

# UNLV | OMBUDS OFFICE



## Quarterly Summary of Activities January 1, 2024 to March 31, 2024

# Introduction

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This report summarizes the activities of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) Ombuds Office in the first quarter of calendar year 2024.

In this quarter, UNLV recovered from the tragic events of December 6 while campus operations continued. The Ombuds Office supported UNLV staff, faculty, and students as they navigated their way through the first three months of 2024, which was one of the highest-volume quarters in the office's history.

The office's primary functions are to listen to concerns, educate on options and conflict resolution, provide mediation and facilitation services, and advocate for systemic change when needed. The [Ombuds Office website](#) has a complete list of the services and programs it offers; these range from informational sessions about the office itself to one-on-one conflict coaching to interactive workshops—in person or online—that promote productive conflict resolution.

UNLV's Ombuds Office is operated in accordance with the [International Ombuds Association's Code of Ethics](#) and [Standards of Practice](#). This entails embodying the fundamental principles of *independence* in structure and function; *impartiality*; *informality*, in not participating in any disciplinary or legal processes; and *confidentiality*.

My intention with this report is to increase awareness of the valuable services offered by the Ombuds Office. It is my hope that by sharing information about the office's functions and capabilities, more individuals will feel comfortable reaching out for assistance when needed. If you are uncertain about the office's scope or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. Our team is here to support and guide you through any challenging situations you may be facing.

Sincerely,

*David G. Schwartz*

David G. Schwartz, Ph.D.

Ombuds

University of Nevada, Las Vegas





## Overview

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This quarterly report presents visitor trends and common concerns shared by visitors to the Ombuds Office during the first quarter of 2024 (January 1 to March 31).

The office's work generally falls into three areas: consultations, mediations and group facilitations, and educational programs such as workshops. In a consultation, one or more people (although it is usually one) meet confidentially and informally with the Ombuds to discuss a concern. Mediations facilitate a voluntary and confidential discussion between two individuals. A unit may request a group facilitation to discuss an agreed-upon agenda or to have a more open-ended conversation about what they should be talking about. Workshops and other educational programs, which are endlessly customizable for particular audiences, embrace a variety of interpersonal communication and conflict resolution topics.

The Office aims to equip teams and individuals with the necessary tools to navigate conflict, achieve collective objectives, and foster a kinder campus culture.

The Ombuds Office commits to transparency and accountability by regularly publishing reports, available on the Ombuds Office [website](#), on its activities. The Office ensures that stakeholders are informed and engaged by disseminating this information on a quarterly basis, as well as providing an annual summary report in January of the following year.

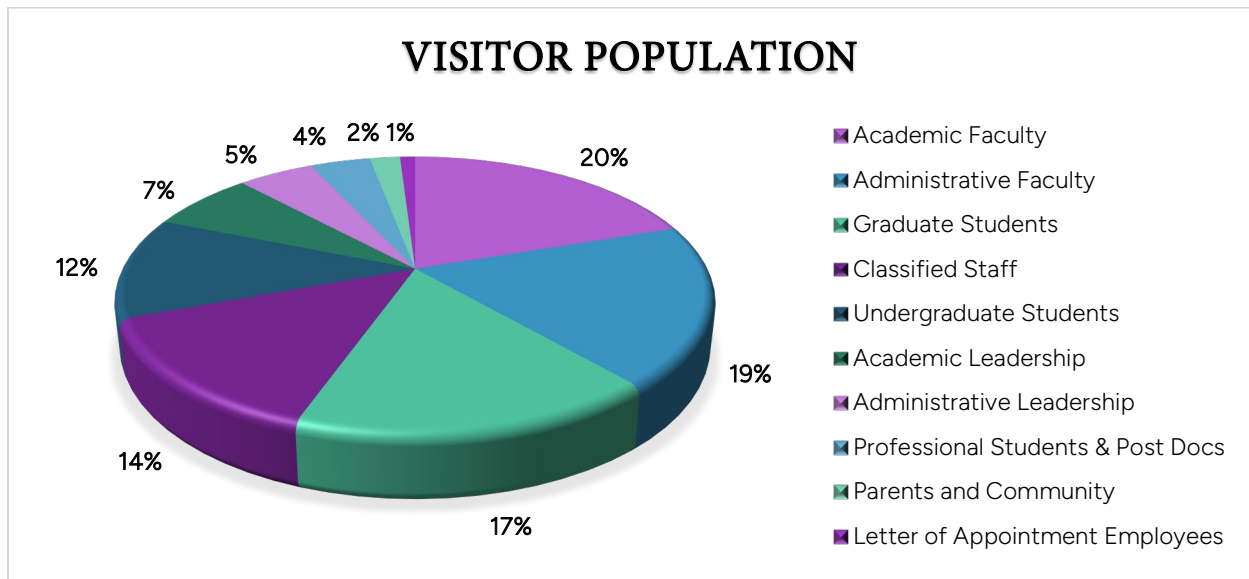
# Visitors and Contacts

This report defines a visitor as someone who utilizes the Ombuds Office for individual services, including one-on-one meetings, whether in person, by telephone, or remotely. Individuals participating in workshops with the Ombuds are not considered "visitors."

