

UNLV | OMBUDS OFFICE

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



This is the fifth annual report from UNLV's Ombuds Office, summarizing the activities of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas's Ombuds Office during calendar 2025.

This report provides a measure of transparency for an Office whose work is confidential while maintaining that confidentiality. No individual cases are discussed, nor are specific units or divisions mentioned.

Rather, this report offers insights into the aggregate use of the Office, as well as its services and functions, for the dual purposes of raising awareness of the services the Office provides and charting the Office's value to UNLV.



OVERVIEW

This comprehensive annual report provides an in-depth analysis of visitor trends and a comprehensive overview of concerns received and various activities aimed at promoting informal conflict resolution undertaken by the Ombuds Office throughout the calendar year 2025, spanning from January 1 to December 31.

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WHAT IS THE OMBUDS OFFICE?

The Ombuds Office serves as a resource for the UNLV community, and provides an alternative to other dispute resolution mechanisms on campus. The office operates in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice of the International Ombuds Association (IOA), a member-led professional association that supports the work of organizational ombuds through training, development, and networking resources. Our office seeks to promote the well-being and

productivity of UNLV's diverse constituents. The office serves all UNLV including full-time and part-time, classified staff, administrative faculty, academic faculty, executive administrative faculty, medical residents, and graduate, professional and undergraduate students.

At the Ombuds Office, visitors can be confident that a neutral and independent party hears their concerns and that their privacy is protected by confidentiality.

Independence

The Ombuds is independent in structure, function, and appearance to the highest degree possible within the organization.

Informality

The Ombuds, as an informal resource, does not participate in any formal adjudicative or administrative procedure related to concerns brought to his/her attention.

Neutrality & Impartiality

The Ombuds, as a designated neutral, remains unaligned and impartial. The Ombuds does not engage in any situation which could create a conflict of interest.

Confidentiality

The Ombuds holds all communications with those seeking assistance in strict confidence, and does not disclose confidential communications unless given permission to do so. The only exception to this privilege of confidentiality is where there appears to be an imminent risk of serious harm.

Why Standards?

IOA standards, reflected in the Ombuds Office Charter, define the Ombuds role. As a neutral, impartial party, the Ombuds does not advocate for individuals or determine right or wrong in a conflict. This means that anyone can use the Ombuds Office, whether or not another party to their issue has previously used it.

Confidentiality ensures that those who use the office do so without fear that others will learn about their concerns.

Due to the office's confidentiality, the Ombuds does not accept notice on behalf of the university.

The informality of the office allows visitors to raise concerns without starting a formal investigative or administrative process, which is ideal for those who are unsure how to proceed and are more comfortable exploring options before initiating any course of action. As the Ombuds only acts informally, he cannot overrule the decisions of others at UNLV or create, eliminate, or alter policies or regulations adopted at any level.

The office's independence guarantees that those who use it get the office's full attention, and that options are discussed without preference for or against any institutional power.

WHAT WE DO

The Ombuds Office performs many functions at UNLV, providing a space where faculty, staff, students, and other members of the community can explore their options and discuss strategies in one-on-one consultations. Groups can use the Ombuds and members of the mediation practice to facilitate discussions. Units can bring the Ombuds Office in to run interactive workshops on a variety of conflict and communications topics. Finally, the Ombuds can listen to concerns and relay systemic and structural issues to campus leadership.

These different functions are united by a single goal: to help all members of the UNLV community to be happier here, and to assist that community into being as equitable and welcoming an environment as it can.



Ombuds Mediation Practice

The Ombuds Office mediation practice employs a co-mediator model, in which two mediators guide each session. To enhance the diverse expertise of our mediation roster, the Ombuds Office draws from a pool of potential mediators. This pool comprises dedicated volunteers from several departments across the campus, referred to as campus mediators. The mediation pool may also include advanced students from the William S. Boyd School of Law, who are designated as practitioner mediators.

All mediators have completed the rigorous “Basic Mediation Essentials” course offered by the Boyd School of Law. This comprehensive 40-hour program equips participants with the essential skills and knowledge required for effective mediation across various contexts. By ensuring that our mediators undergo this specialized training, we aim to uphold the highest standards of mediation practice.

