



**Ombuds Services**  
**2023-24 Annual Report**

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# University of Michigan-Dearborn Ombuds Services 2023-24 Annual Report

Ombuds Services operates independently as an informal, impartial, and confidential\* resource providing students guidance on University policies, assistance in resolving concerns and critical situations, help in securing appropriate information and timely responses, and opportunities to discuss or question University actions. Ombuds duties encompass researching visitor questions and concerns, communicating with students, faculty, and staff involved to provide a quick resolution, if possible, and assisting with appeals and petitions.

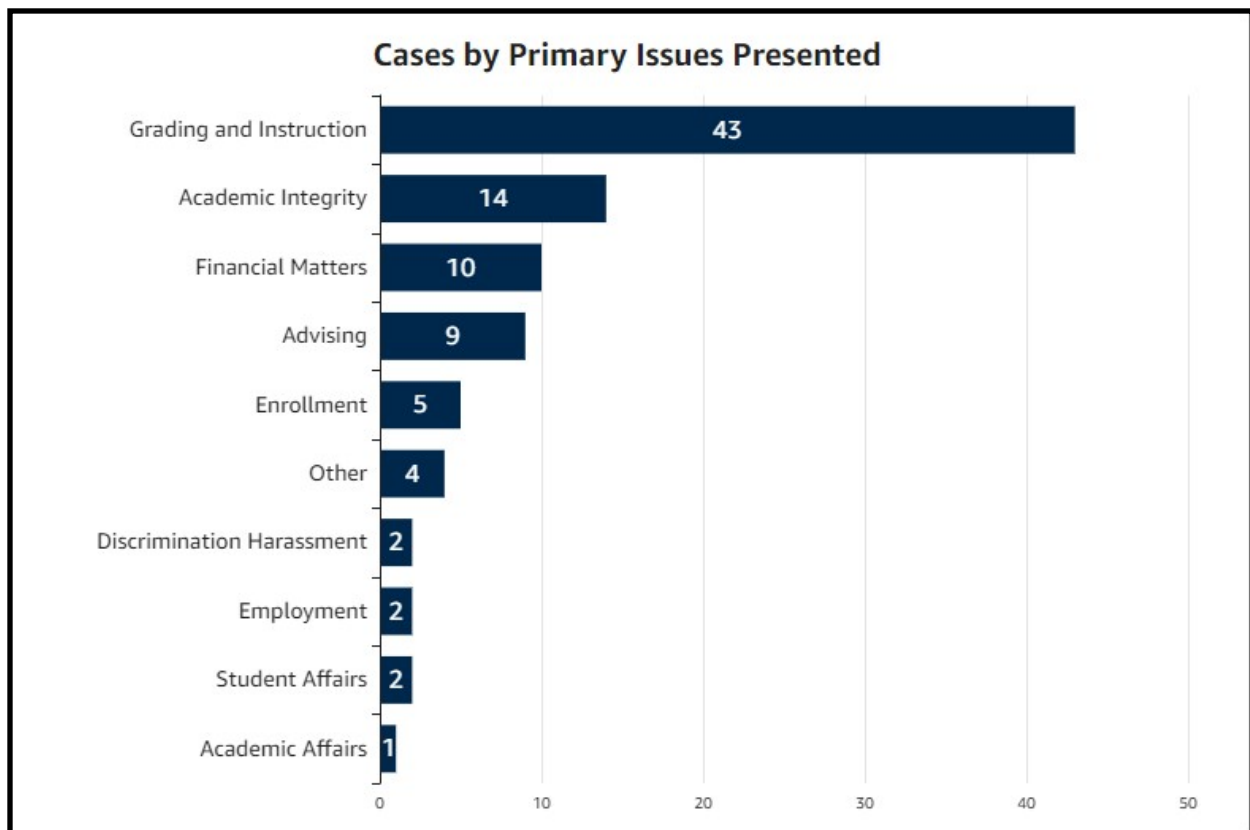
**Mission:** To provide a safe space for students to express concerns and receive assistance navigating University policies and procedures. To propose University policy recommendations based on issues presented by students. To support UM-Dearborn’s commitment to ensure that students are treated with fundamental fairness and personal dignity.

