



2023



**OMBUDS
SERVICES**

ANNUAL REPORT

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LETTER FROM OMBUDS SERVICES



Noteworthy Observations

More than **50%** of 2023 visitors cited “Work Related Stress and Work/Life Balance” as a concern. This is a **26% increase** from 2022.

We supported **128% more individual visitors** in 2023 than in 2022, with only two certified ombuds on our staff. We were particularly grateful for the opportunity to **expand our team** in November, 2023, to continue supporting UNM’s growing needs in 2024 and beyond, while reestablishing a sustainable pace of work.

Coming Together to Better Serve UNM

In the fall of 2023, Ombuds Services for Staff, Faculty Ombuds/Dispute Resolution, and Graduate Student Ombuds consolidated to become one **Ombuds Services** department that serves UNM employees (staff and faculty), graduate students, and their colleagues.

Achievements

During the year, we held **496 individual visits**, hosted **21 facilitated conversations**, collaborated in **45 interagency meetings**, and offered **57 workshops and presentations**.

Tracked Trends

A trend we observed in 2023 was a significant increase in visitors citing the following three areas as a concern: **Organizational Climate**, **Work Related Stress and Work/Life Balance**, and **Supervisory Effectiveness**.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS: YEAR IN REVIEW

Consolidated Ombuds Services

In 2023, we consolidated into one Ombuds Services department from

- Ombuds for Faculty
- Ombuds for Staff
- Ombuds for Graduate Students

Our consolidation helps us better serve the UNM community.

Additionally, we published our new website, <https://ombuds.unm.edu>, to reflect the consolidation.

Welcomed New Colleagues

We welcomed two new staff members, Heidi Ricci and Marie Parks. Our team now includes:

- **JoEllen Ransom**, J.D., CO-OP®, Ombuds
- **Anne Lightsey**, CO-OP®, Senior Associate Ombuds
- **Heidi Ricci**, Associate Ombuds
- **Aasma Batool**, Graduate Assistant Ombuds
- **Marie Parks**, Administrative Assistant to Ombuds Services

Conducted 496 Individual Visits

We provided **496** individual visits for UNM employees, their colleagues, and graduate students.

This represented a 128% increase in number of visits compared with 2022. For further context, we provided a then-unprecedented 398 visits in 2019, just before the Covid-19 pandemic, with three full-time ombuds. Our 2023 data indicates a sharply growing demand for Ombuds Services, and we look forward to a more sustainable pace of work while continuing to support the UNM community in 2024 and beyond.

For de-identified trend information about visitors' concerns and goals, see page [8](#). For anonymous feedback on the visitor's experience, see page [20](#).

Held 21 Facilitated Conversations/Mediations

We conducted **21** facilitated conversations/mediations. For anonymous survey feedback, see page [30](#).

2023 HIGHLIGHTS: YEAR IN REVIEW, CONTINUED

Delivered 57 Workshops and Presentations

We reached **878** members of the UNM community through over **64** hours of **57** workshops. We also met with **16** UNM agencies to plan workshops, retreats, and professional development for their teams. For more information, see page [33](#).

Collaborated in 45 Interagency Meetings

We collaborated in **45** meetings with **19** UNM partner agencies, planning workshops, **7** external agencies, **3** professional ombuds or ombuds offices, **4** individuals pursuing ombuds as a career, and **2** Rezler Scholars. For more information, see page [37](#).

Developed Ombuds Services Informational Video

In 2023, we collaborated with EOD graduate student intern Michelle Castro and narrator Bryan O’Neil to produce an Ombuds Services informational video, which is now used in the New Employee Experience (NEE), other presentations, and the Ombuds Services website. Watch the video at <https://youtu.be/JiSC55aQ4Wg>.



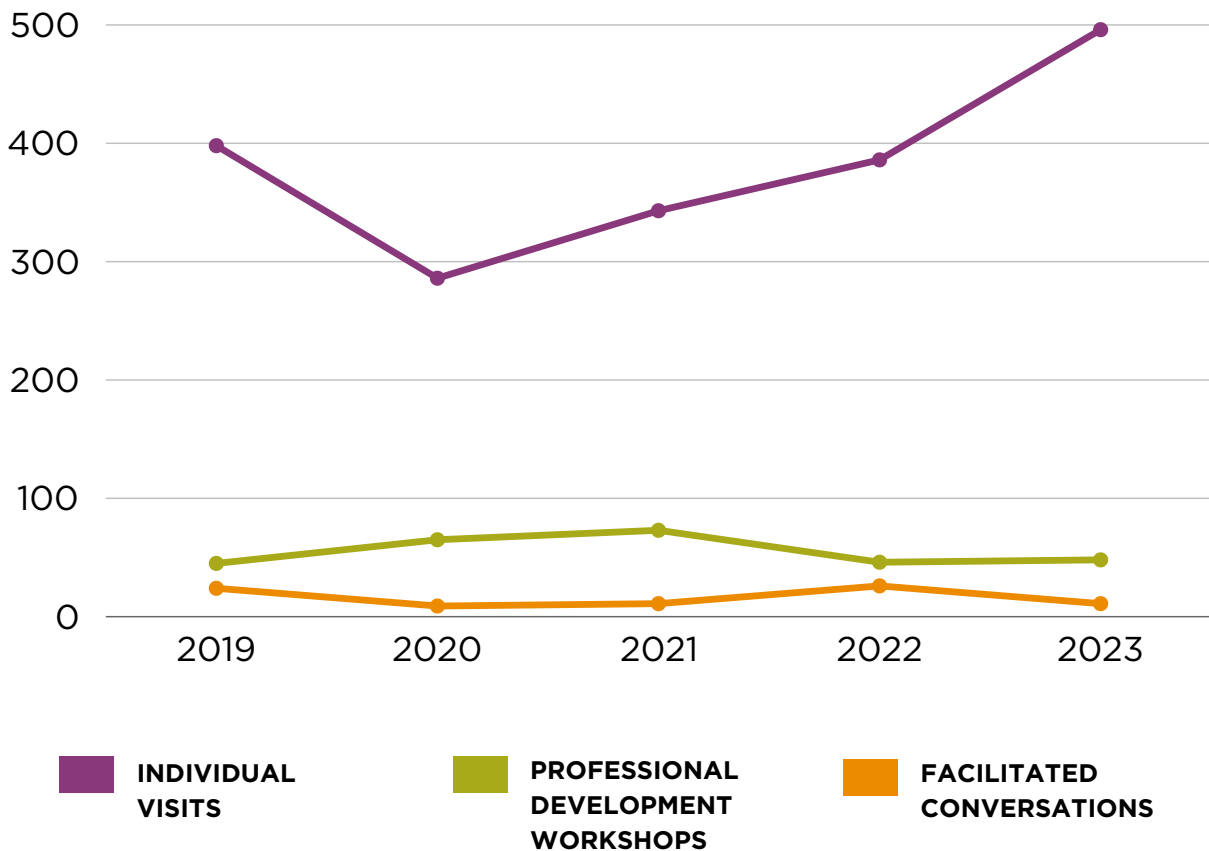
Top Concerns and Goals of Visitors in 2023

We anonymously captured concerns and goals raised by each visitor; individual visitors often raised multiple concerns. We use the International Ombuds Association (IOA) Uniform Reporting Categories (URC) to capture this trend data. For details on IOA Reporting Categories and URC data reflecting all visitor concerns and goals in 2023, see page [8](#). For insights into some of the significant costs of conflict, visit <https://ombudsforstaff.unm.edu/common/images/documents/costsofconflict.pdf>.

