

Ombuds Office

Report 2022 - 2023

Carolyn Brendon, University Ombuds



OUR FOCUS IS FAIRNESS



Table Of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Types of Cases.....	3
Who Contacted the Office.....	3
Case Studies.....	4
Why Visitors Contacted the Office.....	5
Undergraduate Students.....	5
Graduate Students.....	7
Employees.....	9
Others.....	9
How We Helped.....	10
Observations and Recommendations.....	12
Course Management.....	12
Timeliness.....	13
Decision-Making Authority.....	14
User-Friendly Policies.....	14
Student Conduct.....	15
Academic Accommodations.....	17
Academic Integrity.....	18
Graduate Student Issues.....	19
Activities of the Office.....	19
Summary of Recommendations.....	20

Introduction

I am pleased to present the Annual Report (the "Report") for the Ombuds Office (the "Office") covering casework from the period of May 1, 2022, to April 30, 2023. With gratitude and respect, I acknowledge that we are on the ancestral and traditional territories of the Mississauga and Haudenosaunee nations and within the lands protected by the "Dish with One Spoon" Wampum agreement.

Following a university review of the Office, the [Terms of Reference](#) ("the Terms") were revised in 2020. The Office continues to be co-funded by the University and the McMaster Students Union ("MSU") and the mandate of the Office remains to assist in the just, fair, and equitable resolution of concerns and to proactively identify areas for systemic improvement and make recommendations to changes in policies and procedures as appropriate. The guiding principles of the Office are independence, impartiality, and confidentiality.

While the Office has always been student-focused, the Terms now reflect that the Office concerns itself exclusively with student-related matters. Another important modification to the Terms is the addition of an Ombuds Advisory Committee (the "Committee") to support the day-to-day operations of the Office and provide oversight and assistance to the Ombuds in fulfilling their mandate. The Committee meets several times a year and is made up of eight members of the community, four from the MSU and four from the university, including one university senator. There are on-going discussions about adding a graduate-student representative as well as proportional Graduate Student Association funding.

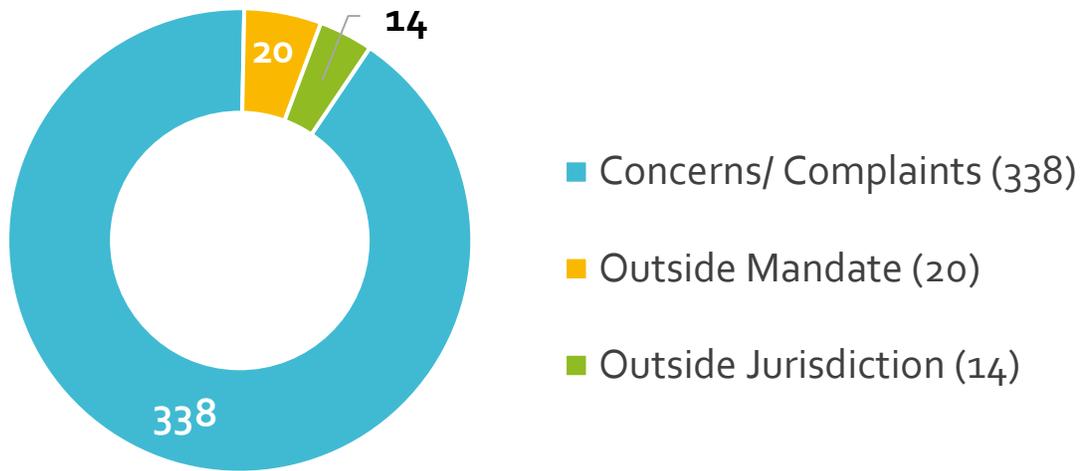
In addition to the above-mentioned changes, the President's Office has provided funding for the creation of an Assistant Ombuds position. In September of 2022, the Office welcomed Meghan Rego to this new role. Meghan is the first point of contact for the Office, manages promotion and outreach initiatives, and provides a range of administrative support.

The Report contains statistics about users of the Office and matters that we responded to, a review of some of the important work that we did in the past year, trends and recommendations for systemic improvements, and descriptions of other activities of the Office.