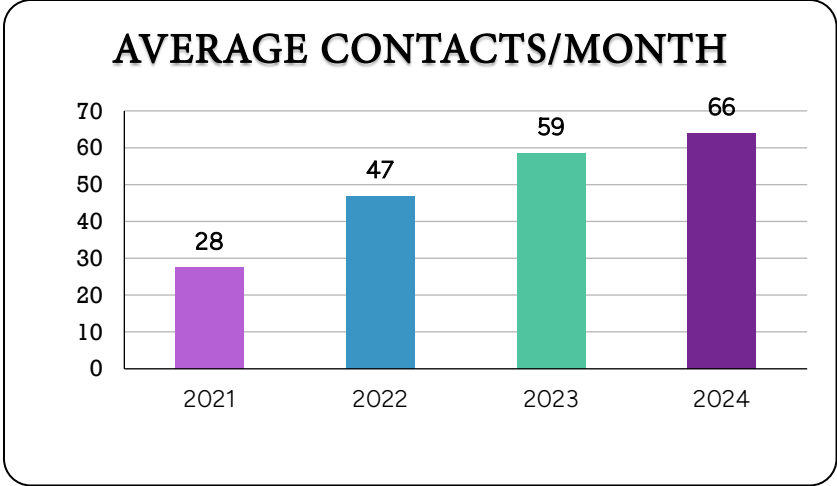
To effectively track its engagement with visitors, the Office treats all in-person or virtual exchanges, regardless of their nature, as "contacts." Note that a single visitor may have multiple "contacts" with the Office. This tracking approach allows the Office to gain deeper insight into visitor interactions and improve support offerings.

Visitor population percentages were as follows:

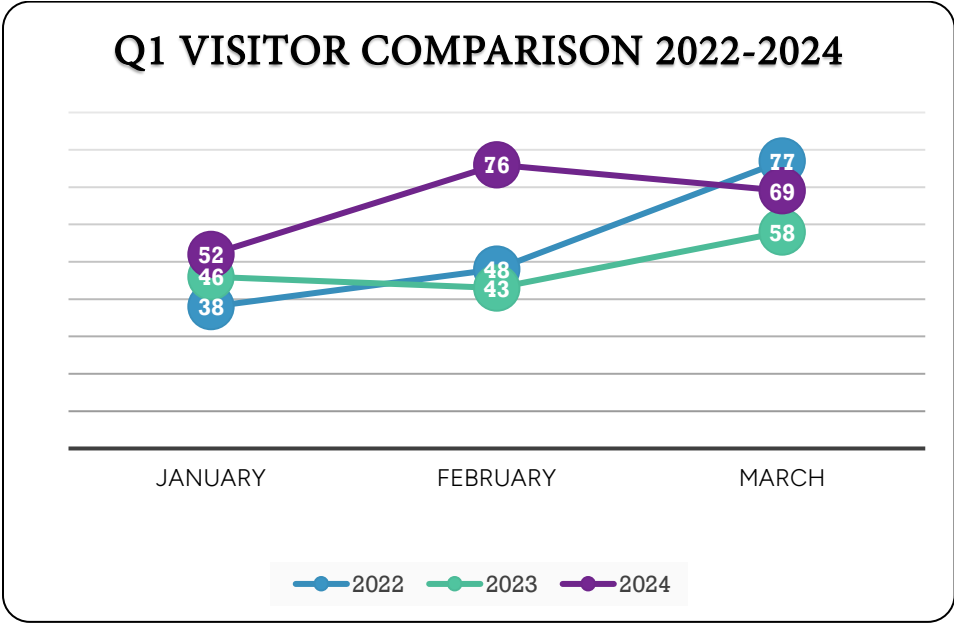
<b>20%</b> Academic Faculty	<b>1%</b> Letter of Appointment Employees
<b>7%</b> Academic Leadership	<b>17%</b> Graduate Students
<b>19%</b> Administrative Faculty	<b>12%</b> Undergraduate Students
<b>5%</b> Administrative Leadership	<b>4%</b> Professional Students and Post Docs
<b>14%</b> Classified Staff	<b>2%</b> Community Members and Parents



There were a total of 197 visits to the Ombuds Office from January 1, 2024 through March 31, 2024. Additionally, 42 percent of visitors were individuals who had previously used the office this year, returning to discuss their concerns further and seek additional information, which is a positive indication of their satisfaction with the services provided. This data also shows significant shifts from the previous year's first quarter, notably an increase in the representation of Graduate Students and Classified Staff.