TRENDS OVER TIME

The need for, and use of, Ombuds Services for individual visits is growing, while demand for professional development and facilitated conversations remains fairly flat. UNM Ombuds Services is a much-appreciated access point for support, guidance, mediation, and collaboration.

Individual Visits, Professional Development, and Facilitated Conversations, 2019-2023

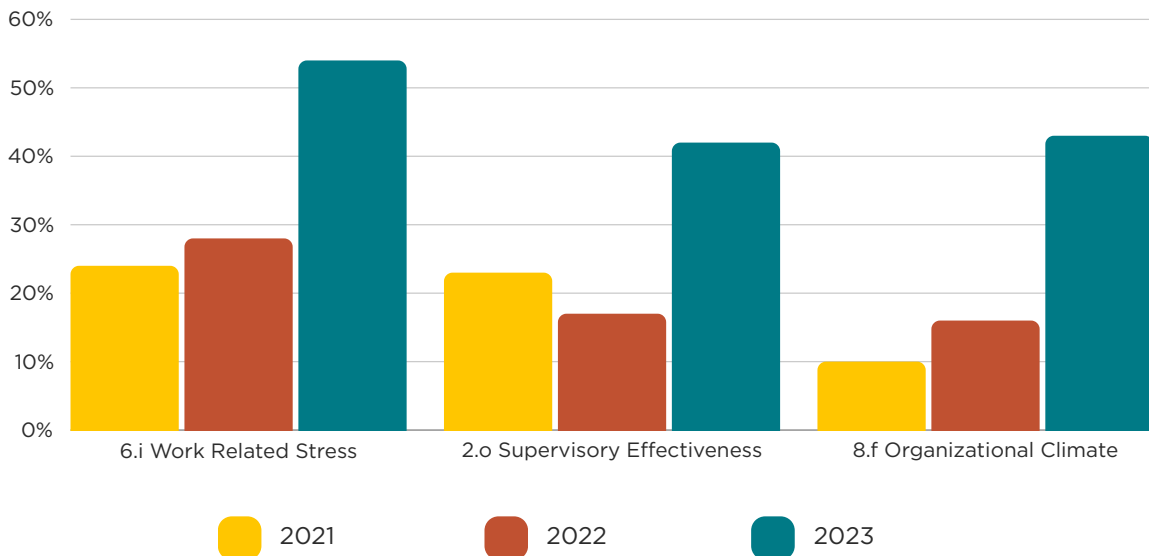


TRENDS OVER TIME, CONTINUED

Reasons for visits that are trending up in include (percent increases in the bulleted list below represents the time frame from 2022 to 2023):

- **2. Supervisor/Supervisee Relationships**
 - **b. Respect/Treatment** (13% increase)
 - **e. Communication** (12% increase)
 - **n. Departmental Climate** (14% increase)
 - **o. Supervisory Effectiveness** (25% increase)
- **4. Career Progression and Development**
 - **g. Resignation** (12% increase)
- **6. Safety, Health, and Physical Environment**
 - **i. Work Related Stress and Work-Life Balance** (26% increase)
- **8. Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related**
 - **b. Leadership and Management** (18% increase)
 - **f. Organizational Climate** (27% increase)
- **9. Values, Ethics, and Standards**
 - **b. Values and Culture** (10% increase)

Percent of Visitors' Concerns Raised, 2021-2023 (Largest 3 Increases)



APPENDICES

- 08.** Concerns and Goals Raised by Visitors
- 20.** Findings of Anonymous Post-Visit Surveys
- 30.** Findings of Anonymous Post-Facilitated Conversation Surveys
- 33.** Workshops, Professional Development, and Outreach
- 35.** Crucial Conversations Feedback Survey
- 37.** Interagency Collaboration
- 39.** Next Steps

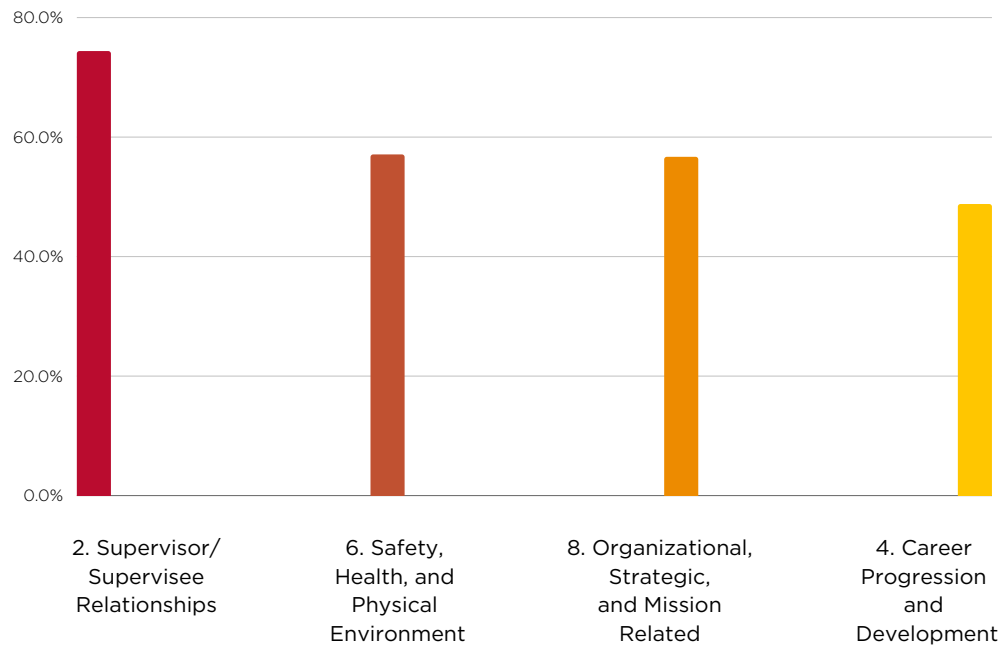
A. CONCERNS AND GOALS RAISED BY VISITORS

UNM Ombuds Services anonymously tracks concerns and goals raised by visitors using the [Uniform Reporting Categories \(URC\) developed by the International Ombuds Association \(IOA\)](#). The URC includes a list of categories and subcategories used by ombuds around the world to classify the types of issues brought to their offices, identify trends in requests for services, and note opportunities for professional development and proactive organizational methods to address trending concerns.

