

# The Ombuds Office 2015-2016 Annual Report

**UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO**

**July 1, 2015– June 30, 2016**



PREPARED BY  
BARBARA L. BEATTY, M.D.R.  
OMBUDS

September 30, 2016

## Message from the Ombuds



I am honored to be serving as the University of Idaho's second full-time Ombuds for faculty, staff and students, and the sixth Ombuds since the establishment of the Office in 1992 with a half-time Faculty Ombuds.

I want to extend my appreciation to President Chuck Staben and the Search Committee for bringing me on board and for the Administration's ongoing support of the Ombuds Office, supporting the independence, neutrality, informality and confidentiality of the Organizational Ombuds role and the problem resolution process. This commitment demonstrates an abiding respect for those individuals who sought and will continue to seek assistance with resolving very challenging issues.

I have been very impressed with the friendliness and sense of community the University of Idaho exudes. All of your good-faith efforts are helping to make the university a better place to work, learn and live. It is a great privilege to serve as the University Ombuds, and I thank each of you for your generous trust and the honor of serving in this capacity.

Sincerely,

*Barb Beatty*

Barbara L. Beatty, M.D.R.  
University Ombuds  
2016 -- currently

# The Ombuds Office 2015-2016 Annual Report

## UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO

### History of the University of Idaho Ombuds Office

The Ombuds Office at the University of Idaho is now in its twenty-fourth year of service, and both the office and the ombuds' role have evolved significantly over the two-plus decades. The University of Idaho Ombuds Office was first proposed to the Faculty Council by a faculty member in 1988.

The office was established in 1992 under President Elizabeth Zinser and operated under the title of Office of Faculty Ombudsman. The office was originally staffed by a half-time faculty member whose sole charge was to serve the faculty. In response to a growing need for staff ombudsman services, Carol Hahn was appointed interim staff ombudsman in 1994, and served for one year. The following year, the faculty ombudsman's services were formally expanded to include staff. As the case load increased, President Robert Hoover approved the addition of a half-time, non-faculty ombudsman, and Roxanne 'Ellen' Schreiber was appointed to the position in 1998.

From 1998 through 2009 the Ombuds Office expanded to include staff and eventually students. In January 2010, upon the retirement of then co-Ombuds James Fazio, Ombuds R. Ellen Schreiber was assigned to the Ombuds Office on a full time basis, thus becoming the university's first full time ombuds charged with serving administrators, faculty, staff, and students. Upon Ellen Schreiber's retirement in fall 2015, a national search commenced to fill the full-time position. In April of 2016, Barbara L. Beatty accepted the position becoming the University of Idaho's second full-time Ombuds.

University of Idaho Ombuds 1992-present:

- David J. Walker, Dept. of Agricultural Economics/Rural Sociology, 1992-1999
- Thomas V. Trotter, Dept. of Counseling and School Psychology, Special Education, and Educational Leadership, 1999-2003
- Charles Morrison, Counseling and Testing Center, 2003-2005
- James R. Fazio, Dept. of Conservation Social Sciences, 2006-2009
- Roxanne 'Ellen' Schreiber, 1998-October, 2015
- Barbara L. Beatty, April, 2016-present

The Ombuds Office adheres to and operates by the *Standards of Practice* and the *Code of Ethics* established by the International Ombudsman Association (IOA) for Organizational Ombuds. The four key tenants are:

- Confidentiality\*
- Impartiality/Neutrality
- Informality
- Independence

(Definitions Appendix B.)

*\*Certain limitations apply, e.g., concern for imminent harm & abuse of populations that cannot take care of themselves.*

## **Mission, Purpose and Function**

The University of Idaho Ombuds Office mission is to *foster and support a positive and productive working, learning and living environment for administrators, faculty, staff, and students by promoting mutual respect, ensuring fairness and helping to resolve problems that emerge within the university.*

The primary purpose of the Ombuds Office is to assist members of the university community with resolving their own problems or conflicts informally, and at the lowest level possible, by providing a safe place where they can speak confidentially and candidly about their issues of concern. Visitors receive assistance with clarifying their concerns, understanding applicable policies and procedures, and identifying resources and response options to address their problems. Like so many US academic ombuds offices, the UI Ombuds Office embraces a ‘solutions-focused’ approach to problem solving. While the ombuds may help the visitor to identify possible response options, at all times, the visitor remains empowered to and responsible for selecting his or her own course of action or non-action. The office also serves as an agent of positive change by helping to identify issues of concern, and by providing timely upward feedback.

The Ombuds Office mission and purpose are accomplished by the following:

- listening to concerns non-judgmentally
- analyzing problems and exploring possible response options
- providing information about policies and services
- providing individual and group/unit conflict coaching
- facilitating dialogue between individuals and groups
- mediating disputes
- providing leadership consultation
- referring to campus and community resources
- coordinating with other university offices
- providing training in human relations, communication and conflict resolution
- noting trends and impacts
- bringing systemic problems to the forefront
- recommending changes in policy, processes and/or procedures

*“The problem with communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”*

--George Bernard Shaw

The benefit to the University of Idaho is the potential for higher morale, less turnover and fewer unnecessary formal processes, including litigation.