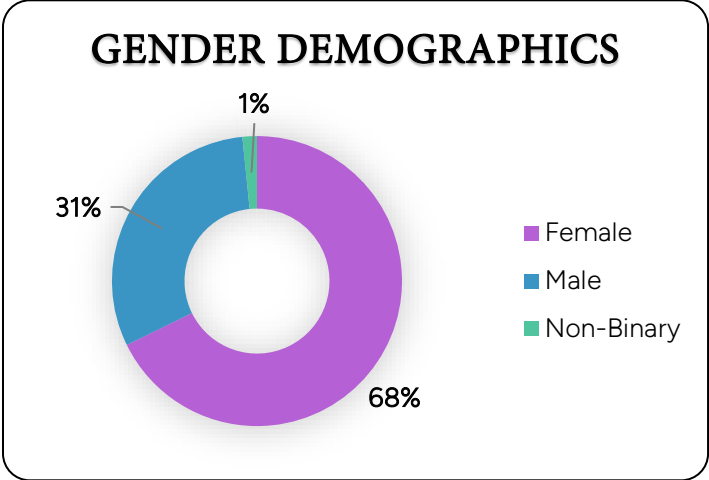
In 2021, the office received an average of 28 contacts per month, which increased to 47 in 2022, and then further increased to 59 in 2023. Thus far in 2024, the average number of contacts per month is 66. This suggests that the office is experiencing a higher volume of activity due to a variety of factors such as increased demand for our services or increased awareness of our offerings.



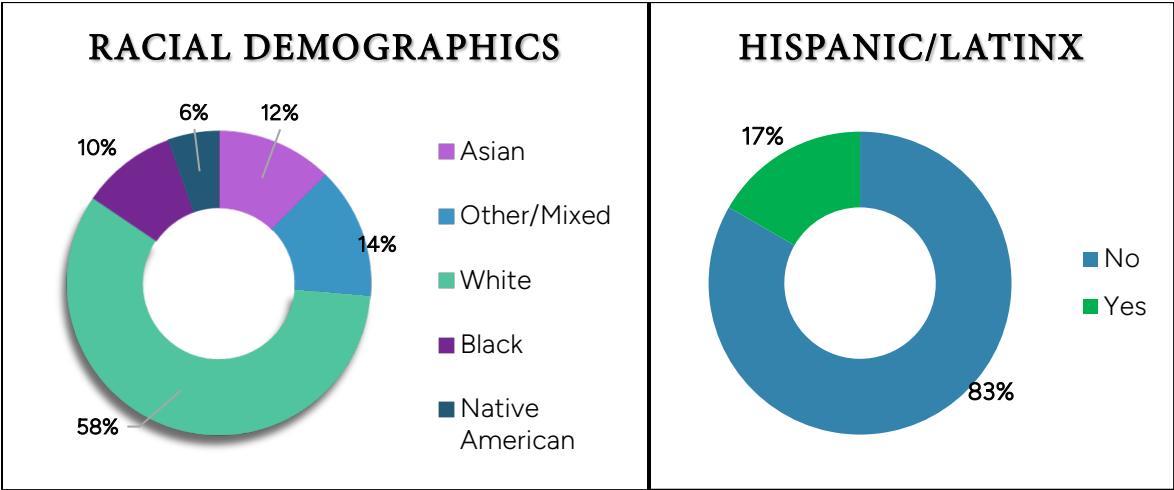
Analysis of the visitor numbers for the first quarters of 2022 to 2024, indicates a significant upward trend. The visitor count begins in January 2022 with 38 visitors and gradually increases to 46 in 2023, finally surging to 52 in 2024. Visitor numbers for February depict a slightly varied trend, starting at 48 visitors in 2022, declining to 43 in 2023, and then experiencing a spike to 76 visitors in 2024. As for March, there is a fluctuating trend, starting at 77 visitors in 2022, declining to 58 in 2023, and increasing to 69 visitors in 2024. Overall, these figures suggest a positive trend in visitor engagement with the Office, with certain months experiencing substantial growth, which could potentially be attributed to seasonal factors or outreach activities.