HIGHLIGHTS

The most-frequently cited categories during 2023 visits included:

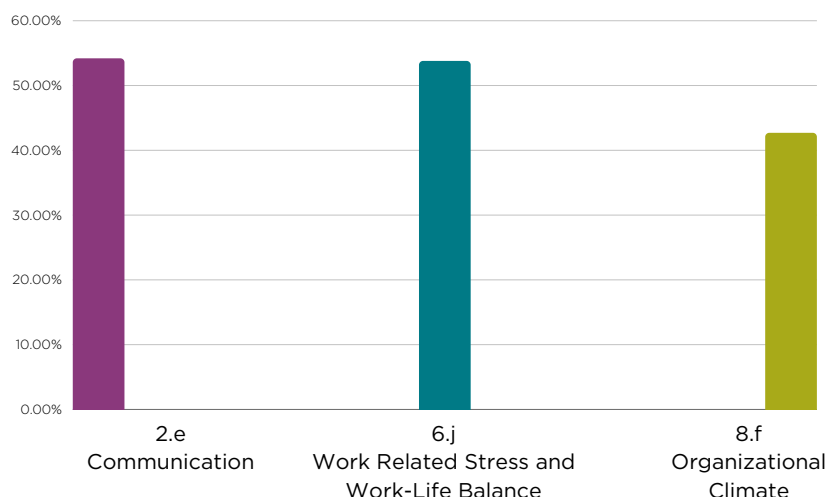
Top Categories of Concerns and Goals of Visitors in 2023



A. CONCERNS AND GOALS RAISED BY VISITORS, CONTINUED

Each category has subcategories within it. The most frequently referenced subcategories by 2023 visitors included:

Top-Cited Concerns (URC Subcategories) for Visitors in 2023



FULL RESULTS

The number following the description is indicative of the number of times this subject was raised during an individual visit in 2023. Individual visitors often raised multiple concerns. The data is from **461** visits.

1. Compensation & Benefits	
Questions, concerns, issues, or inquiries about the equity, appropriateness, and competitiveness of employee compensation, benefits, and other benefit programs.	
a. Compensation (rate of pay, salary amount, job salary classification/level)	34 7%
b. Payroll (administration of pay, check wrong or delayed)	0
c. Benefits (decisions related to medical, dental, life, vacation/sick leave, education, worker's compensation insurance, etc.)	12 3%
d. Retirement, Pension (eligibility, calculation of amount, retirement pension benefits)	11 3%
e. Other (any other employee compensation or benefit not described by the above subcategories)	2 0%

A. CONCERNS AND GOALS RAISED BY VISITORS, CONTINUED

2. Supervisor/Supervisee Relationships	
Questions, concerns, issues, or inquiries arising between people in evaluative relationships (i.e. supervisor-employee, faculty-student).	
a. Priorities, Values, Beliefs (differences about what should be considered important—or most important—often rooted in ethical or moral beliefs)	92 20%
b. Respect/Treatment (demonstrations of inappropriate regard for people, not listening, rudeness, crudeness, etc.)	182 39%
c. Trust/Integrity (suspicion that others are not being honest, whether or to what extent one wishes to be honest, etc.)	92 20%
d. Reputation (possible impact of rumors and/or gossip about professional or personal matters)	71 15%
e. Communication (quality and/or quantity of communication)	250 54%
f. Bullying, Mobbing (abusive, threatening, and/or coercive behaviors)	71 15%
g. Diversity-Related (comments or behaviors perceived to be insensitive, offensive, or intolerant on the basis of an identity-related difference such as race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, etc.)	80 17%
h. Retaliation (punitive behaviors for previous actions or comments, whistleblower)	68 15%
i. Physical Violence (actual or threats of bodily harm to another)	5 1%
j. Assignments/Schedules (appropriateness or fairness of tasks, expected volume of work)	93 20%

A. CONCERNS AND GOALS RAISED BY VISITORS, CONTINUED

2. Supervisor/Supervisee Relationships, Continued	
k. Feedback (feedback or recognition given, or responses to feedback received)	114 25%
l. Consultation (requests for help in dealing with issues between two or more individuals they supervise/teach or with other unusual situations in evaluative relationships)	83 18%
m. Performance Appraisal/Grading (job/academic performance in formal or informal evaluation)	75 16%
n. Departmental Climate (prevailing behaviors, norms, or attitudes within a department for which supervisors or faculty have responsibility)	169 37%
o. Supervisory Effectiveness (management of department or classroom, failure to address issues)	194 42%
p. Insubordination (refusal to do what is asked)	11 2%
q. Discipline (appropriateness, timeliness, requirements, alternatives, or options for responding)	45 10%
r. Equity of Treatment (favoritism, one or more individuals receive preferential treatment)	45 10%
s. Other (any other evaluative relationship not described by the above subcategories)	1 0%

A. CONCERNS AND GOALS RAISED BY VISITORS, CONTINUED

3. 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 two members of a student organization).	
a. Priorities, Values, Beliefs (differences about what should be considered important—or most important—often rooted in ethical or moral beliefs)	67 15%
b. Respect/Treatment (demonstrations of inappropriate regard for people, not listening, rudeness, crudeness, etc.)	82 18%
c. Trust/Integrity (suspicion that others are not being honest, whether or to what extent one wishes to be honest, etc.)	24 5%
d. Reputation (possible impact of rumors and/or gossip about professional or personal matters)	12 3%
e. Communication (quality and/or quantity of communication)	82 18%
f. Bullying, Mobbing (abusive, threatening, and/or coercive behaviors)	49 11%
g. Diversity-Related (comments or behaviors perceived to be insensitive, offensive, or intolerant on the basis of an identity-related difference such as race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, etc.)	27 6%
h. Retaliation (punitive behaviors for previous actions or comments, whistleblower)	11 3%
i. Physical Violence (actual or threats of bodily harm to another)	1 0%
j. Other (any peer or colleague relationship not described by the above subcategories)	0

A. CONCERNS AND GOALS RAISED BY VISITORS, CONTINUED

4. Career Progression and Development	
Questions, concerns, issues, or inquiries about administrative processes and decisions regarding entering and leaving a job, what it entails (i.e., recruitment, nature and place of assignment), job security, and separation.	
a. Job Application/Selection and Recruitment Processes (recruitment and selection processes, facilitation of job applications, short-listing and criteria for selection, disputed decisions linked to recruitment and selection)	6 1%
b. Job Classification and Description (changes or disagreements over requirements of assignment, appropriate tasks)	39 8%
c. Involuntary Transfer/Change of Assignment (notice, selection and special dislocation rights/benefits, removal from prior duties, unrequested change of work tasks)	34 7%
d. Tenure/Position Security/Ambiguity (security of position or contract, provision of secure contractual categories)	21 5%
e. Career Progression (promotion, reappointment, or tenure)	46 10%
f. Rotation and Duration of Assignment (non-completion or over-extension of assignments in specific settings/countries, lack of access or involuntary transfer to specific roles/assignments, requests for transfer to other places/duties/rules)	0
g. Resignation (concerns about whether or how to voluntarily terminate employment or how such a decision might be communicated appropriately)	114 25%
h. Termination/Non-Renewal (end of contract, non-renewal of contract, disputed permanent separation from organization)	3 1%
i. Re-employment of Former or Retired Staff (loss of competitive advantages associated with re-hiring retired staff, favoritism)	2 <1%

A. CONCERNS AND GOALS RAISED BY VISITORS, CONTINUED

4. Career Progression and Development, Continued	
j. Position Elimination (elimination or abolition of an individual's position)	0
k. Career Development, Coaching, Mentoring (classroom, on-the-job, and varied assignments as training and developmental opportunities)	82 18%
l. Other (any other issues linked to recruitment, assignment, job security, or separation not described by the above subcategories)	4 1%