THE OMBUDS OFFICE TEAM



David G. Schwartz, Ph.D., CO-OP | Ombuds

David G. Schwartz, Ph.D., has served as a faculty member at UNLV since 2001, earning tenure in 2006 and promotion to full professor in 2013.

Before starting work as Ombuds, Dr. Schwartz studied the histories of gambling and Las Vegas, a field that he continues to publish in.

As Ombuds, Dr. Schwartz directs the office that serves UNLV's 10,000 academic, administrative, classified, temporary, student, and part-time employees, as well as the larger community of UNLV undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. The office provides a forum for all employees to confidentially discuss matters that concern them, and to receive training and coaching in conflict resolution techniques and strategies, as well as hosting a mediation practice. Dr. Schwartz also oversees the office's programming, including remote and in-person seminars and workshops.

Dr. Schwartz is a Certified Organizational Ombuds Practitioner (CO-OP), administered by the International Ombuds Association. Those with CO-OP credentials are recognized for their understanding of ombuds practice and their adherence to the IOA's Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics.

Guadalupe Negrete, MA | Program Coordinator

Guadalupe (Lupita) Negrete brings years of experience in higher education administration to her role as Program Coordinator for the Ombuds Office. She manages scheduling and visitor appointments while collaborating across departments to coordinate programs and workshops delivered to UNLV faculty, staff, and students. Leveraging her background in digital content creation, Lupita also works to expand the office's reach and visibility campus-wide.



Maria Soriano, MA | Graduate Assistant

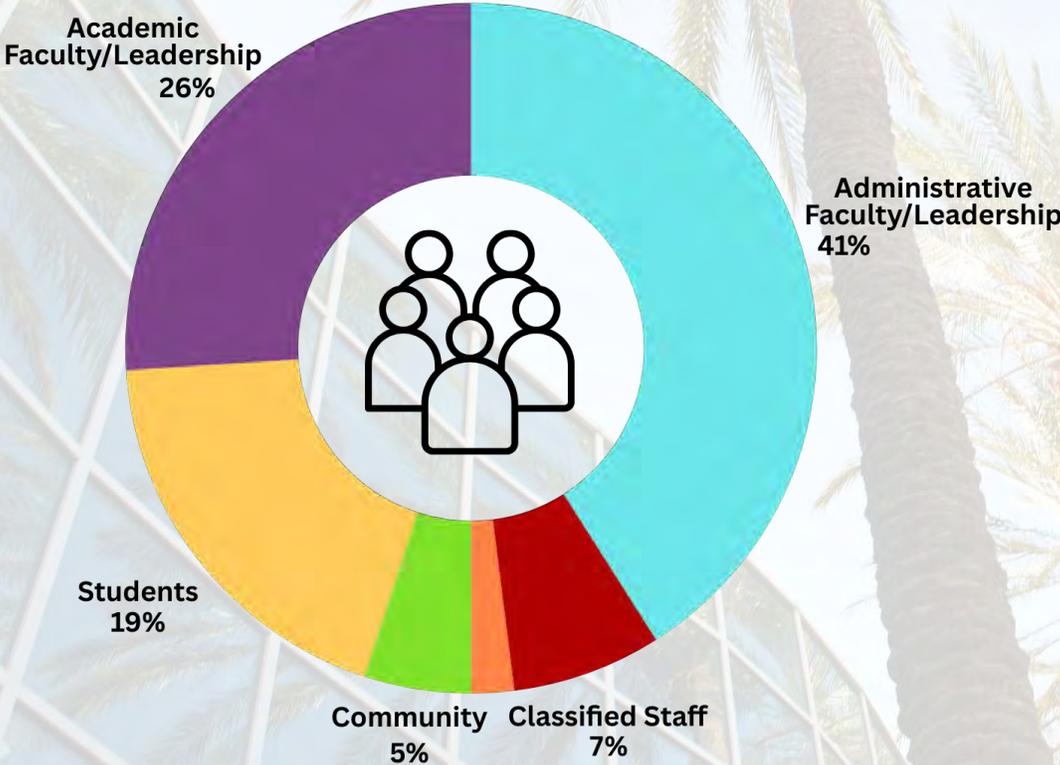
Maria Soriano is the Graduate Assistant for the Ombuds Office and a Clinical Mental Health Counseling student. With her background in mental health, coaching, and higher education, Maria brings intellectual rigor, creativity, and a fresh perspective to our office.