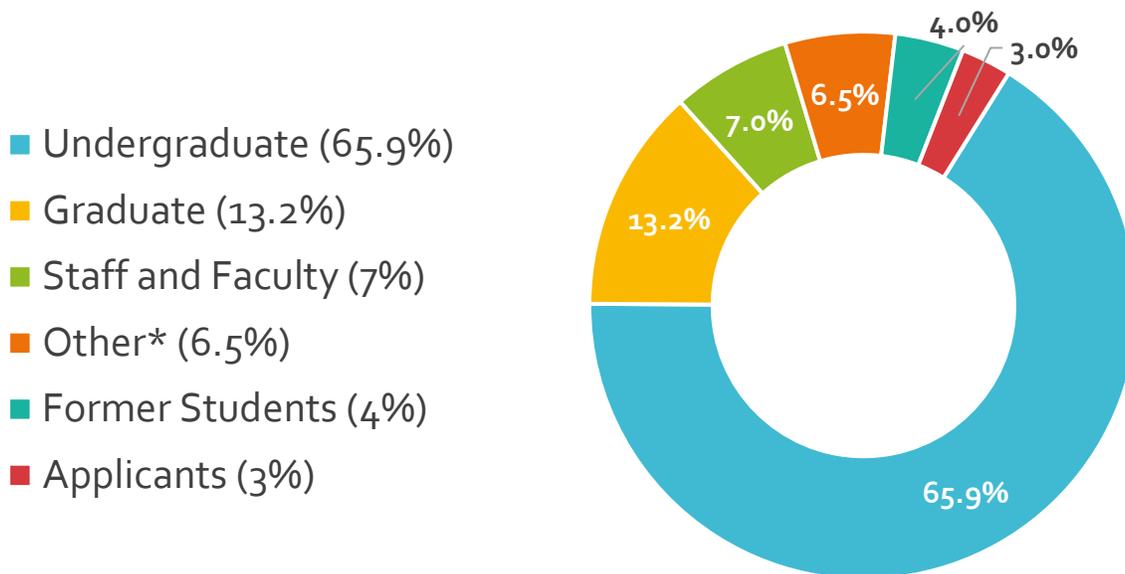
Types of Cases

The Office received 372 cases and enquiries between May 1st, 2022, and April 30th, 2023. Cases refer to concerns and complaints that are student related. Enquiries refer to matters that are related to the university but not student-related (outside mandate) and matters that are not university-related (outside jurisdiction).



Who Contacted the Office

The majority of the 372 cases and enquiries were brought by undergraduate students.



* Other includes Parents, the Ontario Ombudsman's Office**, and those outside the McMaster Community.

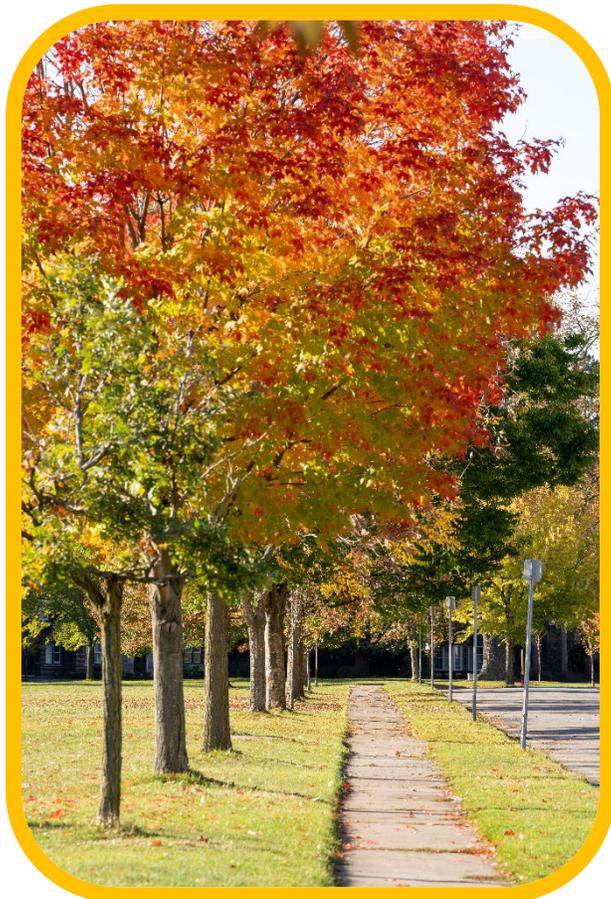
** Ombudsman Ontario is an independent office of the provincial legislature that has oversight over government and public sector bodies, including post-secondary institutions. <https://www.ombudsman.on.ca>

Case Studies

Course Management

An undergraduate student contacted the Office because the tutorial for one of their in-person courses was being taught online. Because the tutorial was scheduled immediately after an in-person lecture, the student was having difficulty finding a suitable location from which they could participate. The student was uncomfortable approaching the tutorial leader due to concerns about damaging the relationship. With the student's permission but without using their name, I contacted the tutorial leader to discuss the matter. The tutorial leader appreciated that I reached out to them directly rather than the instructor. They understood the student's concern and agreed to conduct in-person tutorials going forward.

"... the fact that the Office is impartial and independent meant that they accepted my judgement on the matter."



Financial Matter

A student complained that they thought it was unfair that they had been asked to repay money that had been mistakenly deposited in their account several months earlier. Up until the student was notified, they had assumed the payment was part of their scholarship. As a result of this misunderstanding, the student had used the money in ways that meant they were unable to make a full repayment at the time requested.

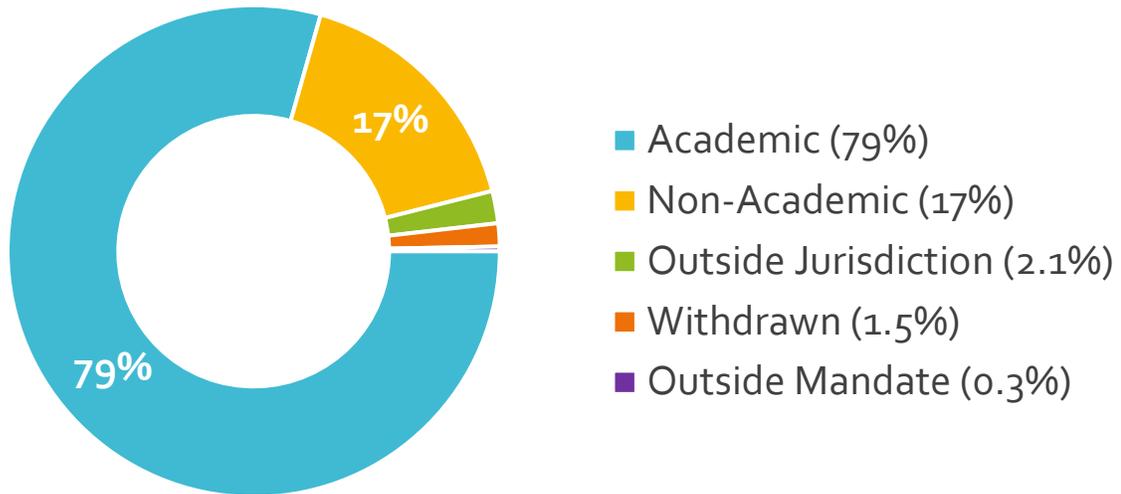
I explained to the student that while I was sympathetic to their situation, an administrative error does not entitle them to keep the money in question. I also explained that the university should be willing to negotiate a reasonable repayment plan to mitigate any difficulties resulting from the situation. I informed the student of external resources to obtain legal advice on the matter. Although the student was disappointed to hear my view that the repayment request was fair, the fact that the Office is impartial and independent meant that they accepted my judgement on the matter.