5. 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.	
a. Criminal Activity (treats or crimes planned, observed, or experienced, fraud)	20 4%
b. Business and Financial Practices (inappropriate actions that abuse or waste organizational finances, facilities, or equipment)	4 1%
c. Harassment (unwelcome physical, verbal, written, email, audio, or video psychological or sexual conduct that creates a hostile or intimidating environment)	31 7%
d. Discrimination (different treatment compared with others or exclusion from some benefit on the basis of, for example, gender, race, age, national origin, religion, etc.; being part of an Equal Employment Opportunity protected category, which applies in the U.S.)	32 7%

A. CONCERNS AND GOALS RAISED BY VISITORS, CONTINUED

5. Legal, Regulatory, Financial, and Compliance, Continued	
e. Disability, Temporary or Permanent, Reasonable Accommodation (extra time on exams, provision of assistive technology, interpreters, or Braille materials, including questions on policies, etc. for people with disabilities)	39 8%
f. Accessibility (removal of physical barriers, providing ramps, elevators, etc.)	12 3%
g. Intellectual Property Rights (e.g. copyright and patent infringement)	6 1%
h. Privacy and Security of Information (release or access to individual or organizational private or confidential information)	3 1%
i. Property Damage (personal property damage, liabilities)	0
j. Other (any other legal, financial, and compliance issue not described by the above subcategories)	2 <1%

6. Safety, Health, and Physical Environment	
Questions, concerns, issues, or inquiries about safety, health, and infrastructure-related issues.	
a. Safety (physical safety, injury, medical evacuation, meeting federal and state requirements for training and equipment)	18 4%
b. Physical Working/Living Conditions (temperature, odors, noise, available space, lighting, etc.)	1 <1%

A. CONCERNS AND GOALS RAISED BY VISITORS, CONTINUED

6. Safety, Health, and Physical Environment, Continued	
c. Ergonomics (proper set-up of workstation affecting physical functioning)	2 <1%
d. Cleanliness (sanitary conditions and facilities to prevent the spread of disease)	2 <1%
e. Security (physical safety, injury, medical evacuation, meeting federal and state requirements for training and equipment)	3 1%
f. Telework/Flexplace (ability to work from home or other location because of business or personal need, e.g., in case of man-made or natural emergency)	27 6%
g. Safety Equipment (access to/use of safety equipment, e.g. fire extinguisher)	3 1%
h. Environmental Policies (policies not being followed, being unfair, ineffective, cumbersome)	0
i. Work Related Stress and Work-Life Balance (Post-Traumatic Stress, Critical Incident Response, internal/external stress, e.g., divorce, shooting, caring for sick, injured)	248 54%
j. Other (any safety, health, or physical environment issue not described by the above subcategories)	0

A. CONCERNS AND GOALS RAISED BY VISITORS, CONTINUED

7. Services/Administrative Issues Questions, concerns, issues, or inquiries about services or administrative offices, including from external parties.	
a. Quality of Services (how well services were provided, accuracy or thoroughness of information, competence, etc.)	37 8%
b. Responsiveness/Timeliness (time involved in getting a response or return call or about the time for a complete response to be provided)	22 5%
c. Administrative Decisions and Interpretation/Application of Rules (impact of non-disciplinary decisions, decisions about requests for administrative and academic services, e.g., exceptions to policy deadlines or limits, refund requests, appeals of library or parking fines, application of financial aid, etc.)	37 8%
d. Behavior of Service Provider(s) (how an administrator or staff member spoke to or dealt with a constituent, customer, or client, e.g., rude, inattentive, or impatient)	23 5%
e. Other (any services or administrative issue not described by the above subcategories)	1 <1%

8. Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related Questions, concerns, issues, or inquiries that relate to the whole or some part of an organization.	
a. Strategic and Mission-Related/Strategic and Technical Management (principles, decisions, and actions related to where and how the organization is moving)	83 18%

A. CONCERNS AND GOALS RAISED BY VISITORS, CONTINUED

8. Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related, Continued	
b. Leadership and Management (quality/capacity of management and/or management/leadership decisions, suggested training, reassignments and reorganizations)	162 35%
c. Use of Positional Power/Authority (lack or abuse of power provided by individual's position)	42 9%
d. Communication (content, style, timing, effects, and amount of organizational and leader's communication, quality of communication about strategic issues)	79 17%
e. Restructuring and Relocation (issues related to broad scope of planned or actual restructuring and/or relocation affecting the whole or major divisions of an organization, e.g., downsizing, offshoring, outsourcing)	34 1%
f. Organizational Climate (issues related to organizational morale and/or capacity for functioning)	197 43%
g. Change Management (making, respond, or adapting to organizational changes, quality of leadership in facilitating organizational change)	79 17%
h. Priority Setting and/or Funding (disputes about setting organizational/departmental priorities and/or allocation of funding within programs)	16 3%
i. Data, Methodology, Interpretation of Results (scientific disputes about the conduct, outcomes, and interpretation of studies and resulting data for policy)	1 <1%

A. CONCERNS AND GOALS RAISED BY VISITORS, CONTINUED

8. Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related, Continued	
j. Interdepartment/Interorganization Work/Territory (disputes about which department/organization should be doing what/ taking the lead)	14 3%
k. Other (any organizational issue not described by the above subcategories)	0

9. 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.	
a. Standards of Conduct (fairness, applicability or lack of behavioral guidelines and/or Codes of Conduct, e.g., Academic Honesty plagiarism, Code of Conduct, conflict of interest)	53 11%
b. Values and Culture (questions, concerns, or issues about the values or culture of the organization)	81 18%
c. Scientific Conduct/Integrity (scientific or research misconduct or misdemeanors, e.g., authorship, falsification of results)	3 1%
d. Policies and Procedures NOT Covered in Broad Categories 1 thru 8 (fairness or lack of policy or the application of the policy, policy not followed, or needs revision, e.g., appropriate dress; use of internet or cell phones)	8 2%
e. Other (other policy, procedure, ethics, or standards issues not described in the above subcategories)	0

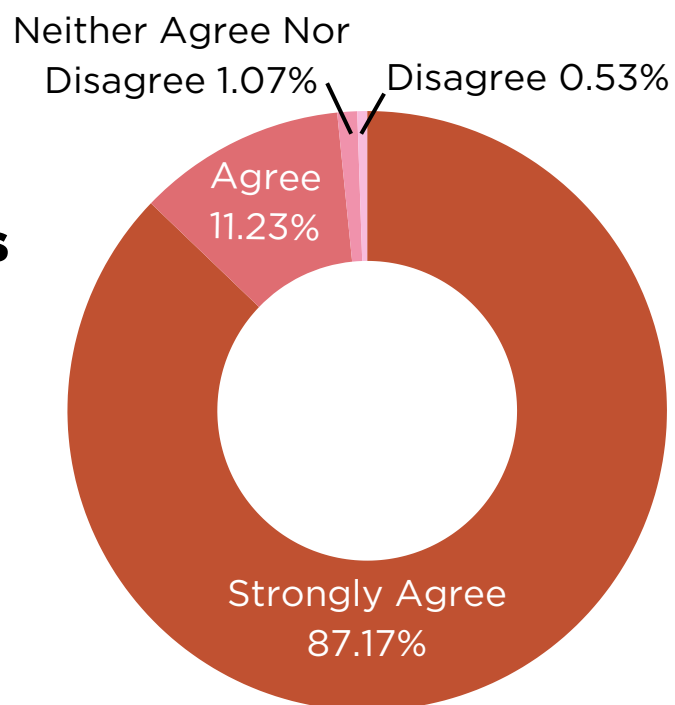
B. FINDINGS OF ANONYMOUS POST-VISIT SURVEYS

HIGHLIGHTS

In our Anonymous Post-Visit Survey, we asked visitors to respond to several prompts:

“The confidentiality of Ombuds Services is important to me.”