**Vision:** Through resolution of specific concerns and imparting of self-advocacy skills, contribute to increased student persistence and sense of belonging.

**Values/Principles:** Informal, Independent, Impartial, Confidential\*

From July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024, the office noted 92 unique cases, a increase of 6 over the previous year. Case numbers were unusually heavy July - December at 63, balanced by an unusually light January - June at 29. In reviewing cases by the primary issue presented by the student, cases involving Grading and Instruction were by far the most frequent (43) followed by Academic Integrity (14), Financial Matters (10), Advising (9), Enrollment (5), Discrimination and Harassment (2), Employment (2), Student Affairs (2), Academic Affairs (1), and Other (4). Charts and analysis follow.

*\*Confidentiality cannot be promised if there is serious risk of imminent harm or if required by law.*



## **What Students Can Expect at an Ombuds Appointment:**

**Introductions** - At the start, the Ombuds will explain how their office operates, covering key principles like independence, informality, impartiality, and confidentiality. It's an opportunity to ask any questions and provide some background on why Ombuds Services was contacted.

**Getting the Story** - This is the time for students to share their concerns. The Ombuds will ask open-ended, non-judgmental questions to understand the situation fully and help analyze it from different perspectives.

**Exploring Options** - Together with the Ombuds, students will brainstorm possible solutions to address their issues. Pros and cons of each idea will be weighed, which might include gathering more information, initiating conversations with involved parties, getting referrals to other offices, working on petitions or appeals, or deciding to take no immediate action.

**Next Steps** - The decision about what happens next is up to the student. Taking time to consider options before making a choice is always an option—unless there's an imminent risk of harm.

**Follow-Up** - Ombuds Services remains accessible for follow-up discussions. It often takes more than one conversation to fully resolve a concern, so additional meetings can be scheduled as needed.

## **Ombuds Services Will:**

- Listen respectfully, non-judgmentally, and confidentially to students having disputes with any part of the University
- Maintain a neutral and objective viewpoint
- Identify relevant University policies and procedures and help students understand their rights
- Make referrals to knowledgeable people
- Assist students in evaluating and assessing a variety of options to address their concerns
- Provide an opportunity for students to discuss or question University actions

## **Ombuds Services Does Not:**

- Make decisions for any other part of the University
- Advocate for any individual
- Take sides
- Serve as an office of notice for the University
- Offer legal advice or provide counseling services

## Primary & Secondary Issues Combined

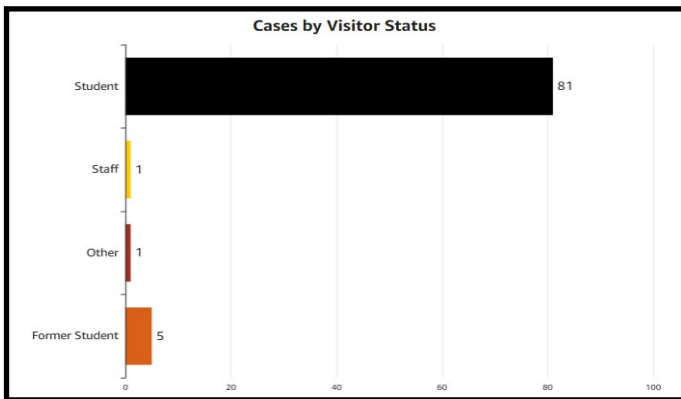
The tables below show the primary and secondary issues presented by visitors totaling 151. Out of 92 visitors, 59 had more than one concern. It is important to note that students sometimes led with one concern (the primary issue), but with discussion it may have been important to address additional areas (the secondary issue). At times the primary and secondary issues fall under the same category. For example a student could have an issue with grading methods and applying for an incomplete. Other times they will fall under different categories such as when a student is contemplating a grade appeal as the poor grade is impacting SAP.