Why Visitors Contacted the Office

There was a total of 502 issues for the period of the report. The number of issues is larger than the number of cases because a matter may involve more than one issue.

Undergraduate Students

Of the 502 issues handled by the Office, 330 were related to undergraduate student matters.



Breakdown of Undergraduate Academic Issues

Of the undergraduate student issues, 262 were academic in nature and can be further divided into types of academic issues as presented below.

- Grading/Evaluation (20%)
- Course/ Program Management (16%)
- Petitions/ MSAF/ Appeals (11%)
- Accommodation (10%)
- Academic Integrity (10%)
- Behaviour of Instructor/ Teaching Assistant (5%)
- Quality of Instruction (5%)
- Application of Policy/Regulation (4%)
- Registration/ Enrolment (4%)
- Examinations (3%)
- Process Concerns (2%)
- Technological Issue/ Barrier (2%)
- Other (8%) (see Figure 1)

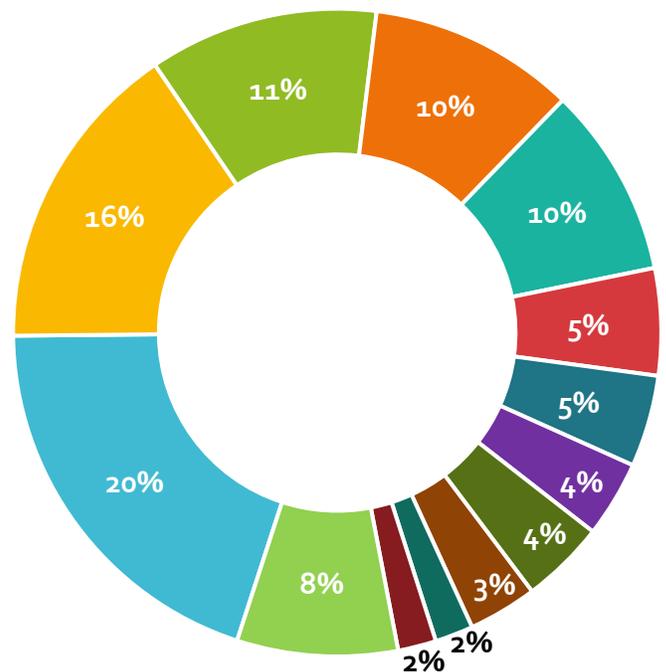


Figure 1:

Other Academic Reasons
Academic Advising
Professionalism Policies
Program/Degree Requirements
Withdrawal/Reinstatement
Co-op/Placement/ Internship
Dropping/ Withdrawing from Course
Fairness/Equity of Policy/Regulation
Freedom of Expression
Harassment/ Discrimination
Privacy/ Protection of Information
Process/Policy/Regulation

“Dear Carolyn,
 Thanks to your amazing help, my issue has successfully been resolved and I can continue to follow my dream. I greatly appreciate the advice and support you provided me along the way as well as your kindness throughout. Again, I cannot thank you enough for your services – you are seriously the best.”
 - Alyssa, (Undergraduate Student)

Breakdown of Undergraduate Non-Academic Issues

Of the 330 undergraduate student issues, 55 were non-academic as shown below.