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree



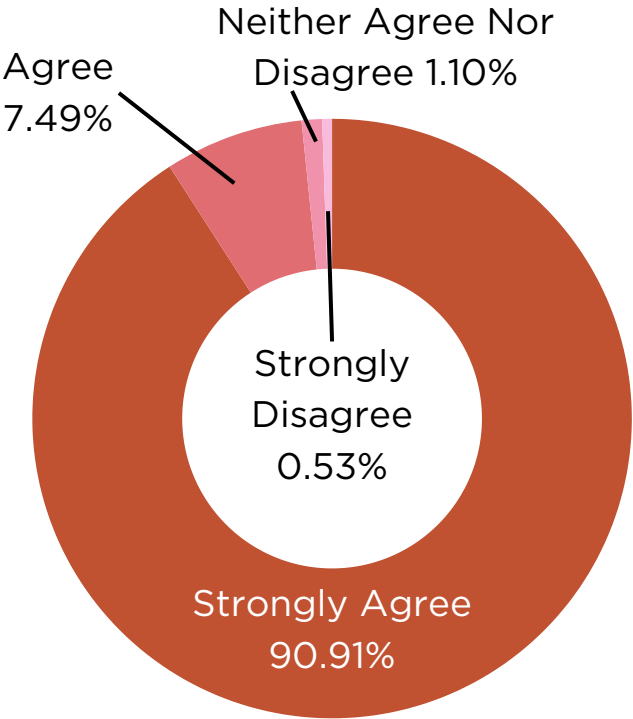
B. FINDINGS OF ANONYMOUS POST-VISIT SURVEYS, CONTINUED

“When I come up against a workplace challenge in which I can’t quite see the path forward, I come to Ombuds. The conversations I have with UNM’s Ombuds team are grounding and **help me to be the best version of myself** for my team and our valuable work.”

-2023 Visitor

“I would recommend Ombuds Services to others.”

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree



B. FINDINGS OF ANONYMOUS POST-VISIT SURVEYS, CONTINUED

“I’m so grateful for their ideas and objectivity. **I feel as though I have a direction, real steps to take**, instead of continuing to flounder in my stress and misery. They are practical steps that those closest to me couldn’t have seen or wouldn’t have known about. I feel as though the feelings I have around what I’m going through were more than validated... **I feel like there’s a light now.**”

-2023 Visitor

FULL RESULTS

We sent **327** surveys to visitors (the survey was not sent after follow-up visits), and **187** visitors submitted anonymous responses, yielding a **57% response rate**.

- **I would recommend Ombuds Services to others.**

◦ Strongly Agree	163	87.17%
◦ Agree	21	11.23%
◦ Neither Agree Nor Disagree	2	1.10%
◦ Disagree	1	0.53%
◦ Strongly Disagree	0	-

- **I would recommend Ombuds Services to others.**

◦ Strongly Agree	170	90.91%
◦ Agree	14	7.49%
◦ Neither Agree Nor Disagree	2	1.10%
◦ Disagree	0	-
◦ Strongly Disagree	1	0.53%

B. FINDINGS OF ANONYMOUS POST-VISIT SURVEYS, CONTINUED

- Please describe your visit with Ombuds Services in one word:

WORD	FREQUENCY	WORD	FREQUENCY
Accessible	1	Integral	1
Affirming	2	Interesting	1
Amazing	2	Kindness	1
Awesome	4	Listening	1
Beneficial	4	Motivating	2
Breathtaking	1	Necessary	1
Calm	2	Open	1
Calming	2	Outstanding	1
Cathartic	1	Pleasant	1
Clarifying	2	Positive	2
Clarity	1	Productive	8
Comfortable	5	Reassuring	6
Comforting	1	Reciprocal	1
Compassionate	2	Refreshing	1
Crucial Conversation	1	Relief	3
Dynamic	1	Relieved	1
Efficient	1	Relieving	2
Empathic	1	Revealing	2
Empowering	1	Revitalizing	1
Encouraging	2	Safe	2
Enlightening	6	Stress-relieving	1
Enriching	1	Superpowers	1
Excellent	9	Support	1
Exceptional	1	Supported	1
Extraordinary	2	Supportive	6
Eye-opening	1	Time well-spent	1
Fantastic	2	Tremendous	1
Fertile	1	Understanding	1
Fruitful	1	Uplifting	3
Fulfilling	2	Useful	1
Good	1	Validating	5
Heard	1	Validation	2
Helpful	37	Valuable	3
Illuminating	2	Welcoming	1
Informative	2	Wonderful	1
Insightful	2		

B. FINDINGS OF ANONYMOUS POST-VISIT SURVEYS, CONTINUED

- **Additional comments/suggestions: (Emphasis added by Ombuds Services)**
 - The ombudsperson was impressively available to all my concerns and both **creative and practical in their workshopping**. Indeed, I wish I reached out far sooner and would recommend them to any in need.
 - The ombuds **exemplified exceptional listening and reflection skills. I felt understood, validated, and supported** in their approach to my concerns, and left our session feeling lighter and with a clear sense of my next steps. Thank you for your incredible response to my situation.
 - The ombuds was incredibly helpful working through a thorny work situation with me. The ombuds helped me **identify some of the core issues at the heart of my dilemma, making it easier for me to address** with my colleagues.
 - **When I come up against a workplace challenge in which I can't quite see the path forward, I come to Ombuds.** The conversations I have with UNM's Ombuds team are grounding and **help me to be the best version of myself** for my team and our valuable work.
 - Ombuds is such an amazing resource. I had such **clarity** after meeting with a staff member. I always recommend Ombuds to employees! Thank you for all you do.
 - I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the issues I face as part of my team. I am hopeful that this is the **first of many positive steps toward strengthening the interpersonal communication among my coworkers, supervisor and me.**
 - I was amazed when I was asked, "What do you want out of this service?" **I am now at peace with my situation and my decisions.** Thank you Ombuds.
 - The ombuds are amazing. It is so encouraging to know that **there is help for my team and that we might be able to heal and become stronger through this process.** I'm so glad UNM has this service available.
 - Thank you so much for your **quiet and attentive listening, your advice and guidance, and the encouraging words** said to me when evaluating options to address my issue. Your conflict resolution advice was really helpful, I am now in conversation regarding the situation at work, and things seem to be heading in 'brighter' direction now. Thanks!!!
 - Thank you all for the work you do! What an **incredible, valuable service to employees to help us stay focused on the mission!!** I appreciate you.
 - **I feel like I have been thrown a lifeline and I am not going to drown after all. So wonderful and supportive. Ombuds Services is a gift.**