An ombuds will not serve as a witness nor offer testimony in any formal proceeding, unless required by law. Individuals using the services of the Ombuds Office retain their rights to all formal procedures ordinarily available to them and are solely responsible for determining their course of action.

## **Year in Review**

### ***Transition***

2015-2016 was a year of transition for the Ombuds Office. The outgoing Ombuds, Ellen Schreiber, worked four months and Maureen Laflin, interim ombuds, served for five months. Maureen is a law professor, Director of Clinical Programs and Director of the Northwest Institute for Dispute Resolution at the University. Barbara Beatty, the new Ombuds, started April 4, 2016 and served the remaining three months of the fiscal year. More information about Barbara can be found in Appendix A.

### Case Load

For the purpose of reporting, a ‘case’ is any new or recurrent *issue* (after a previous case closure) that is brought to the ombuds’ attention by one or more individuals seeking assistance. It can also be an issue of which an ombuds becomes aware and takes ombuds-initiated action. Cases vary from a single informational visit to highly complex interventions involving multiple parties and meetings, and requiring considerable time.

The statistics for 2015-2016 indicate that the ombuds case load was recorded at about half of the prior year, with a total of 103 cases (Figure 1.) This was unexpected, and upon further analysis the new ombuds concluded that it was due to these factors:

1. There were no cases reported in November, 2015, which historically has been an active month. It appears this was due to the fact that the interim ombuds did not start until December 2015.
2. The interim ombuds was not established in that role as her primary duty and it is not uncommon at many college and university campuses with only one ombuds for the case load to fall off when in transition. The forwarding phone message on the Ombuds Office main line indicated to call the Interim Ombuds. Some of the visitor’s, knowing the Ombuds had retired, may have chosen not to call the Interim Ombuds.
3. It was discovered at year-end that the interim Ombuds and newly appointed Ombuds were both documenting cases differently than the outgoing Ombuds. Instead of documenting every significant *issue* as a separate case as had historically been done, the interim Ombuds and the new Ombuds were documenting cases by the number of *individuals* initiating visits to the Ombuds, regardless of how many *issues* were brought up. It is not unusual for visitors to present more than one significant issue, so it is understandable that the numbers fell considerably during this transitional period. (see Figure 2.)

Therefore, for 2015-2016, the Ombuds Office has no way of determining the actual number of cases based on issues, though it is estimated that it was similar to those in the recent past, about 175 cases without the month of November. The number of cases reported also represents a conservative figure since numerous contacts occur informally and spontaneously in the course of doing ombuds business, such as during informational sessions, training workshops, periodic involvement within units (when multiple concerns emerge) and during training and outreach visits. While some of these encounters do result in case entries, numerous others are part of the ombuds’ routine function and are not entered for tracking purposes.

The number of *issues* tracked is a better reflection of the time the Ombuds spends on cases rather than tracking the individual visitor and is being followed in the 2016-17 year.

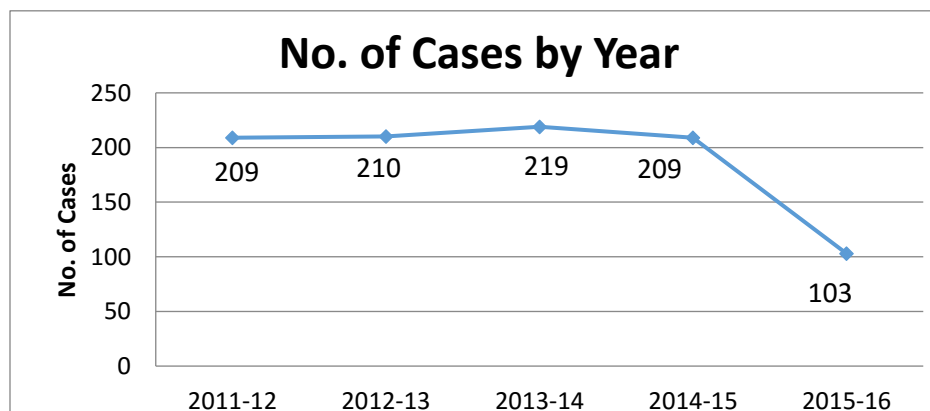


Figure 1: Total number of Ombuds cases by year.

### Number of Cases by Month

These graphs below support the earlier assumption that the lower number of cases for 2015-2016 occurred primarily due to the transitional nature of the year for the office and to the different way the cases were recorded. The uptick in May, with the new Ombuds in place is likely due to the time of year when salary/wage, tenure and non-renewal decisions are made.