# Visitor Demographics

During the first quarter, the majority of the visitors to the office were female, accounting for 68 percent. Males made up 31 percent of the visitors, while only 1 percent identified as non-binary. This trend is consistent with the office's usage over the past year. The office continues to be a welcoming and inclusive space for all members of the university community.



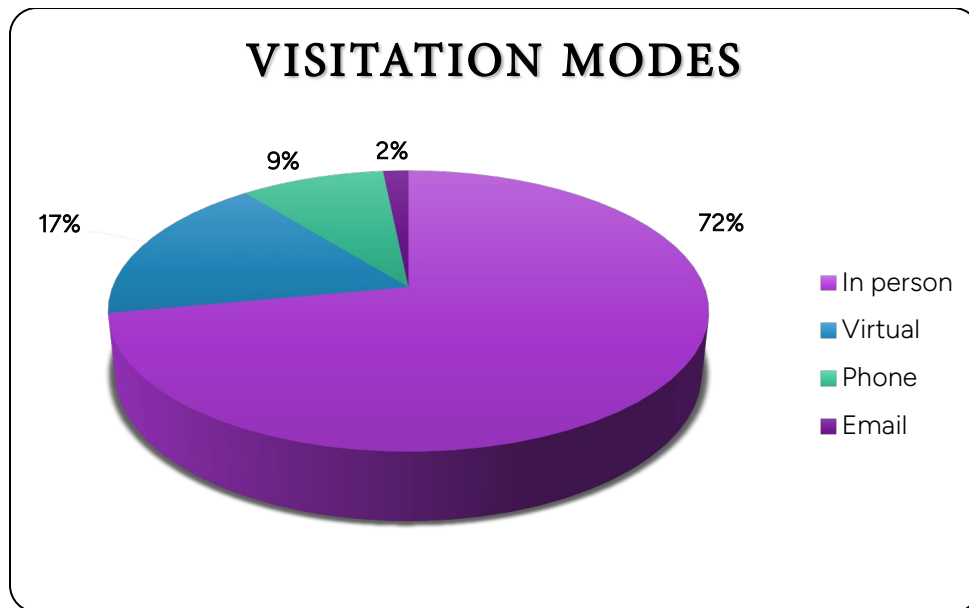
In the first quarter of 2024, noteworthy shifts in the demographic composition of office visitors became apparent compared to last year's first quarter. While the White demographic remained the largest contingent, comprising 58% of all visitors, there was a slight decline from the prior year's 63%. The proportion of visitors identifying as Other/Mixed Race increased to 14%, up from 11% previously. Notably, the Asian demographic saw a substantial rise, constituting 12% of visitors, reflecting a noticeable increase from the previous year's 9%. Despite a decrease in the proportion of Black visitors to 10% (down from 16%), the Native American demographic experienced an uptick, climbing to 6% from 1%. Also, visitors identifying as Hispanic or Latinx reached 17%, a 5% increase. These shifts underscore the evolving diversity within the visitor population, indicating a more inclusive and representative spectrum of individuals engaging with the office's services and resources.



## Visitation Modes

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In the current year, 72 percent of the contacts have chosen to meet in person, which is a trend that has been consistently increasing. Remote visits accounted for 17 percent of the meetings, followed by 9 percent who preferred telephone. Only 2 percent of contacts opted for email communication, which is generally discouraged as it is not considered a secure medium for confidential discussions. Overall, the office has remained flexible about meeting preferences and work schedules.



## Top Visitor Concerns by Category

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To safeguard the confidentiality of its visitors, the Ombuds Office tracks the concerns brought forward through non-specific demographics, for purposes of identifying common concerns within the campus community.