B. FINDINGS OF ANONYMOUS POST-VISIT SURVEYS, CONTINUED

- **I am grateful for the support to me, and the resources necessary to shape my situation into a fruitful outcome.** The ombuds I spoke with is an excellent listener. **I learn so much from their vast expertise. I appreciate their compassion.**
- Overall, it was **extremely beneficial** to speak to them.
- Thank you so much to the ombuds for their help. They're excellent at what they do!
- I'm so **grateful for their ideas and objectivity.** I feel as though **I have a direction, real steps to take**, instead of continuing to founder in my stress and misery. They are practical steps that those closest to me couldn't have seen or wouldn't have known about. I feel as though the feelings I have around what I'm going through were more than **validated**. More critically, I think they saw the real crisis I'm in, even more than I did. I guess I'm so used to things being or feeling wrong that I'd normalized it or rationalized it or downplayed it. They helped me see how urgent it is for me to tend to my health issues as priority one. I feel like **there's a light now**. Thank you for being there, for being you, for all your help.
- Very helpful in letting me say my thoughts out loud to see how they sound. **It allowed me to be sensitive to the feelings of others. It allowed me to grow and improve on myself.** Found it very helpful.
- The ombuds was wonderful to talk to and was a **great sounding board**.
- The ombuds was wonderful. She talked me through all the conversations in my head.
- I appreciate the help
- The ombuds is incredibly talented and helpful. They are a great listener and carry this out with warmth and thoughtfulness. They **asked important questions and gave me a wealth of information** to help me move forward with having my first critical conversation. Thanks much!
- I really appreciated the intro on what the meeting would be like as it **contributed to proving the feeling of safety throughout the meeting**. I learned new things and a lot of what I learned was reinforced; concepts come together and there were **fantastic moments of clarity** here and there that I was so grateful for. I also couldn't help but think, "Wow. Here is the level of conversation that I would really like to get to one day". Not only did you generate sample conversations (so effortlessly it seemed), you were **thoughtful and showed kindness**.
- Thank you!

B. FINDINGS OF ANONYMOUS POST-VISIT SURVEYS, CONTINUED

- **I felt comfortable and at ease** speaking with the ombuds. She was patient and gave me helpful feedback.
- Can't thank you enough!!!
- Any conversation I leave and keep thinking about is a good one to have had. Thank you for that.
- Very helpful!
- The ombuds was **helpful without being directive**. Thank you!
- I felt **comfortable and unrushed** with my Ombuds visit.
- The ombuds **helped us think through process**. Very helpful!
- The ombuds was **professional, attentive, and provided useful feedback**.
- UNM Ombuds are the best! I have always gone into meetings with them with specific ideas of what I want and **leave with much more clarity and energy than I could have imagined**.
- The visit was **comfortable and encouraging**. I didn't know what to expect, but it was a positive experience.
- **Respectful, helpful and affirming**.
- I didn't know what to expect with my session, but it turned out to be wonderful and most helpful because **I was given time to reflect and express**.
- Ombuds Services is an **excellent resource for UNM** employees.
- I have also **enjoyed and learned so much** from the trainings that Ombuds Services offers. Thank you for doing it! I am grateful for this important service, and for the incredible skills of the staff.
- Thank you so much for providing a **safe space** for us here at UNM.
- The ombuds are wonderful and I appreciate them so much.
- Thank you for all your help. I really appreciate it!!
- I am grateful for the team members' time, space, support, and expertise.
- I appreciate the support I receive at Ombuds Services. I am dealing with an exceptionally difficult situation and the safe space to problem solve is **a blessing**.
- It was a great opportunity to be able to share my thoughts and have somebody **give non-judgmental advice** about steps forward.
- Truly appreciated the suggestions, the support, the guidance, the objectivity, patience in listening, creativity, compliments, on-going encouragement and great food for thought. **Left meeting with optimism and ideas for a wholesome plan**. Ombuds Services is a wonderful process and unit!

B. FINDINGS OF ANONYMOUS POST-VISIT SURVEYS, CONTINUED

- **I felt at ease** and really appreciated the follow-up that was directly relevant to the Crucial Conversations course that I took over the past several weeks. I think that **having a connection to Ombuds Services is very beneficial to me.**
- **I would visit again.**
- I greatly appreciated the opportunity to review some difficult issues with the Ombuds staff. I appreciated their questions and the overall conversation.
- This was **extremely helpful**, and I thank you for listening and supporting me.
- Skillful; competent; deep listening; compassionate; light; **faith-restoring; hope-instilling.** Suggestion: Give the Ombuds a raise.
- This is such a **valuable and impactful** service that UNM offers.
- Thank you for providing a **space for me to process**
- I greatly appreciate the ombud's **expertise, insightfulness, and compassion.** This was very helpful and I look forward to meeting with them again.
- I thank the ombuds immensely for the time taken to **listen, give suggestions, and remind me of why I am doing what I am doing.**
- I am working with the ombuds with regards to the Crucial Conversations course and **it has really helped me.**
- The ombuds I met with is **the best listener I have ever met**, and her ability to share back what I have said, in a kind and compassionate manner, is **a godsend.** I so appreciate them and the work of the Ombuds, in general!
- There are **no words to express my appreciation** for the ombuds, so I will just again say thank you!
- Very **exceptional service, which is targeted to assist employees work through workplace issues.** The ombuds listens carefully and was able to **assist me in arriving at practical solutions.** Thank you very much.
- I appreciate the ombud's **expert engagement in my challenges** and am very thankful for their guidance. They are a **valuable confidant, mentor, and supporter of my work and life.**
- THANK YOU!
- **Having a completely anonymous place to talk about issues was incredibly helpful.**
- Thank you

B. FINDINGS OF ANONYMOUS POST-VISIT SURVEYS, CONTINUED

- Thank you so much for taking all the time you spent with me. **You really provided a lot of insight**, and I learned a lot from your suggestions. I truly appreciate your understanding and kindness. You truly helped with my grieving process. I feel better about reaching out for counseling.
- Great work
- **The ombuds should run the world!** 😊
- Thank you!!!
- **Great and valuable service.** Grateful you are all here.
- I had unforeseen logistical issues prior to my scheduled visit but was able to join "in time" (10 minutes after scheduled time). The ombuds generously **shared their time (above the hour allotted for our visit), humanity and insight!** Thank you!
- I can never express how grateful I was for your **amazing support to help organize my thoughts.** I would have been so ineffective without your tremendous effort.
- The person I met with was very understanding, listening to what I had to say and offered sound advice. **It was nice to bounce ideas off someone and have them offer other ideas that might also help.** I would recommend this to anyone who's having issues or needs extra support at UNM. The person I spoke with explained that **our discussions were kept confidential** and expressed the need for me not to discuss any information with others outside of our conversation. Thank you again for your understanding and support!
- They heeded to me.
- I came with a problem of how to deal with someone and **was offered suggestions and resources** that may be helpful. I felt heard.
- The ombuds was very helpful, she is a **great listener**, understanding, and explains things very clearly.
- The ombuds was tremendous, she **listened to me and gave guidance** on how to handle the situation.
- Thank you!!!
- **Really appreciated the perspectives I was given in this visit and the reframes**
- Thank you!
- Found the session **productive, useful and beneficial.** Thank you.
- The meeting with Ombuds was very helpful. Thank you.
- Ombuds was very helpful. Thank you for the service.