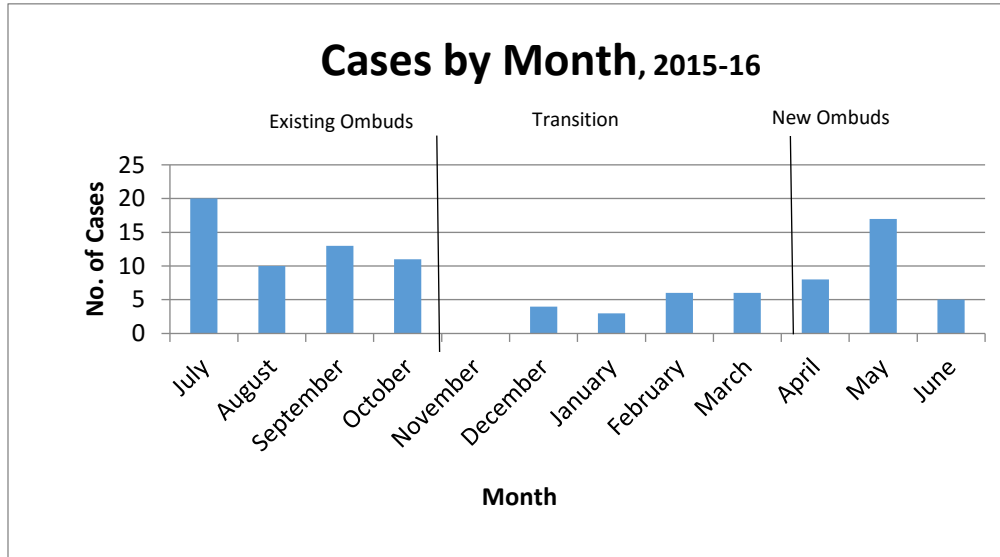


Figure 2: Cases by month, 2015-2016

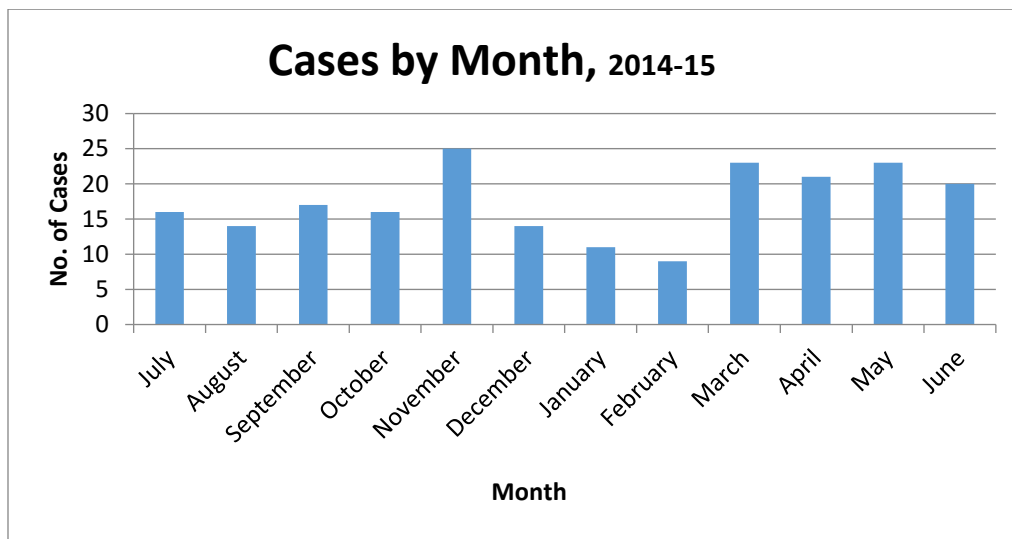


Figure 3: Prior year, cases by month, 2014-2015

### ***Nature of Visitors and Contacts***

The nature of visitor and contacts are virtually the same this year as last year. There were an almost equal number of males (51) and females (52) visiting the Ombuds Office this year. The ratio of referrals to self-referred varied by 1% compared to last year. Eighty-one per cent of cases were self-referred and 19% were referred by others (administrators, supervisors, advisors, HR and co-workers/peers).

### ***University Affiliation***

The Ombuds Office provides services to all faculty, staff and students of the university with affiliation tied to the party initiating an individual case. The affiliation of all parties within a case is not gathered. The ‘Other’ category includes temporary help (TH), consultants, retirees, former students, parents, employment applicants and campus visitors, as long as an issue pertains to a current experience with the university. Table 1 shows the distribution of cases based on the initiators’ university affiliation. Visitor affiliations, remained largely consistent and within normal fluctuations of the previous five years. The same trends as in previous years were noted. Exempt and Classified staff continued to make up the largest percentage of visitors at 46%. Tenured and non-tenured faculty cases combined were 26%. Graduate and undergraduate student cases combined represented 14% of cases (154 cases.) Student issues included grade disputes, interpersonal upsets between peers, academic teams/group/club function, financial aid, and tensions with faculty and business offices.

**Table 1: University Affiliation by Percentage of Cases**

Affiliation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-2016
	%	%	%	%	%
Classified Staff	34	34	37	33	<b>31</b>
Faculty (tenure track)	22	14	20	16	<b>22</b>
Exempt	13	18	19	12	<b>15</b>
Undergraduate	6	9	7	10	<b>10</b>
Administrator	17	11	9	8	<b>7</b>
Other	2	3	4	7	<b>6</b>
Faculty (non-tenure track)	0	1	1	5	<b>4</b>
Graduate Student	4	5	3	8	<b>4</b>
Graduate Assistant (TA/RA)	0	2	0	0	<b>0</b>
Retiree	1	0	0	0	<b>0</b>

Similar to 2014-15, 83% of cases involved only one person (Table 2.) This figure indicates that for these cases there were no other parties presenting the concern or who were *directly* involved with addressing the problem, although in most cases there was at least one other person of concern and is typical for most ombuds’ offices. The remaining cases involved from two to four parties who were directly involved in the problem and problem resolution. Of these cases, two-party cases continued to be most common at nine percent (Table 2).

