staff of the University, regardless of how they may identify.



Gender Identity

Data Analysis (Demographics)*



The University Ombuds Office tracks the affiliation of visitors in the aggregate. The three largest affiliations that are represented by our visitors are the Faculty of Arts & Sciences, the School of Education, and Central Administration.

The data we collect only indicates the affiliation of the visitor, it does not represent whether the issue was internal or external to their affiliation. Arts & Sciences is the largest unit at William & Mary.

The three largest represented affiliations all saw changes in AY 23-24 from AY 22-23. Last academic year, Central Administration was not among the top three most represented affiliations. As an independent and neutral office, we provide the same level of support across all affiliations.

Data Analysis (Issue Areas)

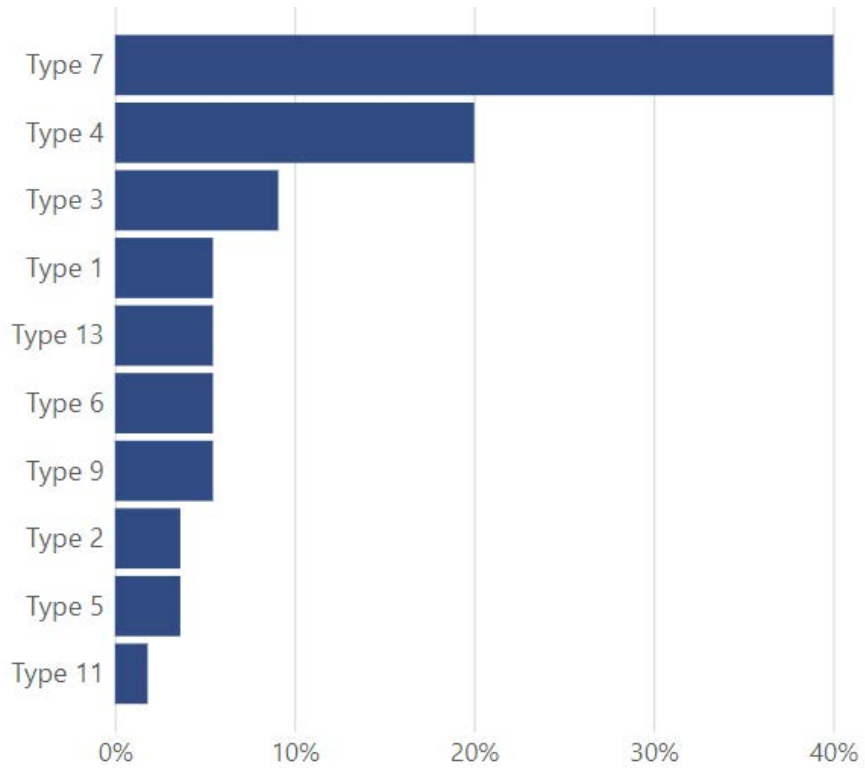
The Office of the University Ombuds subscribes to the uniform reporting categories practice and tracks issue areas by type for data analysis. Currently, we use Types 1-16 to identify and track issue areas. The assigned number type does not correspond, in any way, to its level of importance.

Due to the complexity of certain issues, the Ombuds Office tracks data on secondary issues that may accompany visitors' primary issues. We use the same Type tracking for issues identified as either *primary* or *secondary*.