B. FINDINGS OF ANONYMOUS POST-VISIT SURVEYS, CONTINUED

- The person I spoke with was wonderful and **extremely helpful in regards to suggestions, input and creating a safe unbiased environment.**
- As always, I am so grateful for these services!
- Good opportunity to be heard.
- **Thank goodness that this service is available to UNM.** Keep up the great work!
- Great Listener
- Thank you so much for your **time, attention and deep listening.** I appreciate your reflections and suggestions.
- Thank you for helping me work through this concern.
- I'll be back again.
- Very helpful.
- This service was helpful to me as it **let me speak about my situation without feeling pressure** and not feeling badly for what I say or feel.
- **I felt heard** and that **clear guidance was provided.**
- I am very grateful for this service. Keep up the excellent work!
- **It felt good to express frustrations and concerns.** The feedback was supportive, and suggestions for helping to **create a safe and professional environment** will be helpful to move ahead.
- **Thank you for keeping my information confidential and giving me the opportunity to voice my concerns.**
- Very thankful for this appointment, for the feedback and support, and that **UNM provides this so-valuable resource.**
- Wonderful service. Thank you.
- I will definitely use this service again. Thank you for supporting UNM.
- My conversation with the ombuds was **heartening, informative, and provided the relief** that comes with talking about a stressful time with an extraordinary professional.
- This was the first time I've used Ombuds and I found it very helpful. I liked how she listened and offered suggestions, as well as shared red flags with my situation, as well as **different ways to navigate going forward.**
- I am grateful that you have this service for our community. Thank you for **helping us work through our difficulties and differences.**
- The ombudsperson listened and gave **real possible alternative ways to address my concern.** They seemed to **genuinely hear my challenge** and **gave me options to research resolutions.**

C. FINDINGS OF ANONYMOUS POST-FACILITATED CONVERSATION SURVEYS

HIGHLIGHTS

Donna Hicks, Ph.D., writes in *Dignity: The Essential Role It Plays in Resolving Conflict*, “When offended or hurt our self-protective hardwiring tells us that what matters most is our own well-being and survival, not the survival of the relationship. We’re hardwired to self-protect (fight or flight) for self-preservation.” Therefore, it takes great courage for individuals to participate in a facilitated conversation.

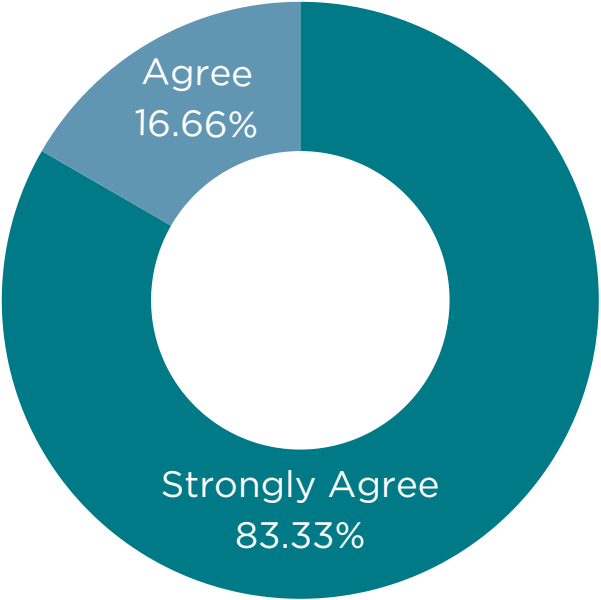
In 2023, Ombuds Services conducted **21** Facilitated Conversations, where two or more people come together to seek resolution, communication, and collaboration, mediated by a skilled, neutral ombuds. Ombuds Facilitated Conversations are preceded by individual visits. The parties determine the topics and outcome of their facilitated conversation, as well as next steps. Participation in all parts of the process is always voluntary.

Our Anonymous Post-Visit Survey had an **81%** response rate for facilitated conversation participants.

C. FINDINGS OF ANONYMOUS POST-FACILITATED CONVERSATION SURVEYS, CONTINUED

“I would recommend Ombuds Services to others.”

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree



FULL RESULTS

- I would recommend Ombuds Services to others.
 - Strongly Agree 10 83.33%
 - Agree 2 16.66%
 - Neither Agree Nor Disagree 0 -
 - Disagree 0 -
 - Strongly Disagree 0 -

“I am so grateful that Ombuds exists for UNM employees. Having a neutral person to talk through things with, and to facilitate difficult conversations, is **absolutely invaluable to the wellbeing of UNM** as a whole.”

-2023 Facilitated Conversation Participant

C. FINDINGS OF ANONYMOUS POST-FACILITATED CONVERSATION SURVEYS, CONTINUED

- Please describe your visit with Ombuds Services in one word:

WORD	FREQUENCY	WORD	FREQUENCY
Effective	1	Illuminating	1
Empowering	1	Insightful	1
Excellent	1	Mediation	1
Good	1	Relief	1
Great	1	Successful	1
Helpful	1	Supportive	1

- **Additional Comments/Suggestions: (Emphasis added by Ombuds Services)**
 - This process was great and **definitely worthwhile**. The ombuds **makes you feel safe so you can open up and share**.
 - The ombuds is **amazing at hearing everyone’s perspective** and helping **ease the stress of communicating through tough issues**. Ombuds is a very wonderful entity that UNM should be happy to have on-site. Thank you to your team for your **time, empathy, and care**.
 - I found the pre work (pre meetings) very helpful. I was able to **prepare mentally ahead of time** to help recognize any potential difficulty I might have with the conversation and my reactions. The conversation was kept on track, **everyone’s points of view were respected**.
 - It was a **highly effective conversation** and the **communication between myself and the other participant was greatly improved!**
 - It was quite good.
 - Thank you so much! This is such a **valuable service** for the University!
 - I am so grateful that Ombuds exists for UNM employees. Having a neutral person to talk through things with, and to facilitate difficult conversations, is **absolutely invaluable to the wellbeing of UNM** as a whole.
 - Things are going very well. I was able to survive a painful environment until a solution could be found. And **I am happy again**. I want to thank you for the significant role you played in these achievements. **Your warmth, skill, and sincerity were crucial to my success**.

“The ombuds is amazing at hearing everyone’s perspective and helping ease the stress of communicating through tough issues.”

-2023 Facilitated Conversation Participant

D. WORKSHOPS, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND OUTREACH

Ombuds Services is dedicated to supporting UNM's efforts to improve communication, manage conflict constructively, and problem-solve collaboratively among staff, faculty, and graduate students. We offer various professional development opportunities to promote wellness and productivity at work.

In 2023, we provided **57** professional development workshops, presentations, and learning opportunities, reaching **878** members of the UNM community in **64.5** hours.

Additionally, Ombuds Services met with **16** UNM agencies in **25** meetings to plan workshops, retreats, and professional development for their teams.