[Note: When responding to unit or department-wide cases the only parties counted for reporting purposes

*“Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.*

– Winston Churchill

were determined by the degree to which the ombuds was *directly* involved with individual parties and does not reflect the total number of persons within the unit. In many instances, services provided to entire units or departments (such as when serving as a neutral, facilitating or training) involved much larger numbers than shown below.]

**Table 2: Number of Individuals (Parties) per Ombuds Case**

<u>Individuals Involved</u>	<u>No. of Cases</u>	<u>Total Parties</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1	85	85	83%
2	9	18	9
3	7	21	7
4	2	8	2
<b>Total Parties/Individuals</b>		<b>132</b>	

Face-to-face consultations, were the preferred type of contact for visitors, accounting for 69% of all visits. Twenty-eight percent were by phone, with only a handful conducted through email or other means. One case was partially conducted by video conferencing. The current Ombuds believes video technology could be a growing trend for handling Ombuds cases as it becomes more accessible to everyone. The Ombuds also noticed that with the new Cisco video phones, communication and understanding was improved when the video screens were used.

Visitors continue to report that being able to talk openly with an informed, confidential and impartial person about their concern was the most helpful feature of the Ombuds Office.

Cases vary significantly in the amount of ombuds involvement needed; this involvement is reported as ‘number of contacts.’ Thirty-eight percent of cases involved only one visit or contact with no further ombuds/visitor/other direct involvement. This single contact may involve several hours of consultation in a single session. The remaining cases involved multiple consultations or contacts, either with the visitor alone (the person bringing the case) and/or with others involved, such as with multi-party mediations or facilitations with those who were resources for addressing concerns (e.g., administrators, supervisors, General Counsel, Human Resources, Human Rights, Access and Inclusion, etc.). The number of contacts for 2015-16 was 252. Table 3 shows the distribution of contacts per case:

**Table 3: Number of Contacts per Case, 2015-2016**

<u>No. of Ombuds Contacts</u>	<u>No. of Cases</u>	<u>Total No. Contacts %</u>
1	39	38%
2	18	17
3	17	17
4	7	7
5	8	8
6	5	5
7	4	4
17-39	5	5

There were 5 additional cases that involved more contacts ranging from 17 to 39 contacts per any one case. A total of 382 contacts were recorded, although this Ombuds thinks the number might be low due to differences in documentation as discussed above.



### Nature of Problems

Every organization will have concerns or problems that emerge within the normal process of conducting business, and the University of Idaho provides multiple resources in addition to the Ombuds Office to help members of the community address their issues constructively. It is the confidential, informal and impartial features of the Ombuds Office that most often prompt visitors to seek ombuds services, especially as an initial resource. While contact with the Ombuds Office is confidential, presenting *issues* are tracked. In noting the *nature* of problems, the Ombuds Office can inform the university of areas requiring attention. Even though the number of issues recorded in 2015-16 are incorrect due to the transition described earlier, the fluctuations in cases among the different types of problems were proportionately similar to previous years and did not reflect new patterns or trends. Figure 3 shows the distribution of problem categories received by the Ombuds Office in 2015-16. Descriptions of each category may be found in Appendix C

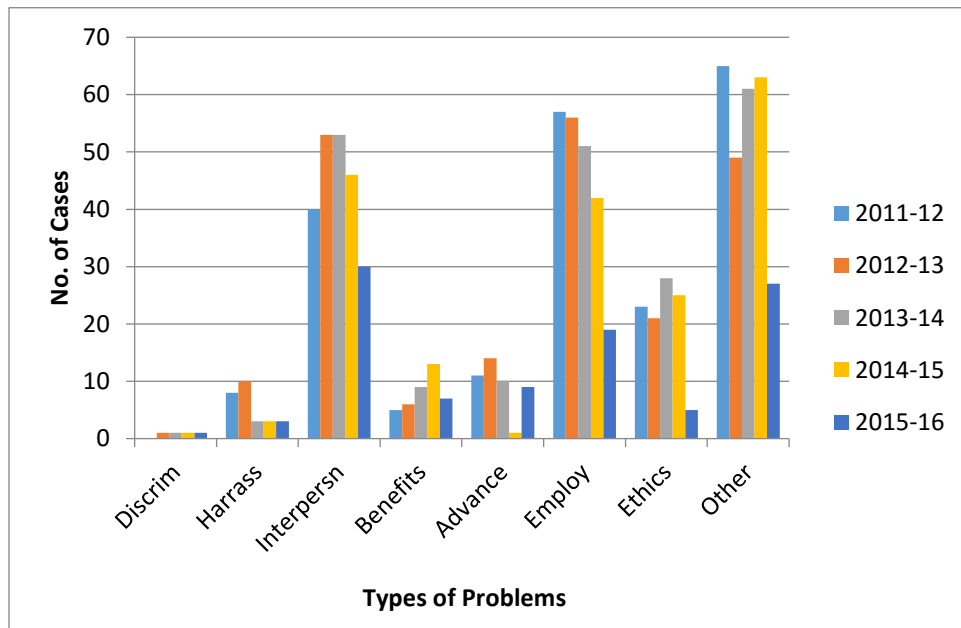


Figure 3: Problem type by year, 2011-2016 FY, brought to the Ombuds Office

### Resolution of Problems

Ombuds use a variety of processes to assist visitors with addressing concerns, and most cases involve multiple actions, thus the actions categories below are *not* mutually exclusive. Four basic categories of ombuds’ actions are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5: Actions Used by Ombuds