Each issue brought forward by Ombuds visitors was first assigned to one of 12 categories (highlighted in blue). Each issue was then assigned to the appropriate sub-category. In 2023-24, there were cases in 10 categories. Zero concerns were brought to the office surrounding Campus Facilities or Housing.

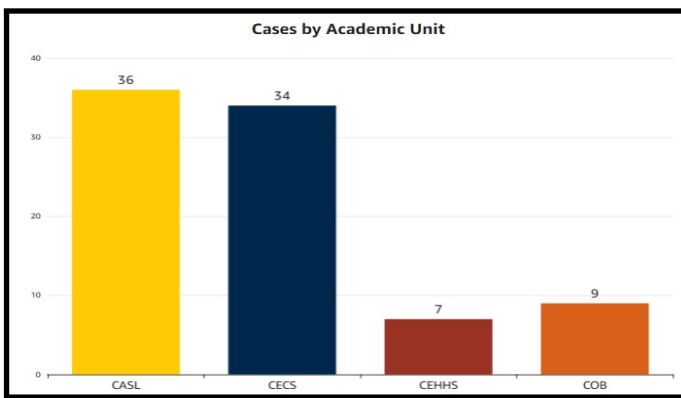
<b>Grading &amp; Instruction</b>	<b>64</b>
Issue with instructor	23
Grading methods	13
Exams/homework	12
Grade appeal	9
Teaching methods	5
Incomplete	1
Other	1
<b>Academic Integrity</b>	<b>19</b>
Policy review	10
Violation appeal	3
Other	66
<b>Advising</b>	<b>15</b>
Petition	8
Issue with advisor/advice	5
Unable to contact advisor	2
<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>14</b>
Withdraw	5
Fee adjustment petition	4
Adds, drops	1
Hold	1
Repeat credits	1
Transfer credits	1
Other	1

<b>Financial Matters</b>	<b>12</b>
Aid not disbursed as expected	5
Past due balance/hold	4
SAP appeal	2
Residency	1
<b>Discrimination &amp; Harassment</b>	<b>10</b>
Disability	6
Religion	2
Race	1
Sex	1
<b>Student Affairs</b>	<b>6</b>
Dearborn Support	4
Office of Student Life	2
<b>Employment</b>	<b>4</b>
Temporary	2
Work-study	1
Other	1
<b>Academic Affairs</b>	<b>1</b>
Career Services	1
<b>Other</b>	<b>6</b>
Health/medical	2
Office of International Affairs	2
Other	2

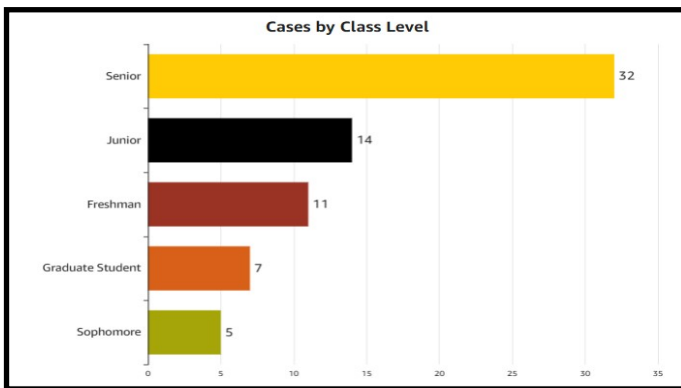
The charts below and on the subsequent page illustrate demographic data on student visitors to Ombuds Services. Please be aware that complete data was not collected for all visitors, and categories with null values are not shown. As a result, percentages may not total 100%, and numbers may not sum to the overall total of 92 cases.