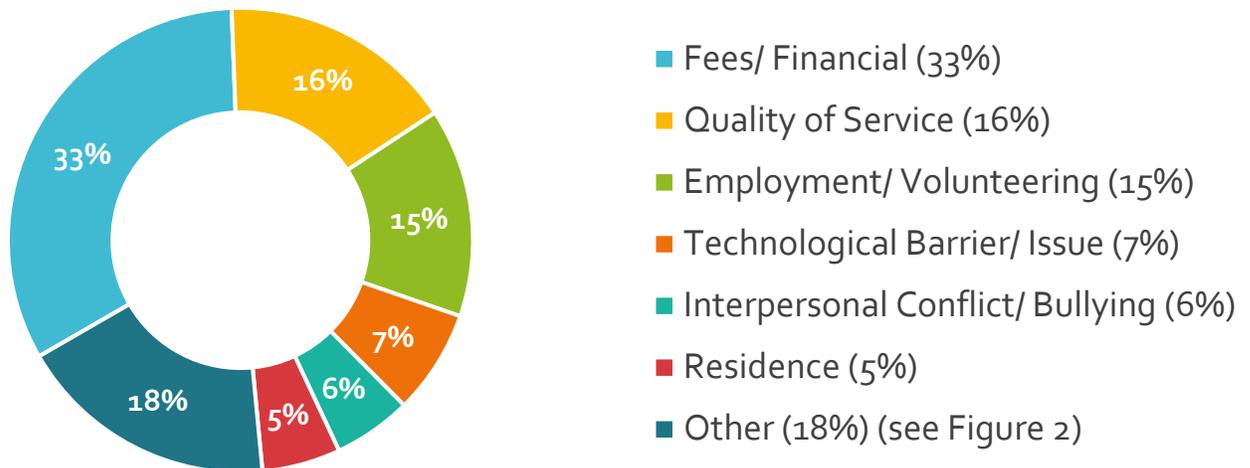
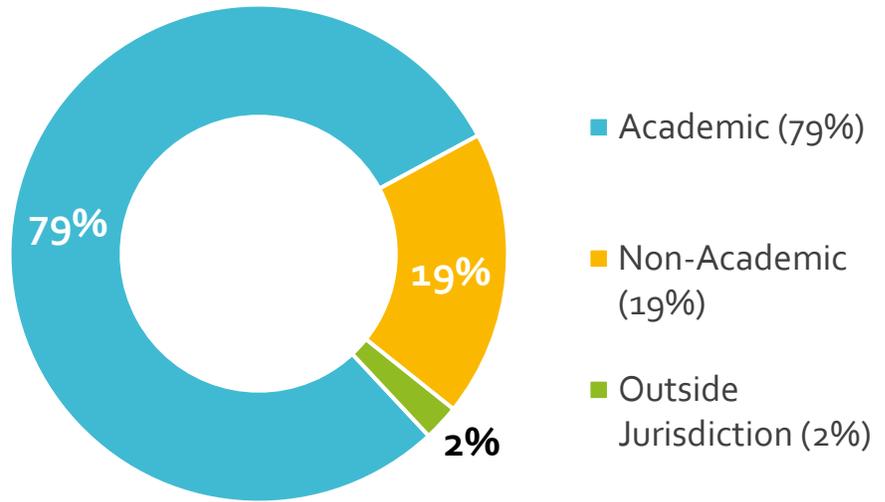
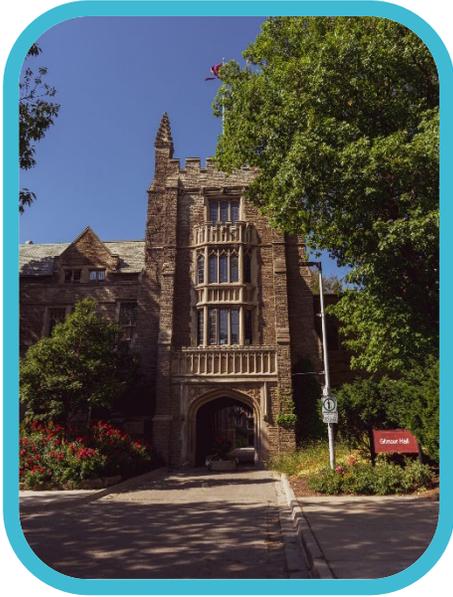


Figure 2:

Other Non-Academic Issues	
Application of Policy/Regulation	Student Association
Harassment/ Discrimination	Student Behaviour
Process Concerns	Student Club/Service
Rights of Student Groups/ Societies	Transcripts/Records

Graduate Students

Of the 502 issues handled by the Office, 86 were brought by graduate students.



Breakdown of Graduate Academic Issues

Of the 86 graduate student issues, 68 were academic in nature.

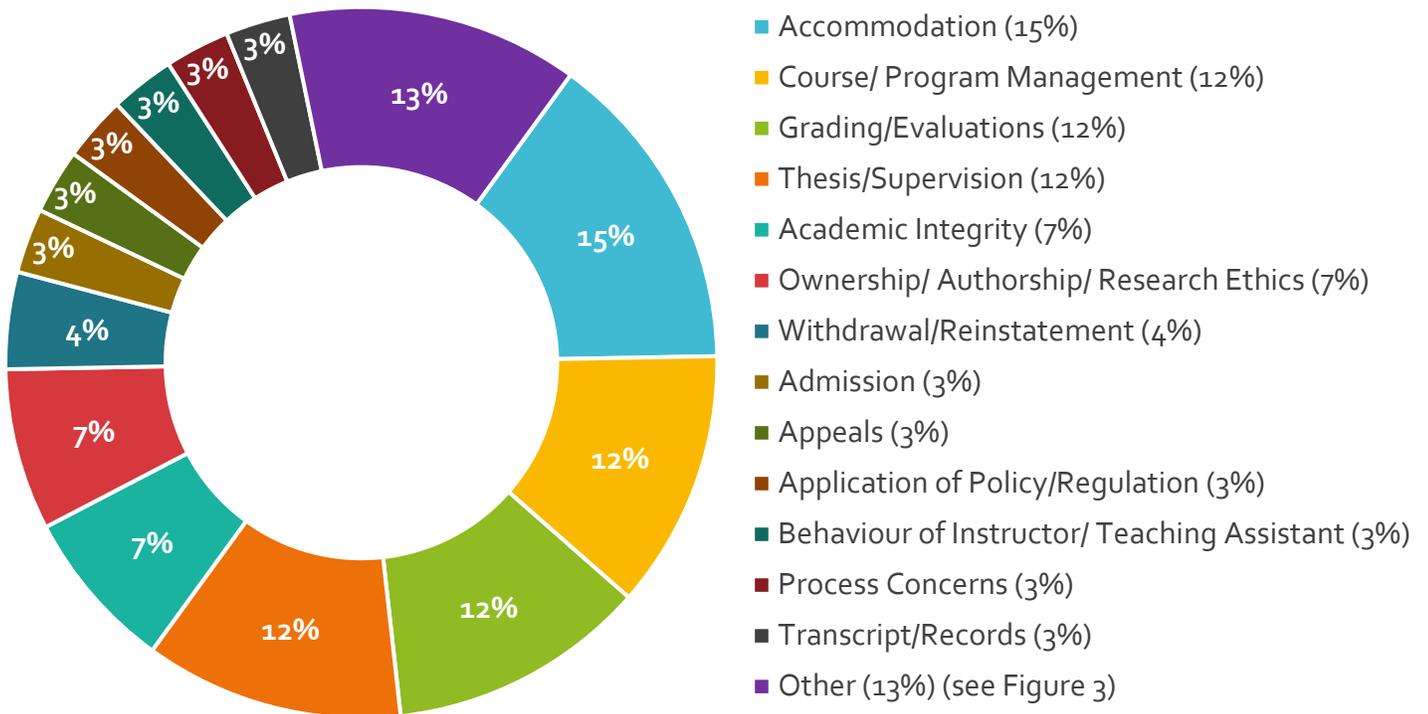


Figure 3:

Other Academic Issues
Academic Advising
Disproportionate Penalty
Dropping/ Withdrawing from Course
Fairness/Equity of Policy/Regulation
Harassment/ Discrimination
Quality of Instruction
Registration/ Enrolment
Reprisal/ Retaliation

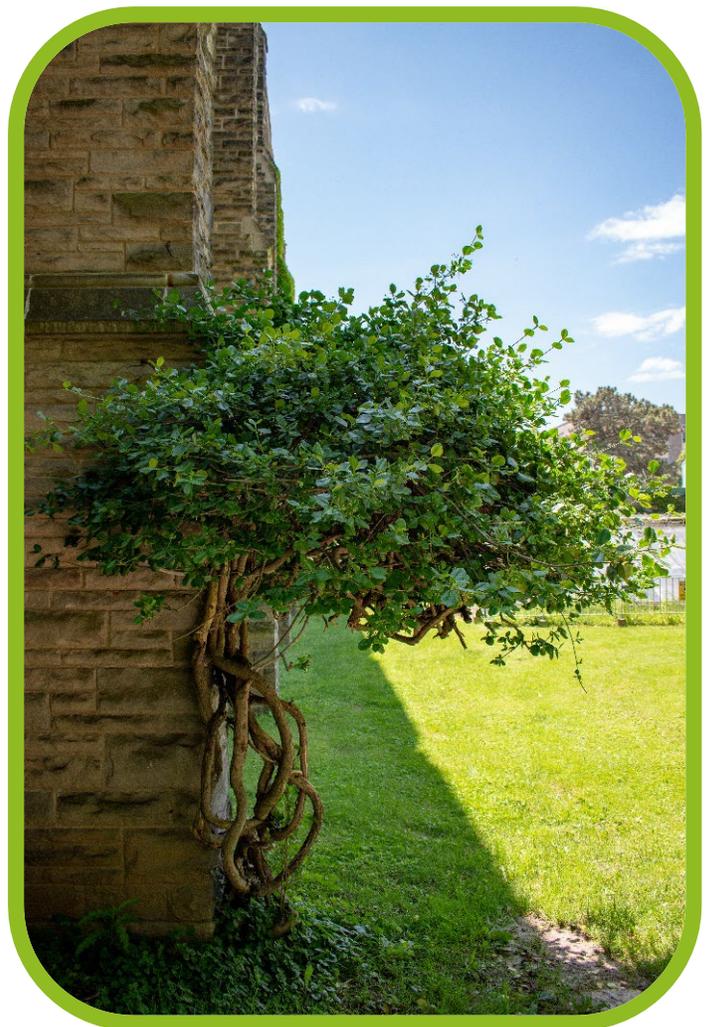
“Thanks once again for your help and support. I will be grateful to you forever for this.”
- Graduate Student

Breakdown of Graduate Non-Academic Issues

Of the 86 graduate student issues, 18 were non-academic in nature.



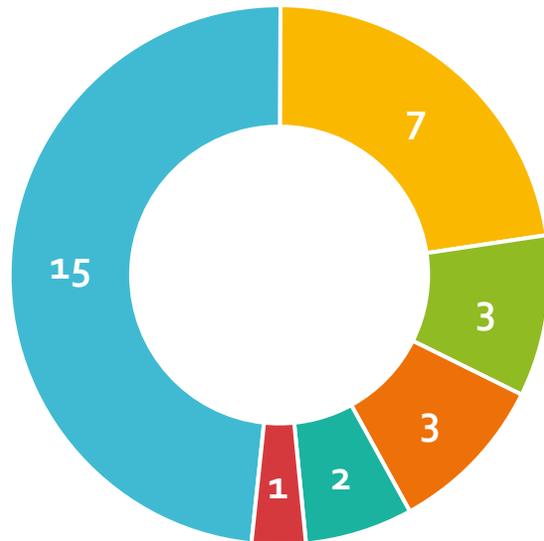
- Fees/Financial (6)
- Employment/Volunteering (3)
- Application of Policy/Regulation (2)
- Harassment/Discrimination (2)
- Privacy/Freedom of Information (1)
- Quality of Service (1)
- Technological Barrier/Issue (1)



Employees

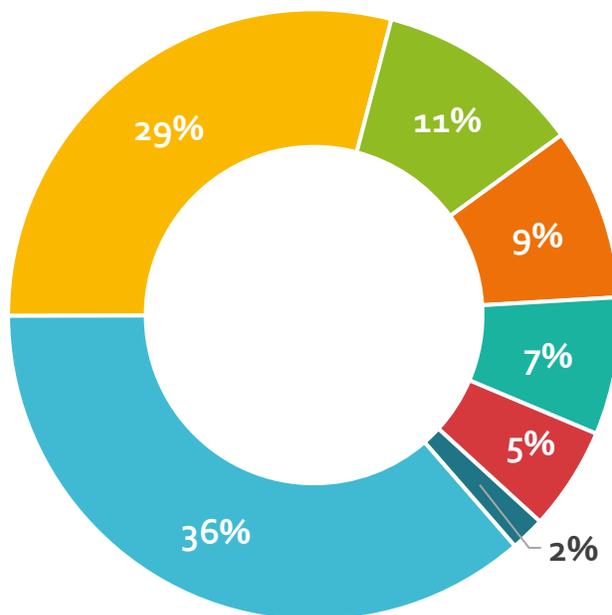
Approximately 13 per cent of cases and enquiries were brought by Faculty and Staff. Almost half of these did not involve student-related matters and, therefore, were outside the mandate of the Office.