Action	Cases	Percentage of Cases*
Problem exploration	86	83%
Information	56	54%
Intercession (e.g., mediation, shuttle diplomacy, facilitation)	16	16%
Referrals (e.g., EAP, HR, Human Rights, Access and Inclusion, deans, supervisors, advisors)	20	19%

\* Categories are *not* mutually exclusive and therefore exceed 100%.

### ***Outreach and Other Services***

The Ombuds Office contributes to the university's 2016-2025 Strategic Plan as a service that underpins all four goals: Innovate, Engage, Transform and Cultivate. The Office provides direct problem resolution services for faculty, staff and students with the intended result being to enable individuals to work collaboratively to reach their goals that in-turn feed the university's goals. Outreach activities, included teaching communication and conflict resolution classes for the Professional Development and Learning Department and individual programs for various academic and support departments.

Outreach activities help members of the university community become informed about the role of the ombuds and the availability of services as well as provide a venue for meeting the ombuds. It also helps acquaint the ombuds with areas of rising concern.

*New Employee Orientation/Benefits Orientation.* Monthly New Employee Orientation sessions were again a highly effective outreach activity that impacted nearly all new Moscow-based employees and some new employees from off-campus locations. After the New Employee Orientation moved to an online format, the current Ombuds has been able to continue this outreach.

*Employee and Student Development.* The ombuds again provided employee professional development, unit in-service trainings, department retreat facilitation, student leadership trainings, and student group presentations. These sessions focused on civility, interpersonal communication, conflict management, change, collaboration, team building, and Ombuds Office introductions. Data is not available for the first three quarters of the FY. However, in the remaining three months, April, May, June, the new ombuds provided two requested presentations that were not case related. Several informal discussions took place when the Ombuds visited over a dozen unit and college level meetings to introduce herself. Outreach to all areas of campus is an ongoing activity.

*University Service.* The past and new ombuds engaged in service to the broader university through continuing participation on the Benefits Advisory Group, and the Professional Development Coordinating Committee. The new Ombuds continues to attend the Faculty Senate, Staff Council and Student Senate whenever possible to stay in tune with the broader community.

*Professional Service.* The new ombuds continues to be a member of the International Ombudsman Association (IOA,) The Ombuds Task Force in the Dispute Resolution Division of the America Bar Association (ABA) and the Association of Conflict Resolution (ACR.). In 2016, the current Ombuds reached out beyond the University of Idaho borders to give three 90 minute talks on communication and conflict resolution to the Northwest Consortium of Professional Staff Annual Conference reaching 100+ participants.

*Professional Development.* The new ombuds is committed to continuous professional development and engages regularly in reflective practice with other experienced academic ombuds through video conferencing, telephonic consultation and on-site review, when opportunities are available. The new Ombuds received three days of training at the IOA annual conference and 2 days attending the Consortium on Abrasive Conduct in Higher Education (CACHE.) in 2015-2016 FY. The new Ombuds has and will continue taking advantage of several on-line learning opportunities related to the field.

### ***Effectiveness of the Ombuds Office***

The definition of a successful outcome and ombuds effectiveness cannot be gauged solely by whether a problem is ultimately resolved according to a visitor's satisfaction or an ombuds' preference. Rather, there are multiple descriptors of success:

- Visitor better understands their concern and identifies solution options, was better informed and prepared to self-advocate, act or not act
- A potential problem was avoided
- Further deterioration or escalation of a situation was avoided
- A manifest problem was resolved
- A policy or system problem (and a potential modification) was identified

Helping visitors and all parties to be more effective, constructive, fair and respectful in seeking solutions to their concerns, and reducing harmful tensions or hostility, is considered a successful outcome from the perspective of the Ombuds Office. However, there are many problems where no remedies or resolution options are available. Some cases can leave visitors with few options, such as:

- termination for cause or performance
- intractable disagreement over evaluation ratings
- expectations or compensation
- and many academic decisions with clear processes set out by policy

In these cases, being able to confirm that the relevant policy or action was appropriately or fairly applied, talking about possible next steps, and being heard are crucial to moving forward uneventfully. Being heard and understood is *the most powerful intervention*; and each year this intervention alone has likely lessened the emergence of unnecessary escalation, and even potential violence. Being heard without judgment or fear and being assisted with sorting out issues and response options is the most common and highly appreciated benefit reported to the ombuds.