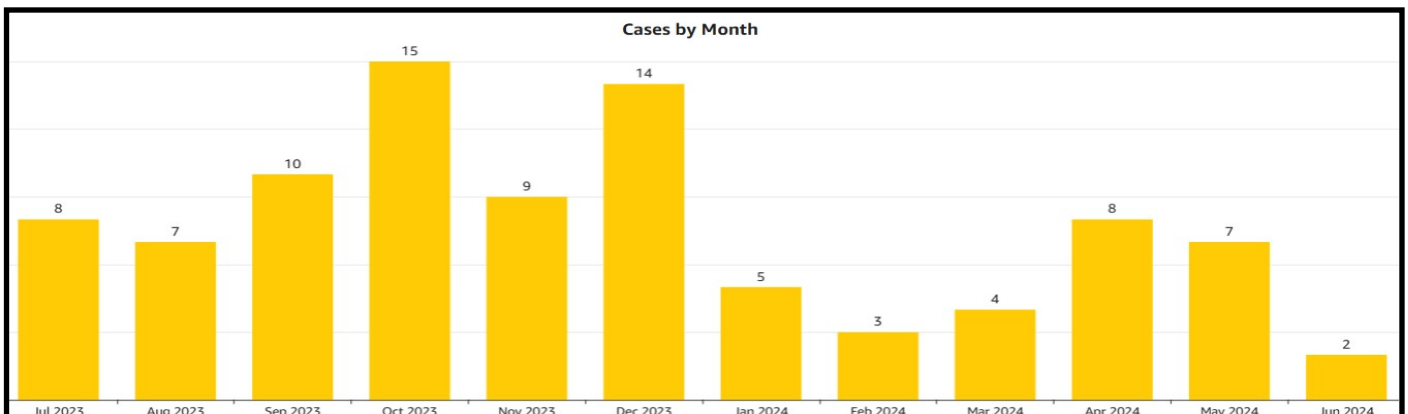
The majority of visitors are current students. Additional groups seeking assistance include former students (including alumni), faculty and staff, and parents. A small number of parents reach out each year; if their student subsequently engages with the Ombuds, this interaction is not categorized under parents.

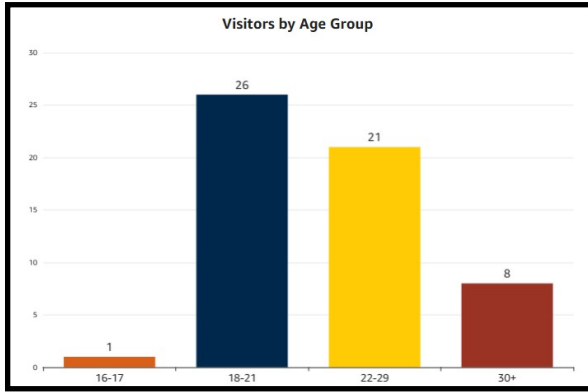


The Cases by Academic Unit chart reflects the student's college. However, the student's issue may not necessarily originate within their own academic unit. It could involve a non-academic unit or a course offered by a different college.

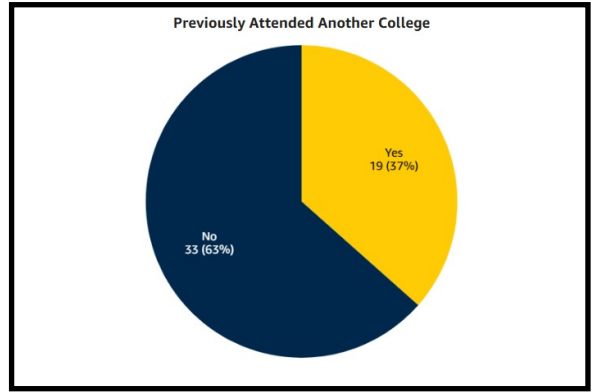


Seniors initiated the highest number of cases, followed by juniors, freshmen, graduate students, and sophomores. Historically, seniors have been the most frequent users of the office, with freshmen being the least frequent. The increase in visits from freshmen may be attributed to heightened awareness efforts during Orientation and Wolverine Welcome.