INDIVIDUAL CONSULTATIONS

Individual consultations held confidentially with the Ombuds serve as a primary avenue for those on campus to interact with the office. In this report, a “visitor” is defined as someone utilizing the Ombuds Office for one-on-one meetings conducted in person, by telephone, or virtually. The office defines each interaction with a visitor, whether online, in person, or through another medium, as a “contact.” In 2025, the office had 635 visitors and 952 contacts.

While the report captures general demographic data and adheres to the IOA’s Uniform Reporting Categories, no identifying information about visitors is retained in any form. The Ombuds refrains from making notes during or after meetings with visitors, ensuring visitor confidentiality.

VISITOR TYPES



Visitors

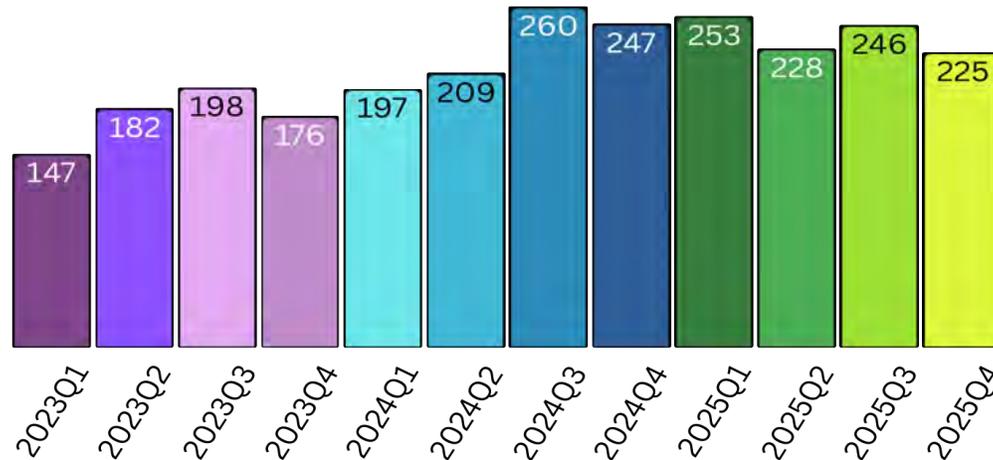
Over the course of the year, the office had 635 unique visitors from among the following groups:

- 34% Administrative Faculty
- 21% Academic Faculty
- 6% Administrative Leadership
- 5% Academic Leadership
- 7% Classified Staff
- 20% Professional, Graduate, and Undergraduate Students
- 2% Temporary Clerical/Letter of Appointment Faculty or Resident
- 5% Community: parents and community members

Contacts

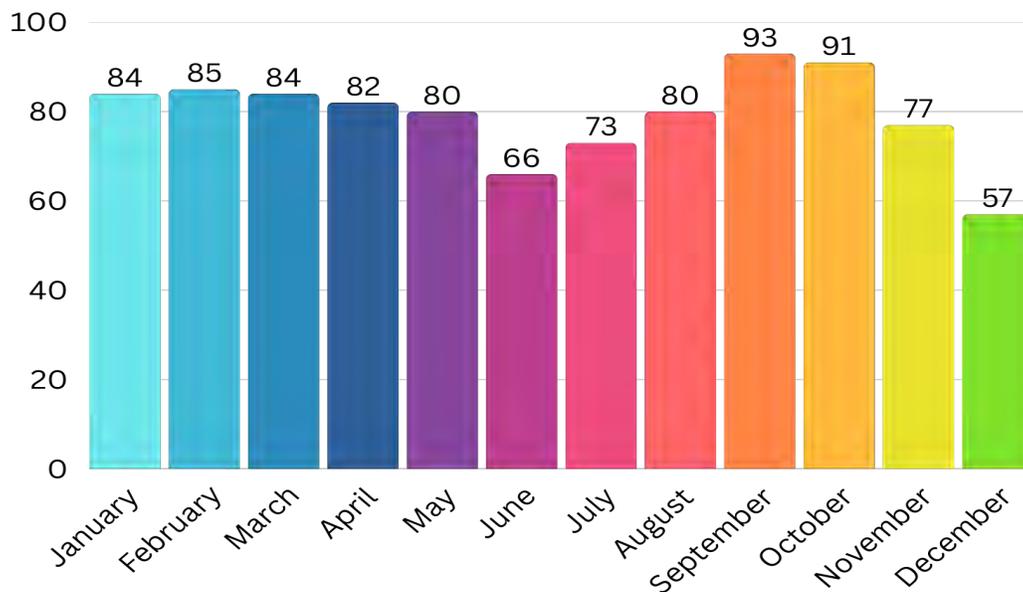
The office logged 952 contacts for the year, a 4.27% increase over 2024 and a 35.61% increase over 2023. Fifty percent were visitors who utilized the office more than once, indicating that they were comfortable returning to discuss their concerns and seek additional information about available resources.