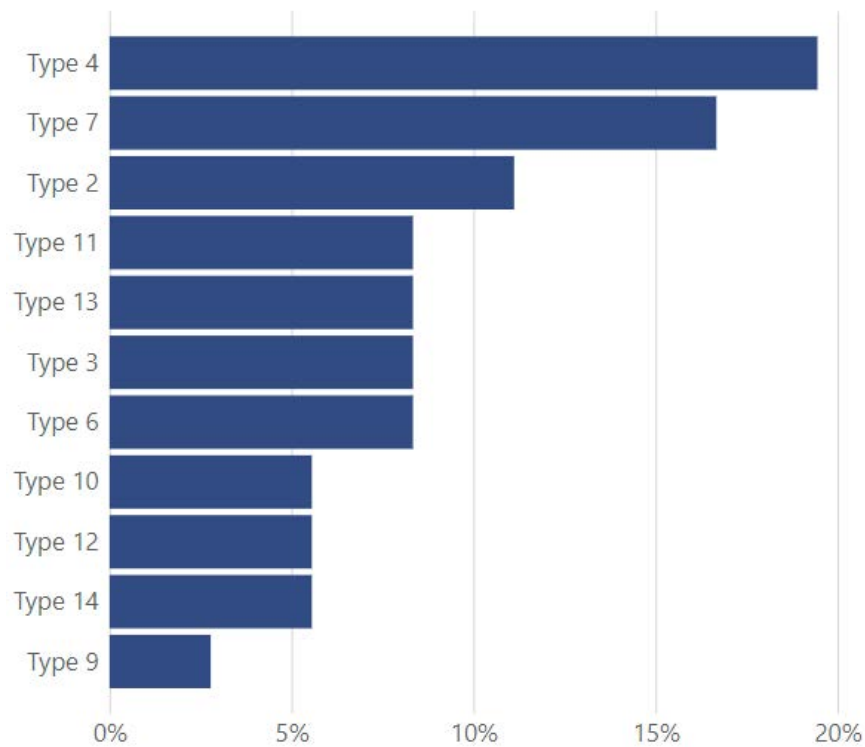
Type 1	Organizational, Strategic, & Mission Related
Type 2	Discrimination & Harassment
Type 3	Career Progression & Development
Type 4	Evaluative & Evaluative Relationships
Type 5	Compensation & Benefits
Type 6	Values, Ethics & Standards
Type 7	Peer & Colleague Relationships
Type 8	Central Administration
Type 9	Safety, Health & Physical Environment
Type 10	ADA & Disability
Type 11	University Policy & Central Administration
Type 12	Legal, Regulatory, Financial & Compliance
Type 13	Services & Administrative Issues
Type 14	External Issues
Type 15	Academic Affairs
Type 16	Other

Data Analysis (Issue Areas)*

AY 23-24 Primary Issue Areas by Category Type (Chart)



AY 23-24 Secondary Issue Areas by Category Type (Chart)



Data Analysis (Issue Areas)*

AY 23-24 Primary Issue Areas by Category Type (Table)

Peer & Colleague Relationships (T7)	40%
Evaluative & Evaluative Relationship (T4)	20%
Career Progression & Development (T3)	9.09%
Safety, Health & Physical Environment (T9)	5.45%
Services & Administrative Issues (T13)	5.45%
Organizational, Strategic, & Mission Related (T1)	5.45%
Values, Ethics & Standards (T6)	5.45%
Discrimination & Harassment (T2)	3.64%
Compensation & Benefits (T5)	3.64%
University Policy & Central Administration (T11)	1.81%

AY 23-24 Secondary Issue Areas by Category Type (Table)

Evaluative & Evaluative Relationships (T4)	19.44%
Peer & Colleague Relationships (T7)	16.67%
Discrimination & Harassment (T2)	11.11%
Career Progression & Development (T3)	8.34%
Values, Ethics & Standards (T6)	8.34%
University Policy & Central Administration (T11)	8.34%
Services & Administrative Issues (T13)	8.34%
External Issues (T14)	5.55%
Legal, Regulatory, Financial, & Compliance (T12)	5.55%
ADA & Disability (T10)	5.55%
Safety, Health & Physical Environment (T9)	2.77%

Looking Forward

Consistent with the values of William & Mary, the Ombuds Office strives to foster a culture of integrity, inclusion, ethicality, and fairness. As ombuds, we remain strictly confidential, impartial, and independent serving as a centralized resource for all categories of faculty and staff at the University. As William & Mary grows, we continue to serve the community and assist in navigating workplace conflict and issues.

In Gratitude

We are listening with open ears and look forward to feedback and suggestions from faculty, staff, and members of the administration on ways we can improve our services. We remain excited to serve and assist all levels of faculty and staff here at William & Mary.

Rebecca, Rick, & Liz
University Ombuds

The Office of the University Ombuds at William & Mary is enormously grateful for the continued support by the Office of the Provost, W&M administration, and members of faculty and staff. With our collateral duty ombuds model, we look forward to continuing to serve the university community and enhance the workplace experience of the University.

We thank all members of the university community who have entrusted us to confidentially meet with them to assist in and navigate through conflict. It is our privilege to serve as a confidential and independent part of William & Mary's workplace resources.

*Not all data presented in this report may equal 100 (Variation: ± 0.01 to 0.1) due to approximation for simplified visualization.



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