When assessing impacts of ombuds services, results are difficult to measure since visitor perceptions of outcomes are often tied to factors outside of an ombuds' role (an ombuds cannot reverse decisions, change a grade, or adjudicate complaints, etc.) and confidentiality precludes the use of many of the usual forms of evaluation.

*Assessments.* The Ombuds Office uses two methods to assess the outcomes and impacts of services. The first is *feedback and evaluation* forms. For individual visitor meetings, a voluntary visitor feedback form is given to each visitor that goes directly to the President's Office and is summarized for the ombuds evaluation feedback. A different, voluntary feedback form is given to groups that have received training from the ombuds. They are left anonymously in an envelope after the class and later given to the President's Office for evaluation purposes. In the last quarter of the FY, the first quarter the new ombuds was on campus, there were 2 teambuilding training with a total of 17 participants. They were to rank the overall class from 1 to 5, 5 being 'Excellent' and rate the Ombuds on the same scale. Space for comments were provided for each category. For the course, 12% gave the highest rating of 5; 59% ratings of 4 and 30% ratings of 3. The dominant comment for improvement was to have more time. For the Ombuds as presenter, 24% gave the highest ranking of 5, 41% rankings of 4, and 35% rankings of 3. Feedback for the ombuds included allowing more time, more exercises and more university examples. It should be noted that the ombuds is not always the one who makes the decision about time, as in these cases.

Second, is an assessment based on the *ombuds' self-analysis of completed cases* using a scale ranging between 'satisfactory', 'neutral' and 'unsatisfactory' resolution of cases. It is not a measure of visitor satisfaction, but is used as an element of reflective practice. The scale attempts to help the ombuds evaluate the service provided and outcome of each case as objectively as possible. Appendix D describes the

outcome identifiers that fall within each range and that are used to guide the ombuds' appraisals. The chart also shows percentage of cases the ombuds' considered completed satisfactorily, neutrally or unsatisfactorily for the entire 2015-2016 year and for the last quarter of the year FY, with the new ombuds only. The numbers are similar, with, for example, the assessment of 'Satisfactory' at 74% for the entire year and 70% for the last quarter of the FY.

As in previous years, the greater number of cases gauged to be positive outcomes reflects the ombuds' observation that:

- working through an issue or problem with an impartial skilled listener
- developing a broader perspective on the problem
- identifying relevant policies and procedures
- developing constructive response options
- having difficult conversations mediated directly or indirectly

generally contributed to more positive and less negative outcomes for most issues. This was true even when a visitor or the university's irrevocable actions have already occurred. Despite not attaining a full resolution, an adverse situation that stabilizes and does not decline further, may at best be considered a satisfactory or, at the least, a neutral outcome.

### ***Ombuds Observations and Comments***

Most concerns or problems brought to the Ombuds Office are specific to a set of circumstances or particular individuals. However, when issues appear to be systemic or reflect trends that might warrant further attention, the ombuds may share these directly with the relevant administrator and make recommendations in accordance with the provisions of the *Faculty-Staff Handbook*. Individuals are still kept strictly confidential. The current Ombuds has only been at the University of Idaho for six months at the time of writing this report, therefore it is premature to comment directly on any major trends. However, a few comments will be made reflecting what the Ombuds has observed in this short time period.

*"The ombuds is encouraged to comment on policies, procedures and processes with an eye to positive future change. These observations should be shared with the administrators and bodies with jurisdiction over those policies, procedures, and processes." (FSH 3820 B-6)*

**Pay Equity.** The faculty pay equity issue surfaced as it appears to have in prior years, although to a lesser extent. The major concerns seemed to be with the process taking too many years and why more funding is not earmarked for this to be taken care of in one year. There is some concern as to why the process varies from college to college and department to department; why one person in one college or department gets a pay equity increase while another, who is similarly behind her/his colleagues, and with comparable ranking, is not given an equity increase. Having the detail and transparency of what the equity plan is and how these decisions are made on a website, along with quarterly updates on the new market compensation program, might reduce and or prevent unnecessary escalation of tensions for those who have concerns.

**Supervisory Training.** The majority of visitors to the Ombuds Office in the last quarter of the FY had all or part of their concerns related to what they perceived as inappropriate, unprofessional behavior by supervisors. These concerns applied to both experienced and inexperienced supervisors at various levels. These concerns were raised by faculty with regard to their chairs and/or deans and by staff with regard to their supervisors at various levels in their units. The issues related to this concern were two-fold. One being inexperience of the supervisors/chairs in their roles leading to problems with consistency, fairness, and not knowing or following policies and procedures. The other concern was the supervisor's/chair's/dean's ability to actively listen and communicate effectively, be transparent and treat everyone with respect. The best training programs are provided live, and to the extent possible, development of an effective program for all

supervisors, will help address these concerns. Improving supervisory and management training should improve retention and result in a strong positive impact on the workplace culture and climate which, in turn, significantly improves the overall university culture and climate.