- Outside Mandate (15)
- Issue Involving a Student (7)
- Application of Policy/Regulation (3)
- Process Concerns(3)
- Other (2)
- Issue on Behalf of Student (1)



Others

The category of “Other” includes Applicants, Former Students, Parents, Ontario Ombudsman, and non-McMaster Community Members. There were 55 reasons why these types of visitors reached out to the Office.

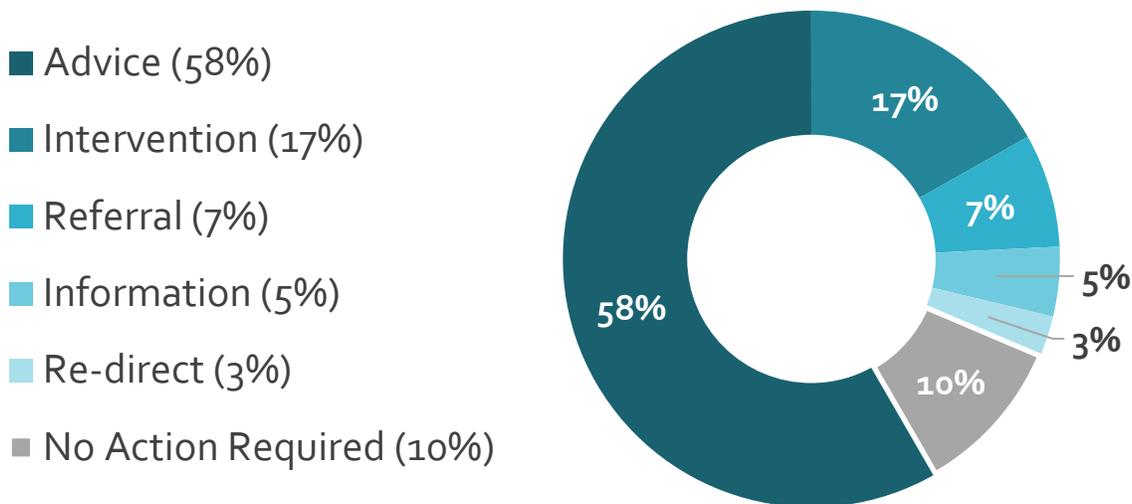


- Academic (36%)
- Non-Academic (29%)
- Outside Jurisdiction (11%)
- Issue on Behalf of Student (9%)
- Outside Mandate (7%)
- Other (5%)
- Issue Involving a Student (2%)

How We Helped

The Office provided more than one type of assistance for most cases. Almost all cases entailed providing information and referrals while the majority required more in-depth involvement. The most common form of assistance provided by the office was advice. Advice includes explaining policies and procedures, identifying and analyzing the issues, providing an objective perspective, coaching on how to raise a matter with a decision-maker or launch an appeal, helping weigh options to resolve a matter, and, because conflicts may create additional stress, gauging how a student is coping. Providing advice on a matter may require examination of policies and email correspondence, along with several meetings with a visitor. Where matters are outside our mandate or jurisdiction, we do our best to assist by providing referrals to university and external resources as appropriate.

Of the 372 cases and enquiries, 365 were closed and 7 remain active. The actions reported below are based on the 487 issues identified within the 365 closed cases and enquiries.



* Re-directs are referrals outside university.

** No action was required by the Office after being contacted by a visitor for several reasons: a visitor did not respond after being offered a meeting; a matter was resolved before the meeting occurred; or a matter was outside the mandate or jurisdiction of the Office.

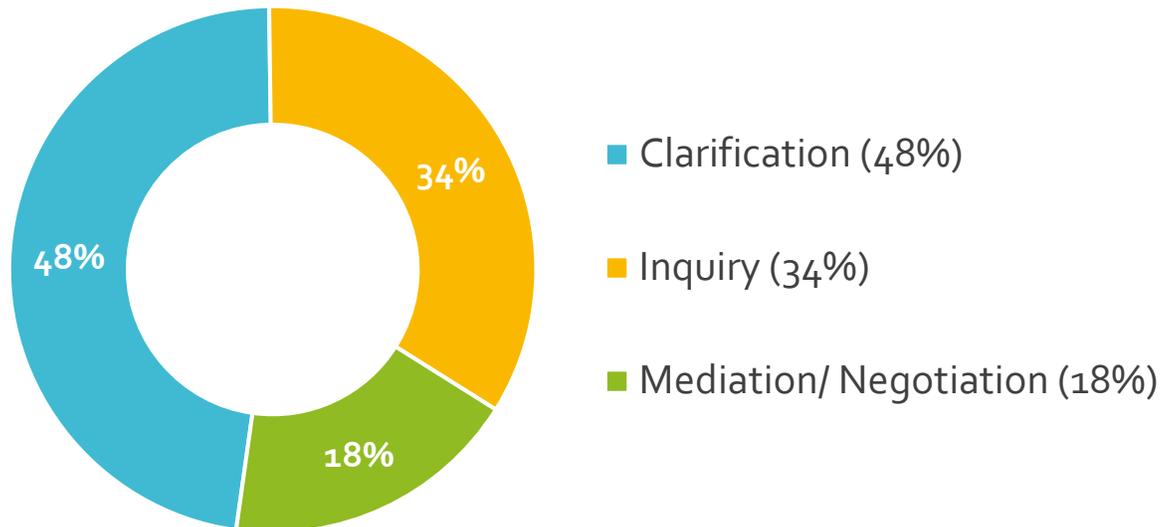
“Hi Ms. Carolyn

Thank you so much for all your help. I was able to be accepted back into McMaster with my GPA reset. Again, thank you so much, you've helped and supported me through this difficult task. Thank you so much.”