CONTACTS BY QUARTER, 2025



The data illustrates a significant upward trend in quarterly contacts from 2023 through 2025. While there were fluctuations throughout 2024 and 2025, the office maintained an overall growth trend compared to previous years despite a slight decline in the final quarter. Although 2024 Q3 remains the highest peak at 260 contacts, 2025 established a higher consistent baseline, led by a strong performance of 253 contacts in the first quarter.

CONTACTS PER MONTH, 2025



Monthly interactions fluctuated throughout the year, peaking in the fall with all-time record numbers for the office: 93 contacts in September and 91 in October. In contrast, December saw a significant dip to only 57 contacts.

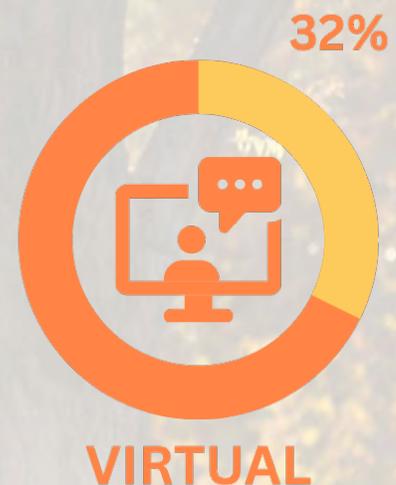
Preferred Contact Methods

To advance our goal of access for everyone, the Ombuds Office offers various meeting options. Visitors can meet with the Ombuds in person, schedule a remote video conference, or speak with him over the phone.

Throughout the course of the year, the majority of the meetings with the Ombuds were held in person, accounting for 45% of the total meetings. Virtual meetings accounted for 32%, while phone calls accounted for 7%. An additional 16% of contacts chose to communicate via email or chat.



Enables natural expression of thoughts, facilitate questions, and minimize the chance of misinterpretation.



A great solution for individuals with varied needs and schedules.



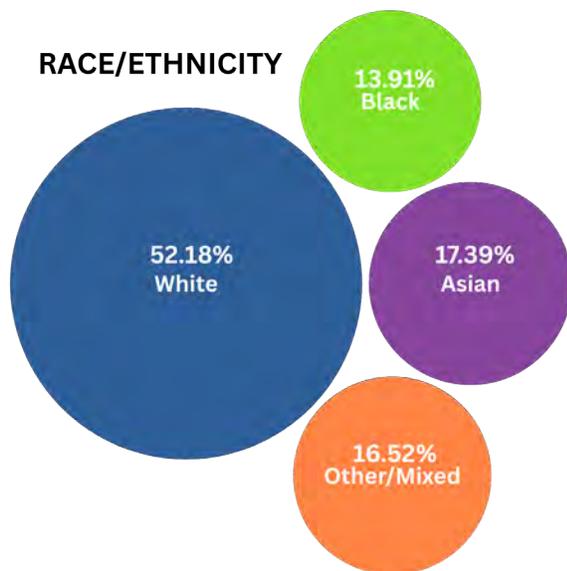
Acceptable for brief inquiries, but not appropriate for private or confidential discussions.



An option for individuals who are on the go or do not have immediate or private access to technology.