**Workplace culture and climate.** The concern for turning around a discouraged and somewhat negative workplace emerging out of a troubling past seems to be giving way to hopeful, more positive views as President Staben enters his fourth year and he and the Executive Vice President and Provost have nearly finished their restructuring of the administration. Observations over the past six months by the new ombuds are that things *are* changing and people *are* starting to risk getting hopeful again, believing that some stability is here and things beginning to move forward. Changing the climate and culture of an organization takes time, patience and dedication. The dedication of the new administration seems to be apparent to more and more faculty and staff. Continuing to be as transparent as possible and communicate on a regular basis about the progress points within each of the four strategic goals will continue to grow a strong, positive culture.

### ***The Year Ahead.***

As the new ombuds for the past six months, I have been pleasantly surprised to see how welcomed and recognized the Ombuds Office is as an important service to the university community. Ellen Schreiber has left a legacy I intend to continue. I will continue to expand outreach efforts to more students, many of whom did not know they were eligible for the ombuds services. Also, I want to reach out to the growing number of off-campus faculty, staff and students working and learning at our centers, stations and sites located throughout the state with education about the services the ombuds offers. Services, include coaching, facilitations, mediations, and trainings, in addition to the one-on-one confidential visitations.

The office will continue to provide a vital confidential, informal, impartial and independent resource for all members of the university community to avail themselves of to get assistance with resolving university-related problems. I intend to continue partnering with the university administration, colleges, departments, units, residence staff and student leadership to provide ongoing Ombuds Office awareness activities, promote civility, and encourage respectful behavior to prevent and to resolve conflict. While many problems brought to the ombuds are complex--and some simply defy a full or satisfactory resolution—I remain passionate about actively encouraging all parties to learn how to engage in respectful, constructive communication and problem-solving.

One goal I have is to engage individuals, departments and groups in more *proactive* training, including individual coaching and department and group training to improve their communication and reduce problems *before* conflicts arise. In addition, working with other departments on campus to develop additional supervisory classes will contribute to creating a positive, cohesive community.

I appreciate President Staben solidifying the policy that the Ombuds office is not a mandated reporter for Title IX purposes, including sexual misconduct, so that the office remains a fully confidential resource as it is on the majority of college and university campuses across the nation. There are many opportunities for the ombuds to support the university in its commitment to and efforts towards fostering an increasingly respectful and satisfying environment.

### ***In Appreciation***

In starting my tenure as the second full-time ombuds, I wish to express my appreciation for my former ombuds colleagues who started this office and developed it to where it is today, an important part of university life. Special thanks to my immediate predecessor, Ellen Schreiber who, through her leadership, creativity and hard work, created a model ombuds program. I also want to thank Anna Thompson, Assistant to the Faculty Secretary and the Ombuds Office, for her support and administrative assistance as I have transitioned into the University of Idaho.

## Appendix A

**Barbara Beatty** is an experienced mediator and Ombuds, having begun her career in mediation in 1989. She refreshed her skill set in 2009 completing a Masters in Dispute Resolution (M.D.R.) from Pepperdine University School of Law, Straus Institute for Dispute resolution, ranked the # 1 school in this category for over 14 years by *U.S. News and World Report's* annual rankings. Barbara was the Director of the Mediation and Conciliation Center for the Arizona Superior Court in Mohave County and most recently served as the Deputy Ombuds for the Texas Department of Public Safety (State Troopers and Texas Rangers.) She also has a Masters in the Geosciences from the University of Arizona. Her undergraduate degree in Business and Organizational Development is from the Colorado College. Barbara has written articles and given presentations on the history and evolution of the Ombud's profession at national conferences of the Association of Conflict Resolution (ACR) and the journal *Resolution*. She was also the past Chair of the Work-place Section of the ACR and is currently active on the American Bar Association (ABA) Dispute Resolution Task Force on Ombuds.

Barbara has travelled across the United States and to Russia and the Ukraine finding and contracting with faculty for books while in the scholarly book publishing business. Additionally, she was the Director of the Extended University Phoenix Office for the University of Arizona where she developed many continuing education programs. Barbara spent her teenage years and five years as a young adult in Boise, Idaho.

*I am delighted to be back in Idaho and very proud to be part of the Vandal family.*

*“Out beyond right and wrong  
there is a field. I will meet  
you there.”*

*-- Rumi*

## Appendix B

### Tenets of the Organizational Ombuds

In fulfilling its purpose, the Ombuds Office at the University of Idaho adheres to and operates by the *Standards of Practice* and the *Code of Ethics* for Organizational Ombuds as established by the International Ombudsman Association (IOA.)

***Confidentiality.*** All contacts, conversations and information exchanged with the ombuds remain confidential and are not disclosed by the ombuds without the consent of all parties involved *and* the ombuds. Limits to confidentiality exist when disclosure is necessary to protect someone from imminent harm and when otherwise required by law.

***Neutrality and Impartiality.*** An ombuds is a designated neutral on behalf of all members of the university community. As such, the ombuds remains impartial and unaligned. An ombuds does not take sides, serve as an agent, represent or advocate on behalf of any party or the university. Rather, it is the role of the ombuds to consider the facts, rights, interests, and safety of all parties involved in a search for a fair resolution to a problem. An ombuds promotes and advocates fairness and justice.

