



WILLIAM & MARY

CHARTERED 1693



OFFICE OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OMBUDS

ANNUAL  
REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR  
2022-2023



# Letter from the Ombuds

Dear William & Mary Community,

We are pleased to share this report outlining the activities of the William & Mary Ombuds Office this past year. We are grateful to Kevin Lopez Pelaez '23 for his invaluable role preparing and perfecting this (and last year's) report.

It has been a continued honor to talk with members of the William & Mary community to help them navigate workplace issues they face. We have listened and we have endeavored to improve communication and trust on campus. We believe each member of the William & Mary community deserves a workplace that values and supports their growth and potential.

The William & Mary Ombuds Office is unique in that it is staffed by "collateral ombuds," meaning that we fulfill this role in addition to our full-time roles at William & Mary. This presents challenges but also opportunities. We welcome feedback and suggestions from faculty, staff, and members of the administration on ways we can improve our services and innovate in this role to better serve William & Mary faculty and staff.

As Ombuds, we adhere to the standards of the International Ombuds Association (IOA) and remain strictly confidential, independent, and impartial. Together, we are here to assist faculty and staff at William & Mary to navigate conflict with the ultimate aim that William & Mary be an even better place to work than we know it to be.

**Shylan, Rick & Rebecca**  
University Ombuds



WILLIAM & MARY

UNIVERSITY OMBUDS

*Informal · Independent · Impartial · Confidential*

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ANNUAL REPORT

*for*

Academic Year 2022-2023

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# 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, J.D.**

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, Ph.D.**

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.



## **Shylan Scott, Ph.D. '12**

Ombuds, Office of the University Ombuds

Shylan works in Residence Life. She brings a plethora of professional experience in mediation, restorative justice, facilitation, and student affairs. She earned her Ph.D. from William & Mary.

# 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 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, the 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.

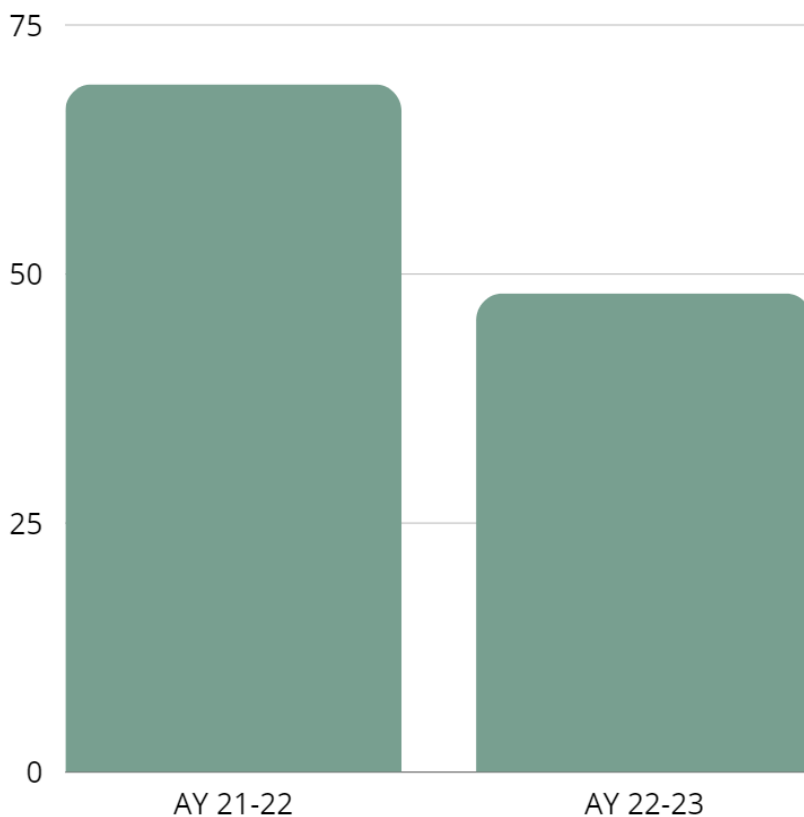


## Kevin Lopez Pelaez '23

Researcher, Office of the University Ombuds

Kevin is a researcher for the University Ombuds Office. He specializes and consults on annual reporting and data analysis. He earned his BA from William & Mary.

For Academic Year (AY) 2022-2023, the Ombuds Office had 48 visitors.<sup>†</sup> 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.