WORKSHOP TITLES

- Ombuds 101
- Crucial Conversations for Mastering Dialogue®: Online Self-Paced with Tailored 1:1 Support and Coaching from UNM Ombuds
- Crucial Conversations for Accountability®: Online Self-Paced with Tailored 1:1 Support and Coaching from UNM Ombuds
- Skills Practice Sessions for Trained Mediators and Crucial Conversations® Graduates
- Are We Talking About the Same Things? Getting Clear Can be the Difference Between Success, Failure, Frustration, and Ease
- Collaboration: Practice a Key Skill that Allows You to Overcome Obstacles and Build Bridges
- Culture Eats Strategy for Breakfast
- Difficult Conversations: Start Here to End Well
- Reframing Conflict

D. WORKSHOPS, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND OUTREACH, CONTINUED

We also offer the following Title IX workshops (sexual harassment/sexual assault):

- Am I Ready to Listen? 101: Listening and Responding Supportively to Accounts of Sexual Misconduct
- So...I Have to Report: Listening and Responding Supportively to Accounts of Sexual Violence and Misconduct for UNM Responsible Employees
- Supportive Listening 101: Listening and Responding Supportively to Accounts of Sexual Misconduct

Additionally, we received anonymous feedback the attendees of our Crucial Conversations workshops. Please see page [35](#) for more information.

“This course helped me out to **come out of my comfort zone** and think about having crucial conversations in my life, which I always have been avoiding.”

-2023 Crucial Conversations Course Attendee

“I really like the CC [Crucial Conversations] Course because it offers some very practical tips and resources that I can tap into when I need them.

-2023 Crucial Conversations Course Attendee

E. CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS FEEDBACK SURVEYS

Crucial Conversations for Mastering Dialogue®: Online Self-Paced with Tailored 1:1 Support and Coaching from UNM Ombuds

In our Anonymous Post-Course Survey, we asked participants:

- **How helpful did you find this course?**
 - 100% (7 out of 7 respondents) said “Extremely Helpful”
 - 0 responded with “Very Helpful,” “Somewhat Helpful,” “Not So Helpful,” or “Not At All Helpful.”
- **Would you recommend this course to others?**
 - 100% (7 out of 7 respondents) said “Yes”
 - 0 said “No”
- **Please provide further general remarks or recommendations. (*Emphasis added by Ombuds Services*)**
 - I really like the CC Course because it offers some very **practical tips and resources** that I can tap into when I need them.
 - This course helped me out to **come out of my comfort zone** and think about having crucial conversations in my life, which I always have been avoiding.
 - I am thankful it was **self-paced** and the structure of the course. The **one-one coaching was incredibly helpful**.
 - I have already recommended this course to two other colleagues. Thank you for such a **great learning opportunity!**
 - Great content and additional content. Really appreciated working with the ombuds, who is clearly an expert in this work. **Eager to learn more and implement it personally and professionally.** Thank you!

E. CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS FEEDBACK SURVEYS, CONTINUED

- Thank you so much! The tools from class **really come to life** when talking through situations with Ombuds. I am grateful for this UNM benefit.
- I was reluctant to take the course because of title—Crucial conversations. I don't like confrontations or having tough conversations even though I know that they occur. I'm glad that I took the course as it **provided so many resources and insights** to my own trepidation.

Crucial Conversations for Accountability®: Online Self-Paced with Tailored 1:1 Support and Coaching from UNM Ombuds

In our Anonymous Post-Course Survey, we asked participants:

- **How helpful did you find this course?**
 - 71.43% (5 out of 7 respondents) said “Extremely Helpful”
 - 28.57% (2 out of 7 respondents) said “Very Helpful”
 - 0 responded with “Somewhat Helpful,” “Not So Helpful,” or “Not At All Helpful.”
- **Would you recommend this course to others?**
 - 100% (7 out of 7 respondents) said “Yes”
 - 0 responded with “No”
- **Please provide further general remarks or recommendations. (*Emphasis added by Ombuds Services*)**
 - I've taken a few mediation classes, and **this, by far, is the best!**
 - If I could only take one of the two courses, it would be this one. The **accountability framework was more helpful** in constructing the conversations I needed to start having.

F. INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

We collaborated with **19** UNM sister agencies such as Counseling, Assistance, and Referral Services (CARS), Sexual Misconduct and Assault Response Team (SMART), and Compliance, Ethics, and Equal Opportunity (CEEO) in **37** meetings—and with **7** external agencies such as Central New Mexico Community College (CNM), Los Alamos National Laboratories, and New Mexico Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Bureau during **8** meetings.

Collaboration with other UNM entities and agencies enables us to better support the UNM community in navigating resources and systems effectively.

The **19 internal agencies** with which we collaborated include:

- UNM Compliance, Ethics, and Equal Opportunity (CEEO)
- UNM Counseling, Assistance, and Referral Services (CARS)
- UNM Department of Communication and Journalism
- UNM Division for Equity and Inclusion (DEI)
- UNM Employee and Organizational Development (EOD)
- UNM Faculty Research Development Office (FRDO)
- UNM Graduate Studies
- UNM Health Sciences Center (HSC)
- UNM Health Services Center Wellness Alliance
- UNM Faculty Success
- UNM Hearing Office
- UNM Labor and Employee Relations
- UNM School of Education
- UNM Sexual Misconduct and Assault Response Team (SMART)
- UNM Staff as Students Event
- UNM Staff Council
- UNM Staff and Faculty Wayfinder
- UNM Taos
- UNM University Communications & Marketing (UCAM)

F. INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION, CONTINUED

We collaborated with **7 external agencies** in 2023 during **8** meetings.

We bolstered the Ombuds profession by providing **informal mentorship and support** to other ombuds and ombuds institutions, including by:

- Serving as a sounding board and resource for **3** professional ombuds and ombuds institutions.
- Mentoring and guiding **4** individuals who are pursuing a career in becoming ombuds, including Shannon Driscoll, who was hired as a Faculty Ombudsperson at Kent State University.

Additionally, we provided mentorship and training to **2 Rezler Scholars**, Viktoria Nagy and Zsanett Lengyel.

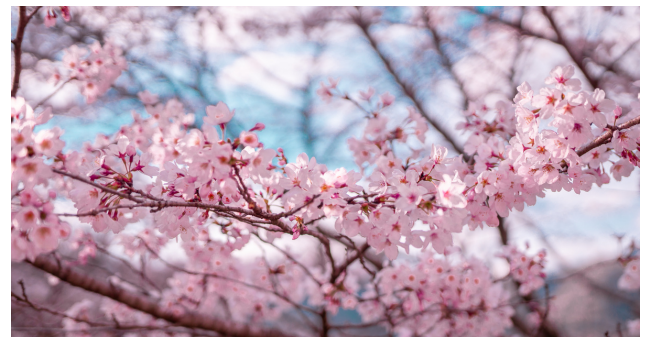
Since 1995, the Julius Rezler Foundation in Budapest, Hungary has cooperated with UNM to send young Hungarians to study alternative dispute resolution. While the Rezler Scholars participate within the School of Public Administration and Anderson School of Management, they also collaborate with UNM Ombuds Services. In 2023, we invited the Scholars to attend our staff meetings, give presentations, learn about how an ombuds office works, and attend our bimonthly Skills Practice Sessions.

G. NEXT STEPS

UNM Ombuds Services is your first stop, your last resort, and everything in between.

Contact Ombuds Services for a visit via Zoom, phone, or in-person. We serve UNM employees, their co-workers, and graduate students.

To schedule a free visit, facilitated conversation, or professional development workshop, please email us at ombuds@unm.edu or leave a message at (505) 277-2993.



It is our pleasure to serve the UNM community and help promote a culture of collaboration and constructive conflict management.