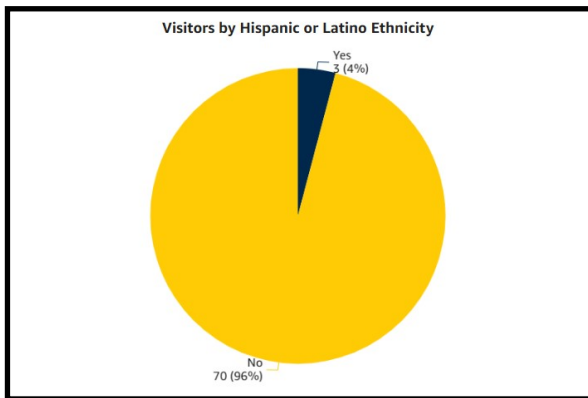




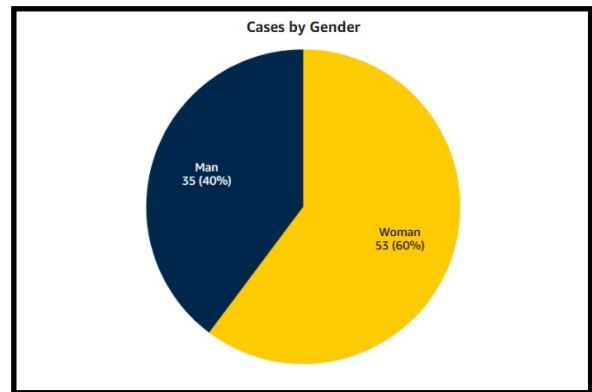
Students aged 18-21 initiated 46% of cases, followed by students 22-29 at 38%. Students 30+ represented 14% of cases. There was one case involving a dual enrollment student.



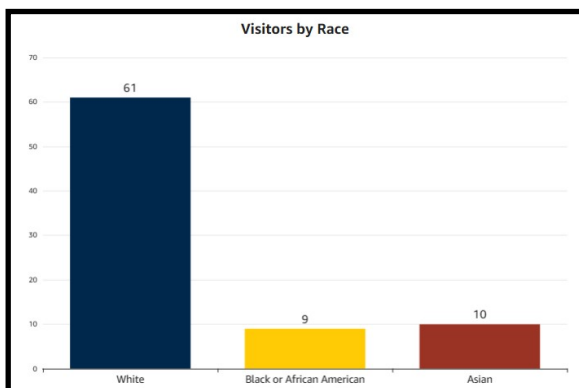
63% of undergraduate cases were brought by transfer students with then 37% brought by FTIAC students.



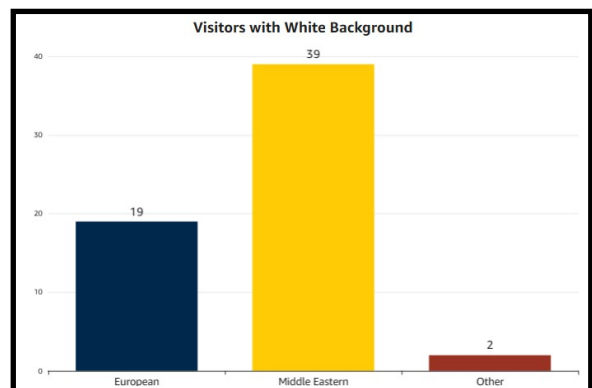
4% of student visitors identified as Hispanic or Latino. (In Banner, this is listed separately from race.)



Ombuds visitors by gender were 60% female, 40% male. This past year there were zero students that self-identified differently.



Visitors by race shows 76% White, 13% Asian, and 11% African American or Black. No students were represented in the American Indian or Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander categories.



The White race category was further subdivided. This resulted in 65% Middle Eastern, 32% European, 3% Other.