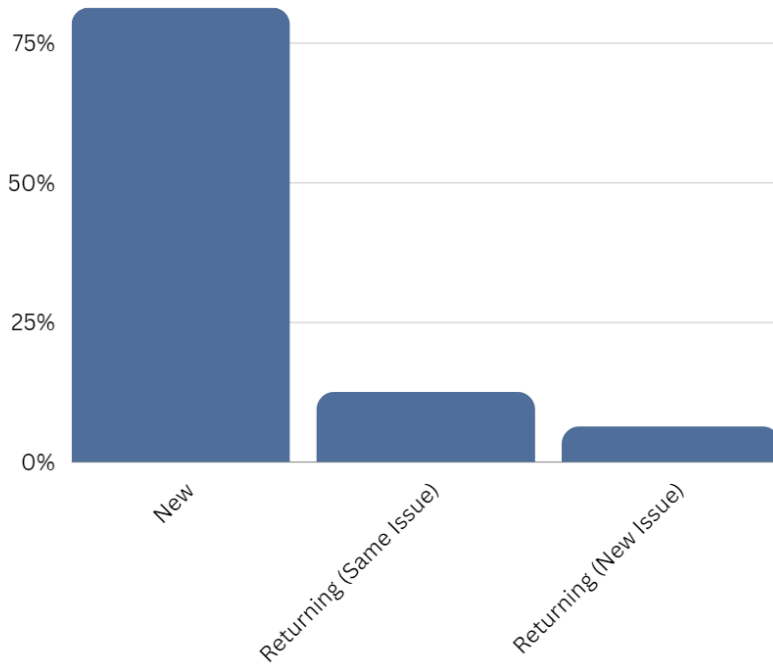
The total visitor count for AY 22-23 decreased from AY 21-22 where we saw 69 visitors. This accounts for an approximate decrease of 30.43%.

<sup>†</sup>Seven additional visitors were seen in Academic Year 22-23 but not included in time for the data analysis of this report. The revised total visitor count for AY 22-23 is 55, representing a 20.29% approximate decrease from AY 21-22.



# Data Analysis (Visitor Type)\*

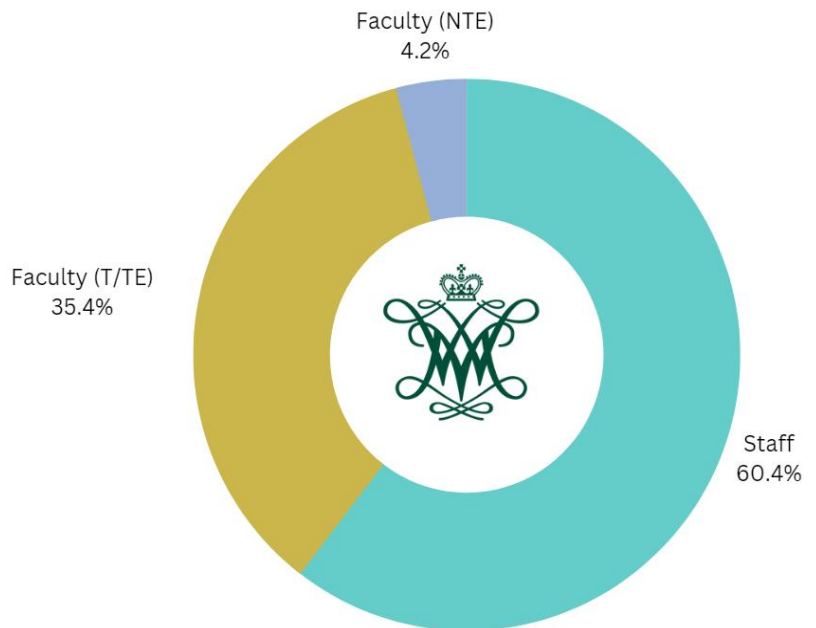
**Visitor Interaction Type**



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 22-23, the Ombuds saw 39 (81.3%) visitors that were new. Six (12.5%) visitors were returning with the same issue and three (6.3%) were returning visitors with a new issue.