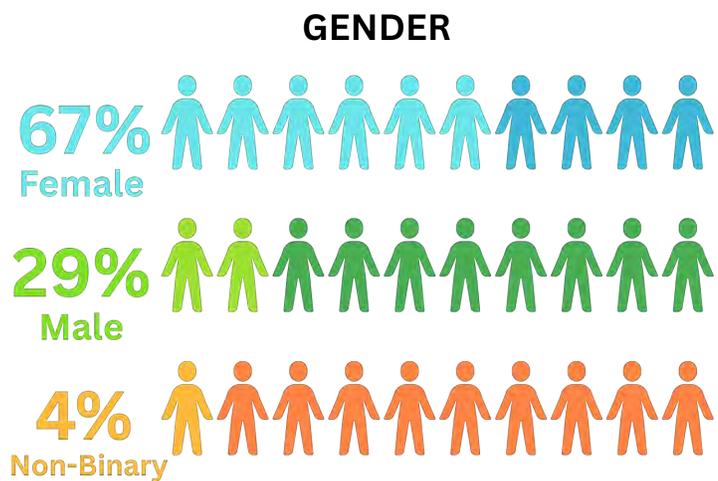
Demographics

The office has always been committed to providing an accessible and welcoming space for all visitors, regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, or beliefs. The consistent distribution of visitors aligns with the office's historical usage patterns, which demonstrates its commitment to serving all visitors equally.

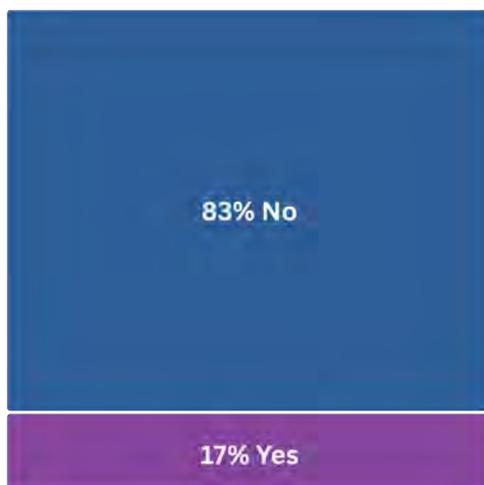


Visitors identifying as White made up 52.18% of the office's total visitors. The second highest demographic was Asian at 17.39%, followed by those identifying as mixed race or other at 16.52%. Visitors identifying as Black made up 13.91% of the total.

The year 2025 saw an increase in female visitors to 67%, up from 63.2% the previous year. Similarly, the percentage of visitors identifying as non-binary rose to 4% from 1.1%. Conversely, male visitors saw a slight decrease, dropping from 35.7% to 29%.



HISPANIC/LATINX



Seventeen percent of visitors reported being of Hispanic or Latinx ethnicity.

CONCERNS BROUGHT: TRENDS

The Ombuds Office tracks the concerns brought forward through non-specific demographics, for purposes of identifying common concerns within the campus community. By looking at information from the 952 contacts over 2025, we can see which concerns are common, and which are not.

What are the Categories?

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

Compensation and Benefits

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about the equity, appropriateness and competitiveness of employee compensation, benefits, and other benefit programs

Evaluative Relationships

Questions, concerns, issues, or inquiries arising between people in evaluative relationships (i.e. supervisor-employee, faculty-student)

Peer and Colleague Relationships

Questions, concerns, issues, or inquiries involving peers or colleagues who do not have a supervisory-employee or student-professor relationship (e.g., two staff members within the same department or conflict involving members of a student organization)

Career Progression and Developments

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about administrative processes and decisions regarding entering and leaving a job, what it entails, (i.e., recruitment, assignment, job security, and separation)

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

Safety, Health, and Physical Environment

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about Safety, Health, and Infrastructure-related issues

Services/Administrative Issues

Questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about services or administrative offices including from external parties

Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related

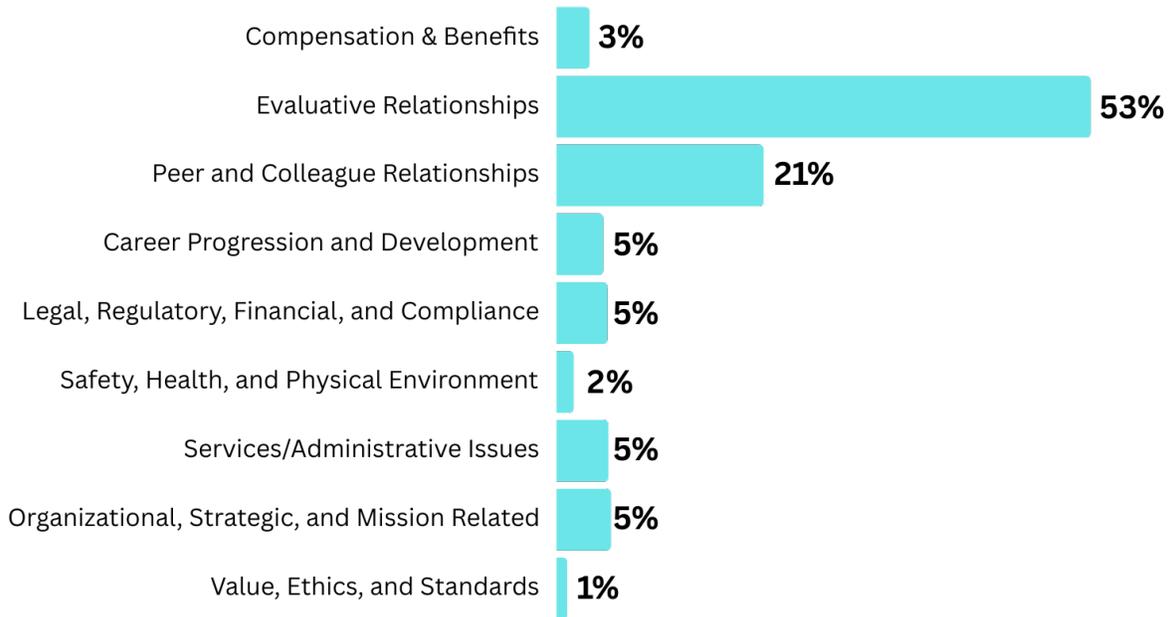
Questions, concerns, issues, or inquiries that relate to the whole or some part of an organization

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

Within those groupings, concerns are further organized into dozens of discrete classifications. For example, an issue relating to an employee’s compensation 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.

CONCERNS BY CATEGORY



Overall percentages highlight key aspects of how individuals interact with each other in the campus community. Similar to past year trends, Evaluative Relationships comprised the majority of issues at 53%, followed by Peer and Colleague Communications at (21%).

Four categories tied for the third-most frequent concern at 5% each: Career Progression and Development; Legal, Regulatory, Financial, and Compliance; Service/Administrative Issues; and Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related.

Three percent of concerns involved Compensation & Benefits. Two percent were regarding Safety, Health, and Physical Environment; and 1 percent was concerning Values, Ethics, and Standards.



Evaluative Relationships: Quality and/or quantity of communication

Over the past four years, the most frequent category of issues raised was **Evaluative Relationships: Communication**. This category encompasses concerns regarding the quality and quantity of communication between individuals in evaluative pairings, such as supervisor-employee or faculty-student.

In 2025, this remained the top concern brought up by visitors to the Ombuds Office at 36.03%. Notably, this represents a significant decrease from previous years, where the issue accounted for 38% of concerns in 2022, 49% in 2023, and 46% in 2024. This downward trend may be attributed to the office's expanded workshop offerings. For instance, our popular 2025 workshop, *Interpersonal Communication: Say What You Mean*, equips participants with the three critical elements of effective communication. The office is encouraged to see that our efforts to foster respect and clear communication on campus appear to be making a measurable impact.

Top Ten Concerns

This year, the top ten issues raised with the Ombuds were:



*Note that the concerns do not total 100%, as visitors can bring multiple concerns in one session. Indeed, while communication may be a big part of why they visit, there are often other issues raised, such as respect, or climate, or disciplinary actions.

PROGRAMMING AND OUTREACH

To better advance informal conflict resolution, UNLV’s Ombuds Office is committed to delivering workshops and training opportunities tailored to the unique requirements of faculty, staff, and students.

Facilitated Discussions

These sessions give groups a chance to discuss important subjects and tackle crucial issues with the help of a trained facilitator.

Through participating in retreats and facilitation, the Ombuds Office facilitated 10 guided discussions, assisting teams with establishing departmental communication norms, and developing best practices or choosing what they want to see in a leadership transition. Participants worked on overcoming complex dynamics and navigating difficult conversations.