- E.N. (Student)

Interventions

The Ombuds Office intervened in connection with 82 issues. The types of intervention include clarification, mediation or negotiation, and inquiries. Most interventions involved clarification of facts and issues. Mediation or negotiation involved collaborative problem solving or suggesting best practices. Of the interventions, 28 involved conducting inquiries. These were situations where, after determining the facts of a case, a resolution was recommended.



“... the mandate of the Office remains to assist in the just, fair, and equitable resolution of concerns and to proactively identify areas for systemic improvement and make recommendations to changes in policies and procedures as appropriate.” (pg. 2)



Observations and Recommendations

Course Management

Course management issues are the second most common academic issues reported by undergraduate students, second only to grading issues. The [Undergraduate Course Management Policy](#) (the “Policy”) summarizes instructor responsibilities in regard to undergraduate courses. Occasionally, students feel that the rules or management of a course are unfair in ways that are not explicitly addressed in the Policy.

Final Assessment Marks

Several students have reported that their final assessment or examination marks are not provided to them in Mosaic along with their other grades. According to one visitor, students were told they could “reverse engineer” their grade, meaning that they could use the other grades they were given to calculate the missing mark. One instructor I contacted about this issue told me that the department has a policy against releasing final examination grades.

Students should be given their final assessment or examination grades for several reasons, including so they can determine if the overall grade is correct and, in the case of final examinations, so they can decide whether to request to view their examination paper should they have concerns.



Recommendation:

That the Policy include a requirement that the grades for all components of a course be released without students having to make a specific request.

Midterms Outside Scheduled Class Hours

When selecting courses, students pay particular attention to potential scheduling conflicts. In some cases, however, the course conflicts are not apparent until after receiving the course syllabus that indicates one or more midterms is scheduled outside of regular class time. As a result, the assessments may conflict with another lecture, assessment, tutorial, or with obligations outside of their studies.

Recommendation:

That courses that have assessments outside regular class time make this information available on Mosaic so that conflicts are identified for students before finalizing their course selection.

Unfair Grading Scheme

Several students have complained about courses where the mark breakdown is provisional subject to passing a component of the course, often the examination. For example, a student who receives an overall passing grade according to the mark breakdown in the syllabus and where one component is a failed exam, will receive an “F” in the course.

Recommendation:

That the Policy specifically references this grading scheme, and either prohibits it or limits it to non-required courses where the information is available to students prior to registering for the course.

Timeliness

“To ensure fairness for students, it is important that their concerns are resolved as expeditiously as possible.”

Explicit Timelines

To ensure fairness for students, it is important that their concerns are resolved as expeditiously as possible. One of the themes in the casework concerns the length of time it takes for a process in which a student is engaged to be completed.

Some policies have multiple steps in a process but may only include timelines for some aspects of the process. In one case, a student who was engaged in a process that they felt was taking too long, decided to transfer to another university rather than continue to wait for the outcome of their complaint.

What is a reasonable amount of time for a university office to informally resolve a dispute, investigate a matter, or hold a hearing should be considered from the perspective of a student who may experience delays in their studies pending the outcome of a process.

Recommendation:

That for every policy involving students that is being revised or developed, specific attention be paid to ensuring that each aspect of the process includes specific timelines that support the goal of the expeditious resolution of the process.

Uniform Language

The language used to indicate timelines is inconsistent across policies. For example, there are references in various policies to “working days,” “business days,” and “weeks”: in one policy, students are asked to contact their instructor “immediately.”

Recommendation:

That for every policy that is being revised or developed, specific attention be paid to the use of consistent and clear language when referring to timelines.

Decision-Making Authority

Delegation

One of the basic rules of fairness is that the authority to make decisions be properly vested in the decision-maker. To that end, policies should always specify who the decision-maker is, and decision-makers should only delegate their authority to whom and when it is expressly permitted by the policy.

Recommendations:

- 1) That every policy involving students indicates the decision-maker (or decision-makers) by job title for every stage in a process, including in circumstances where a review of a decision is permitted.
- 2) That where a policy authorizes a decision-maker to delegate their decision-making authority, it also includes a statement of to whom decision-making authority may be delegated, and limit delegation to those at the same level as the named decision-maker or higher.
- 3) That in cases involving delegated authority, the student who is the subject of a decision be informed to whom the matter has been delegated.

User-friendly Policies

Flowcharts

Some processes under university policies that involve multiple stages or options may be difficult for some students to follow. While some policies include flowcharts that assist students in navigating the process, others do not.

Recommendation:

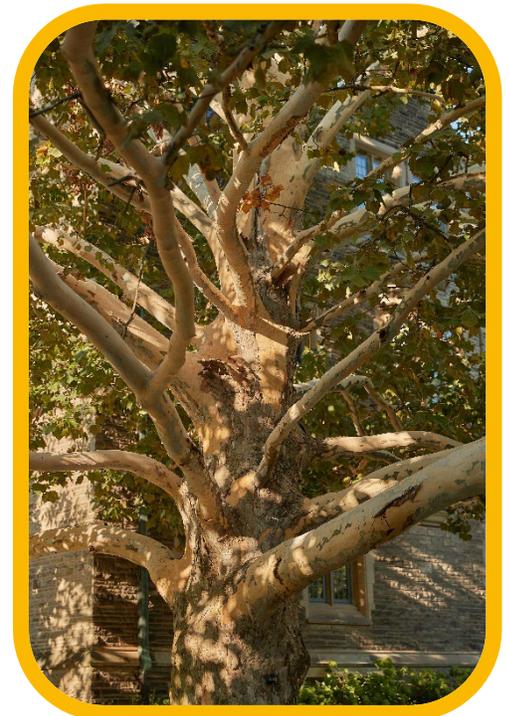
That every policy involving students that is being revised or developed include a flowchart to provide students with a visual representation of the process.