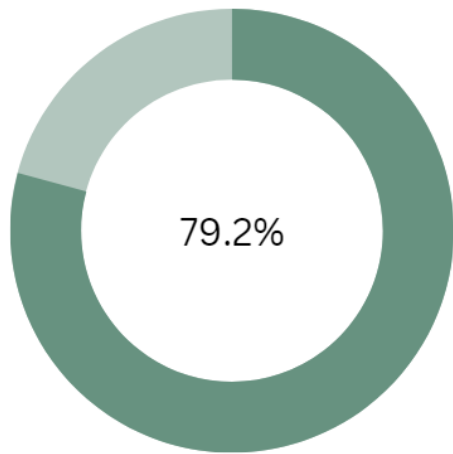
The University Ombuds Office tracks employee classification as a category of visitor type to analyze potential or existing trends among different employee types. Our data protocols separate faculty into Non-Tenure Eligible (NTE) and Tenured or Tenure-Eligible (T/TE).

For AY 22-23, we saw 29 staff members (60.4%), 17 T/TE faculty members (35.4%), and 2 (4.2%) NTE faculty members.

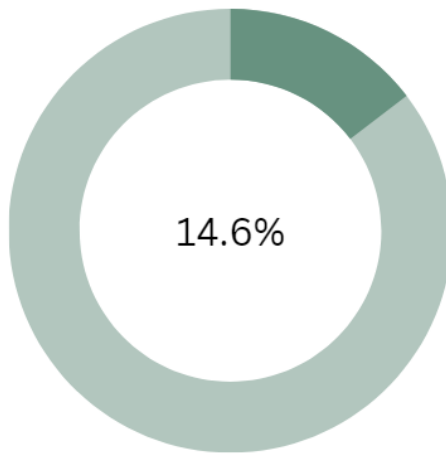


**Visitor Employee Classification**

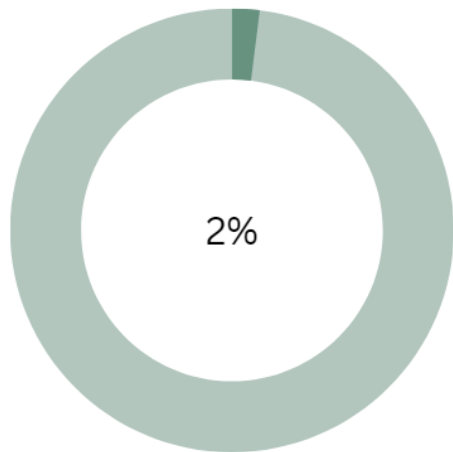
# Data Analysis (Demographics)



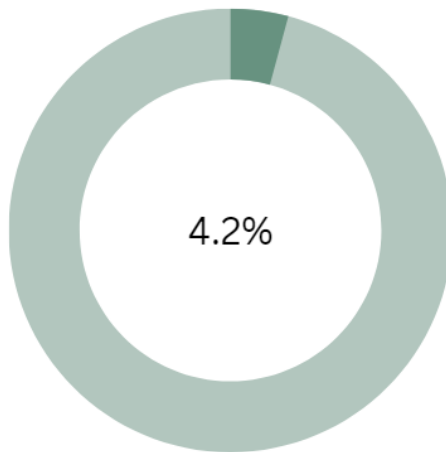
**White**



**Black or African American**



**Asian**



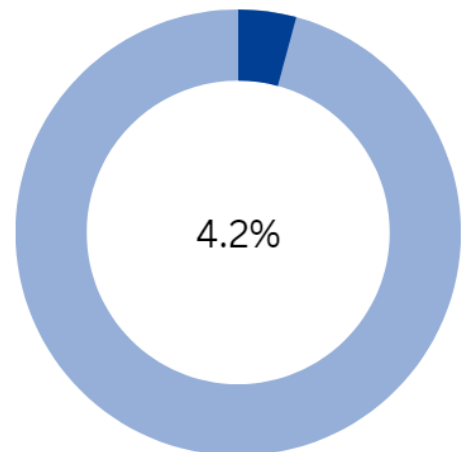
**Prefer not to say**

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

AY 22-23 saw a small increase in visitors identifying as Black or African American compared to AY 21-22. Last academic year, Asian visitors made up 10% of all visitors while they represented 2% of visitors during AY 22-23.