Informational Sessions

Throughout the year, the Ombuds Office conducted a series of presentations aimed at clarifying the purpose and functions of the office. The presentations were delivered to a diverse array of audiences, totaling 7 groups.

Workshops

In 2025, the Office partnered with campus departments, units, and the Human Resources Learning & Development team to conduct 54 interactive workshops.

Overall, workshops focused on improving communication skills, fostering effective conflict resolution, and encouraging the growth of positive interpersonal relationships.

Each program is customized to the audience, with unique scenarios and case studies geared towards the challenges in that unit. Workshops can last from 20 to 120 minutes. For most workshops, 60-90 minutes seems to be the sweet spot.



POPULAR WORKSHOPS



Exploring Conflict Styles

After a brief introduction to Thomas and Kilmann's theory, we will explore, through interactive polling and group discussion, how conflict styles can exacerbate disagreements and complicate productive resolutions. *

This interactive workshop will help participants work more effectively with challenging people, whether it is a passive-aggressive co-worker, an inept supervisor, a know-it-all colleague, or politically minded schemer. This program employs small-group discussions, role-playing exercises, and collaborative problem-solving to equip participants with strategies for maintaining functionality and minimizing frustration in the presence of challenging individuals.



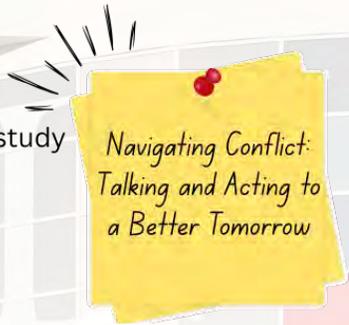
Working Better with Challenging Individuals



Interpersonal Communication: Say What You Mean

Through roleplay and group discussion, participants delve into three critical elements of effective communication: aligning the intended message with delivery and recipient perception, the impact of nonverbal cues, and assessing the benefits and drawbacks of email communication.

Want to build conflict resolution skills tailored for settings like dorms, study groups, and student organizations? Through interactive activities, participants will explore common conflict scenarios, learn productive techniques to resolve conflicts, and discover available resources for navigating conflicts effectively.



Navigating Conflict: Talking and Acting to a Better Tomorrow



Scheduling a workshop, informational session, or facilitation is simple: just email ombuds@unlv.edu to start a conversation about which topic is best suited to your group, and what customizations are best. In general, after solidifying the topic, we need to know how many people will be present, where the location is, the configuration of seating, and preferred dates/times.

WHAT HAPPENS IN A CONSULTATION?

Before [making an appointment](#) to meet with the Ombuds, you might want a better idea of what to expect. While your meeting may go in several different directions depending on your specific needs, below is a general outline of most initial meetings with the Ombuds.

Please fill out the [Ombuds intake form](#) before your first meeting. This completely anonymous survey helps us track how well the office is serving campus.



1

The Ombuds will begin by briefly summarizing the role of the office, the nature of its confidentiality, and what the office can and cannot do.

2

The Ombuds will usually ask a few questions to better understand your background and perspective.

3

Here, the Ombuds will ask directly about the concern(s) that brought you to the office. He may also ask clarifying questions and request additional information to frame the issue.

4

After discussing the surface concern, the Ombuds will help you explore any underlying issues that are generating tension or complicating relationships, helping you consider what a successful resolution will require.

5

In this stage, you and the Ombuds will discuss your potential options, weighing the positives and negatives of each from several perspectives.

6

To close the initial meeting, you will discuss what you want to do next. This may include arranging additional meetings with the Ombuds, scheduling conflict coaching, preparing for mediation or a facilitated discussion, pursuing other channels, or seeking a resolution on your own.

To make your appointment with the Ombuds, please email ombuds@unlv.edu or call (702) 895-1823.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

**Excellent support and communication.
Thank you for going above and beyond!**

Office Visitor 2025

**I think it's great that UNLV has this
office. Complex situations are hard to
navigate without an outside sounding
board if everyone in one's environment
is somehow involved in the complexity.**

Office Visitor 2025

**David is truly amazing with what he does
and I would recommend anyone with
issues to speak to him :)**

Office Visitor 2025

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(702) 895-1823



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unlv.edu/ombuds

For reporting form and calendar slots



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2025 UNLV Ombuds Office Annual Report
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