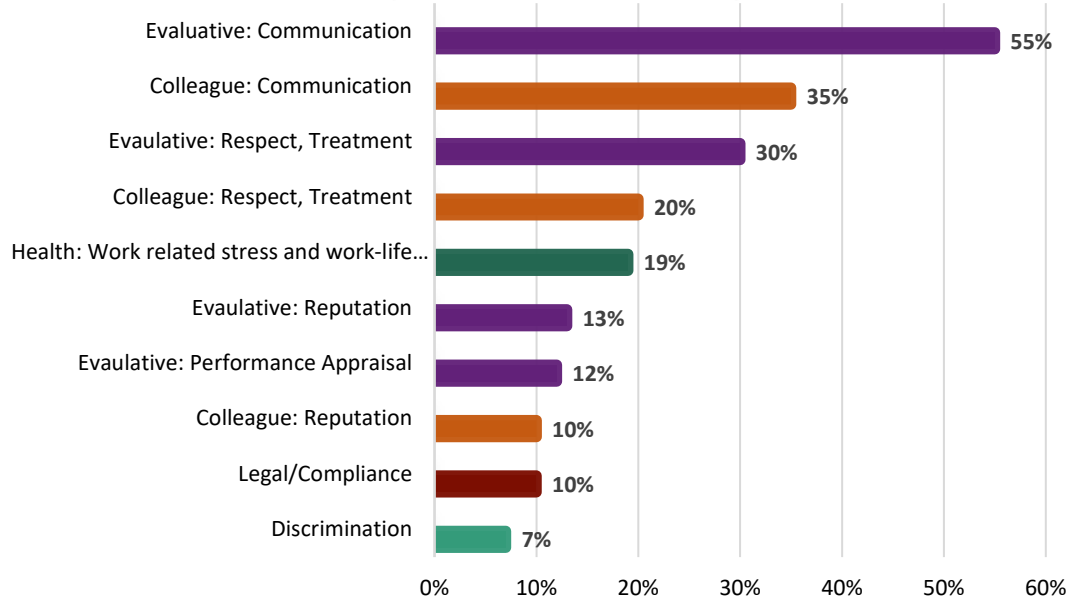
Following International Ombuds Association (IOA) best practices, the Ombuds logs those concerns using the IOA's Uniform Reporting Categories (URC). The URCs reflect concerns typically brought to ombuds offices around the world. These issues are classified under nine main categories:

1. Compensation & Benefits
2. Evaluative 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
8. Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related
9. Values, Ethics, and Standards

Within those groupings, concerns are further organized into dozens of discrete classifications. For example, an issue relating to an employee’s job classification is identified as **1.a**; a concern about communication between an employee by their supervisor is **2.e**; comments and behaviors perceived as insensitive by peers is **3.g**; questions about career development, coaching and mentoring are **4.k**.

Visitors often report multiple concerns, in which case multiple category codes are recorded.

## TOP 10 VISITOR CONCERNS BY CATEGORY (OF 639 TOTAL CONCERNS)



Communication issues with supervisors were again the most commonly recorded category, accounting for 55 percent of cases, while 35 percent of visitors reported communication challenges with colleagues. Visitors also expressed concerns regarding respect and treatment in evaluative relationships and with colleagues, which constituted 30 percent and 20 percent of concerns, respectively. Notably, 19 percent of visitors reported concerns related to work-related stress and achieving a healthy work-life balance, which is a growing trend in workplace challenges.

Primary concerns within supervisory relationships were also related to reputation (13%) and performance appraisal (12%), while reputation was also a concern in 10 percent of colleague relationships. Ten percent of visitors reported compliance issues, and 7 percent raised concerns related to discrimination. These findings highlight the continued importance of fostering positive communication and respectful interactions within the workplace in order to address prevalent concerns and promote a healthy work environment.



## Workshops, Presentations Facilitated Discussions

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In the first quarter, the Ombuds Office organized **16** interactive workshops and guided discussions and participated in **two** tabling events. The workshops provided guidance on how to facilitate productive discussions and decision-making processes within teams, how to de-escalate conflicts, and how to have difficult conversations in the workplace. The guided discussions focused on developing team collaboration and innovation, addressing challenges with team dynamics, and developing best practices. We believe that continued engagement in such programs and workshops is essential for promoting professional and interpersonal growth and enhancing organizational effectiveness. A full list of workshops and informational sessions is available on our [website](#).



## In Closing

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The Ombuds Office exists to serve UNLV by providing an informal channel for conflict resolution and strives to increase collegiality, happiness, and satisfaction on campus.

In presenting this report, we hope to demonstrate the scale and impact of the “quiet work” done by the office as its staff help individuals and groups work through interpersonal concerns and procedural issues. Some of our work, like workshops and presentations, is highly visible. But much of what we do happens in private, under the cloak of confidentiality.

The Ombuds Office continues to develop ways to serve the UNLV community, through individual consultations, group work, and online resources. If you have any questions, or are interested in having the Ombuds work with you to develop a workshop, facilitated discussion, or other programs for your unit, please contact us at [ombuds@unlv.edu](mailto:ombuds@unlv.edu).

For more information about Ombuds Office programs and services, please visit the [Ombuds Office website](#).



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