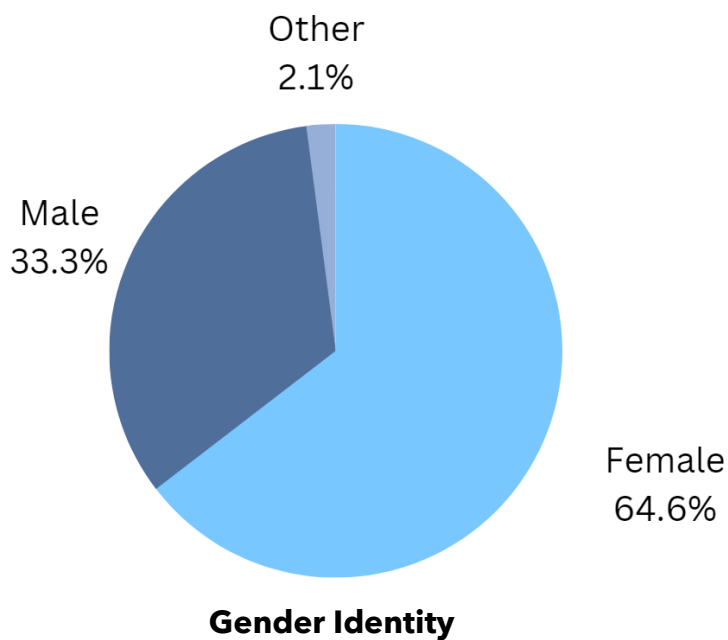
Starting in 2022, the Ombuds also began tracking aggregate data points on whether visitors identified as Latinx or Hispanic. In AY 22-23, 4.2% of visitors identified as Latinx or Hispanic and 95.8% did not identify or preferred not to say.

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



**Latinx or Hispanic**

# Data Analysis (Demographics)



During AY 22-23, the University Ombuds Office saw 31 (64.6%) female visitors and 16 (33.3%) male visitors. The 2.1% 'other' category represents a visitor group that came to the Ombuds as a collective which was made up by both female and male-identifying 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.

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 22-23, about 31% of visitors held a supervisor, manager, or chair position. This represents nearly a 14% increase in visitors who represent faculty and staff leaders from AY 21-22.

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.