***Informality.*** Consultations are conducted ‘off the record’ and *do not constitute notice to the university* in any way. An ombuds does not become involved in or part of formal institutional processes (such as mandatory reporting, formal complaints, investigations, appeals, etc.), unless otherwise specified in policy, and then only as a neutral process observer. No personal information is retained or used for subsequent formal proceedings. An ombuds will not serve as a witness nor offer testimony in any formal proceeding, unless required by law. Individuals using the services of the Ombuds Office retain their rights to all formal procedures ordinarily available to them and are solely responsible for determining their course of action.

***Independence.*** To ensure objectivity, the office operates independently of all university entities and reports to the highest possible level of the organization. *An ombuds exercises sole discretion over whether or how to act regarding an individual’s concern, a trend or concerns of multiple individuals over time* (IOA Standards of Practice).

## Appendix C

### Types of Problems Presented (Graph page 8)

The number of cases for 2015-2016 are than for 2014-2015. This is again due to the data errors made by the interim and new ombuds as explained on page four of this report. Had more cases been broken out by issue rather than by individual, more problems would have been specified.

- Discrimination:** One case involving a potential disability issue came directly to the Ombuds Office. The situation was discussed and the person was referred to the appropriate department.
- Harassment:** Three cases of harassment came directly to the Ombuds Office. Two involved general harassment or perceived bullying, and one was regarding sexual harassment that was referred to the Human Rights Office.
- Benefits:** There were 7 cases attributed to benefit issues. Three cases related to retirement or health insurance, two cases involved family medical leave and one case related to course enrollment and one to consulting issues.
- Advancement:** There were 9 nine cases related to advancement, representing a decrease of seven cases from the previous year. Of the 9 cases, 3 were concerning salary. Increasing perceptions of salary inequities and complaints of significant disparities among similar positions and raises continued to be at the heart of these issues. Another 3 were related to promotions. Tenure and non-reappointment issues accounted for 2 of the remaining advancement cases, with 1 additional case related to a probationary period.
- Employment:** The employment category had a total of 19 cases relating to specific areas of concern. It is the largest category of problems brought to the Ombuds Office. The most frequent sub-categories within the employment category concerned salary agreement decisions, with 2 cases related to the hiring process, 2 related to teaching load/course assignment, 2 related to working conditions, and 2 related to job descriptions. Eight more issues were brought up one time across a variety of sub-categories in the Employment category.
- Ethical:** There were 5 ethical concerns. Two dealt with authorship and 3 dealt with health/safety issues.
- Other:** The 'Other' category allows for the ombuds to fill in an issue that is not listed in the other categories. There were 27 cases listed in this category. Eleven were not specified further, but left as 'miscellaneous.' Four dealt with academic issues and 4 dealt with disciplinary action. Financial aid issues accounted for 3, committee function 2, and department/unit function 2. One case dealt with performance, selection and removal of a department/unit chair.



## Appendix D

### Ombuds Self-Appraisal of Outcomes/Impacts of Cases, 2016-17

**NOTE:** This table shows both the number of cases completed by the current Ombuds (30), April through June, the last quarter of the 2015-2016 FY and the entire year (103.)

Outcome Category for Current Ombuds Only	Percentage of Cases (N=30)	(N= 103)
<b>Resolved satisfactorily with Ombuds Office assistance</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>74%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement/compromise reached through mediation; formal action avoided; visitor given another chance or situation otherwise satisfactorily resolved.</li> <li>• Conflict resolved short of mediation; may involve ‘shuttle diplomacy’ or similar workshops intervention, with entire unit, or other techniques; formal action not taken.</li> <li>• Ombuds served, by invitation or suggestion, as neutral observer; may involve role as moderator, but not mediator; party(ies) satisfied with outcome; formal action not taken.</li> <li>• Information only was provided by ombuds; and/or helps party to self-advocate.</li> <li>• visitor satisfied.</li> <li>• Action resulted in policy or system modification/improvement.</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>	0% 3% 0% 0% 56% 0% 7%	2% 5% 3% 50% 2% 6%
<b>Neutral Outcome (Ombuds Office had no direct impact)</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>14%</b>
Ombuds role was primarily as a neutral listener; little or no ‘coaching’ or additional information was provided. Visitor already had or did not need information, but needed ‘someone to listen;’ may have received confirmation of ideas/plans, but nothing new added by ombuds.	23%	7%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitor initiated and then canceled or ‘vanished’ after setting appointment or before follow-up action was completed.</li> <li>• Situation ‘unrepairable’ upon arrival (e.g. temporary help, already terminated, tenure was denied for appropriate reason, or visitor resigned).</li> <li>• Other.</li> </ul>	7% 0%	2% 2%
<b>Results Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>2%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitor disgruntled with ombuds efforts and discontinued visits or contacts.</li> <li>• Visitor disregarded advice/solution and suffered consequences.</li> <li>• Unfair practice or situation not resolved nor corrected due to lack of cooperation</li> <li>• Other.</li> <li>• Ten percent of the intake forms were either not recorded by one of the ombuds or there was a data entry error.</li> </ul>	0% 0% 0% 0%	1% 1% 0% 0% 10%

On occasion, problems will resurface or new issues arise with previously served parties. Situations that deteriorate after concluding ombuds involvement are not reflected in the ombuds assessment above.