# 31%

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



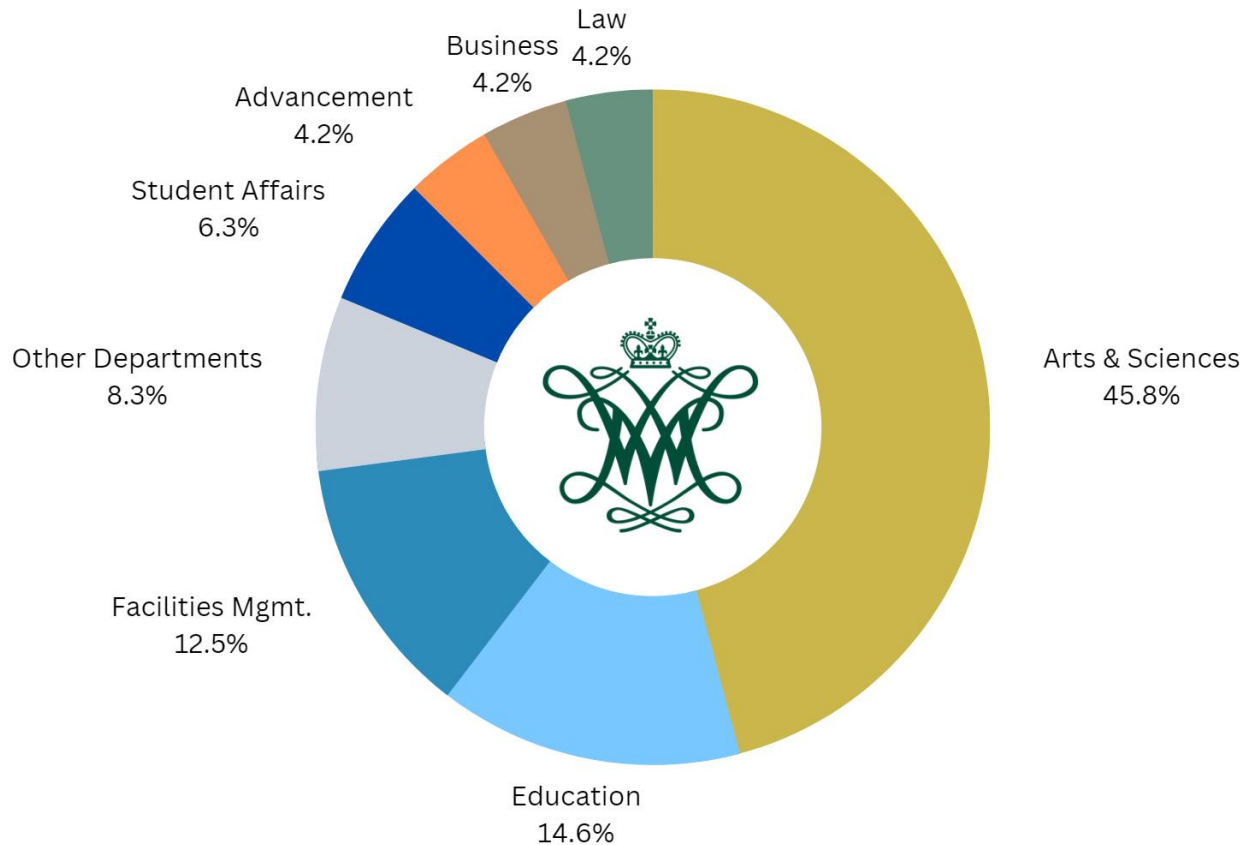
# 14%

**Percent Increase from AY 21-22 to AY 22-23**



# Data Analysis (Demographics)\*

## Division Affiliation



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 Facilities Management.

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.

### AY 22-23

The three largest represented affiliations all saw increases in AY 22-23 from AY 21-22. Last academic year, Facilities Management 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.

Arts & Sciences **+5.2%**

Education **+3%**

Facilities Mgmt. **+9.6%**

# Data Analysis (Issue Areas)

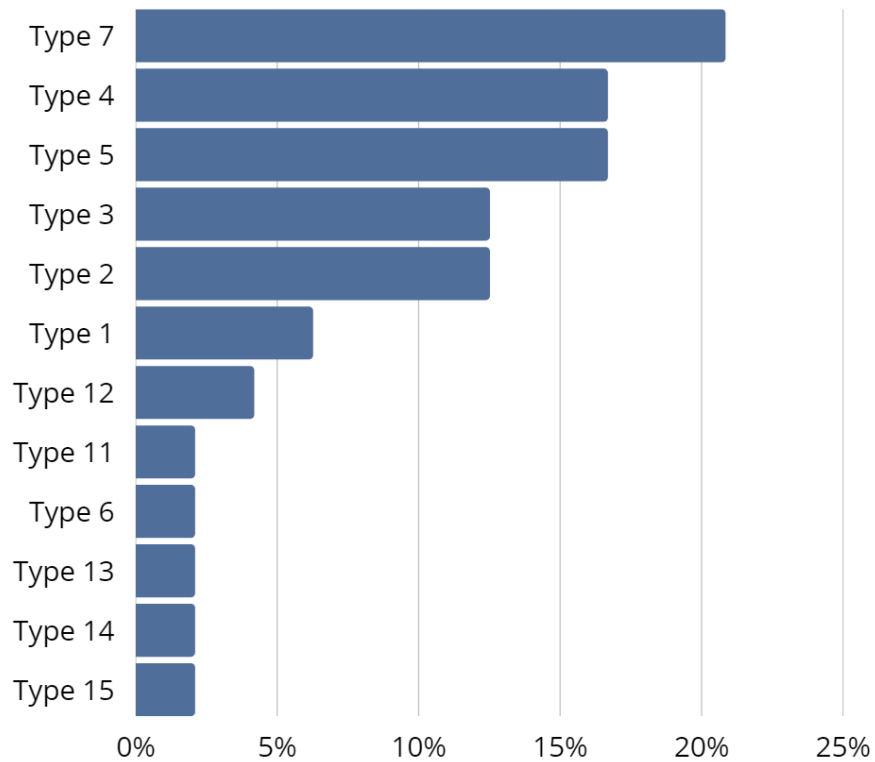
The Office of the University Ombuds subscribes to the uniform reporting categories practice and tracks issue areas by type for data analysis. Currently, we use Types 1-16 to identify and track issue areas. The assigned number type does not correspond, in any way, to its level of importance.

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*.

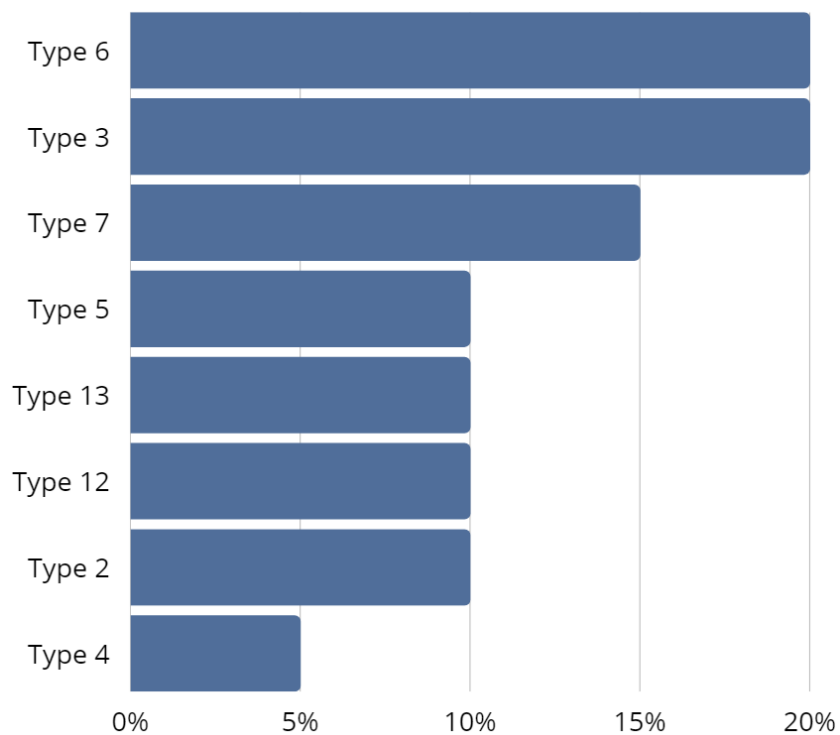
Type 1	Organizational, Strategic, & Mission Related
Type 2	Discrimination & Harassment
Type 3	Career Progression & Development
Type 4	Evaluative & Evaluative Relationships
Type 5	Compensation & Benefits
Type 6	Values, Ethics & Standards
Type 7	Peer & Colleague Relationships
Type 8	Central Administration
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 22-23 Primary Issue Areas by Category Type (Chart)**



**AY 22-23 Secondary Issue Areas by Category Type (Chart)**





# Data Analysis (Issue Areas)\*

## AY 22-23 Primary Issue Areas by Category Type (Table)

Peer & Colleague Relationships (T7)	20.83%
Evaluative & Evaluative Relationship (T4)	16.67%
Compensation & Benefits (T5)	16.67%
Career Progression & Development (T3)	12.50%
Discrimination & Harassment (T2)	12.50%
Organizational, Strategic, & Mission Related (T1)	6.25%
Legal, Regulatory, Financial, & Compliance (T12)	4.17%
University Policy & Central Administration (T11)	2.08%
Values, Ethics & Standards (T6)	2.08%
Services & Administrative Issues (T13)	2.08%
External Issues (T14)	2.08%
Academic Affairs (T15)	2.08%

## AY 22-23 Secondary Issue Areas by Category Type (Table)

Values, Ethics & Standards (T6)	20%
Career Progression & Development (T3)	20%
Peer & Colleague Relationships (T7)	15%
Compensation & Benefits (T5)	10%
Services & Administrative Issues (T13)	10%
Legal, Regulatory, Financial, & Compliance (T12)	10%
Discrimination & Harassment (T2)	10%
Evaluative & Evaluative Relationships (T4)	5%

# 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, & Shylan  
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:  $\pm 0.01$  to 0.1) due to approximation for simplified visualization.



**Office of the University Ombuds**

William & Mary  
Hornsby House  
336 Jamestown Rd  
Williamsburg, VA 23185  
[ombuds@wm.edu](mailto:ombuds@wm.edu)  
[www.wm.edu/ombuds](http://www.wm.edu/ombuds)

*Prepared By:*

**Rebecca Green, J.D.**

Ombuds, Office of the University Ombuds  
[greenombuds@wm.edu](mailto:greenombuds@wm.edu)

**Rick Gressard, Ph.D.**

Ombuds, Office of the University Ombuds  
[gressardombuds@wm.edu](mailto:gressardombuds@wm.edu)

**Shylan Scott, Ph.D. '12**

Ombuds, Office of the University Ombuds  
[scottombuds@wm.edu](mailto:scottombuds@wm.edu)

**Kevin Lopez Pelaez '23**

Researcher, Office of the University Ombuds  
[klopezpelaez@wm.edu](mailto:klopezpelaez@wm.edu)





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