Forms

Some policies require students to fill out forms to initiate the process. In some cases, these forms are not available unless requested by a student. The need to request a form to initiate a process creates an unnecessary barrier for students.

Recommendation:

That all forms required to initiate a process be made available to students in an accessible way that does not require having to make a request to an administrator.



Student Conduct

Interim Measures

We are occasionally approached by individuals who are alleged to have breached community standards as codified in university policies. If the allegation involves student non-academic misconduct, the matter is normally dealt with under the [Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities](#) (the "Code"). One aspect of the Code involves interim measures defined as "steps that are taken where the health and safety of the student or members of the University Community are compromised or at risk, and/or in order to safeguard the environments of individuals alleging violations of the Code and of individuals whose conduct is being questioned." The measures are put in place before a fair process has occurred to determine the facts of a case and an appropriate outcome.

Because of the potential for interim measures to significantly affect a student's rights, including by issuing a *persona non grata* order, they should be both necessary in the circumstances and in place for as short a period as possible while the investigation and/or hearing process is conducted. To that end, the Code should provide a framework to ensure that Interim Measures are judiciously applied.

Recommendations:

That the Interim Measures section of the Code include the following:

- 1) greater clarity on the circumstances under which Interim Measures may be imposed, such as where a serious threat of violent behaviour exists.
- 2) a statement that the Interim Measures are not intended to be punitive and, therefore, must be directly related to the allegations and as minimally restrictive as possible to achieve the goal of harm prevention.
- 3) a statement indicating the maximum period for which Interim Measures may be in place, and a requirement that the expiration date of the Interim Measures be communicated to the student when they are informed that Interim Measures are being imposed.
- 4) a protocol for circumstances where the maximum period for Interim Measures has been exceeded. For example, if there is a need to extend the Interim Measures beyond the period specified in the Code, the student should be informed of the new timeline and given the right to an expeditious review by an appropriate decision-maker outside the Code process.

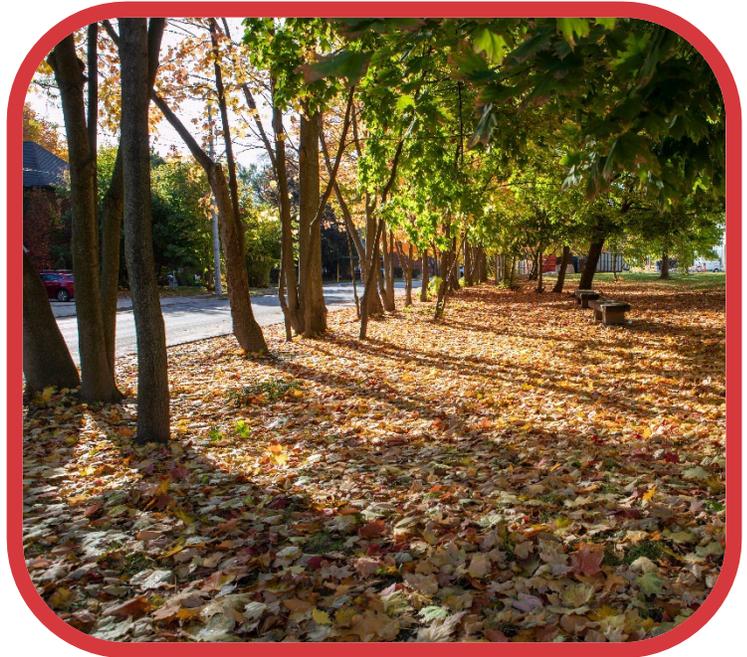


Jurisdiction

Students often take breaks during their studies prior to graduation but may still engage in university-related behaviour that can result in allegations of misconduct. In these circumstances, it is unclear whether or in what way the Code may be applied.

Recommendation:

That the Code clarify whether and/or how it applies to incidents that are alleged to have occurred when an individual is not enrolled at the university at the time of the alleged incident(s) but is eligible to continue in their program should they choose to register in the future.



“The Code is a preferable process in most cases because it provides greater procedural safeguards as well as the possibility of educational and restorative justice outcomes.”

Student Employees

I am occasionally approached by graduate students who are teaching assistants or research assistants and are facing allegations of misconduct that are not related to their employment. In some cases, they are treated as employees and the allegations are handled by Human Resources rather than by the Student Support and Case Management Office under the Code. Graduate students who are also employees are normally employed for a maximum of ten hours a week and are only employees by virtue of their status as graduate students. The Code is a preferable process in most cases because it provides greater procedural safeguards as well as the possibility of educational and restorative justice outcomes. When the matter is unrelated to employment duties, processing all students under the Code regardless of whether they are teaching assistants or research assistants would ensure greater equity among students.

Recommendations:

- 1) That the Code clarifies the criteria used to determine jurisdiction when students who are also employees are facing allegations of misconduct.
- 2) That the Code specifies a decision-maker regarding issues of jurisdiction involving students who are also employees.

Code Appeals

A student found in violation of the Code may only appeal a decision of the Dean of Students (or Provost) to the Senate Board for Student Appeals ("SBSA") in circumstances where the outcome is that the student is suspended or expelled. The SBSA is the highest level of appeal for students within the university and provides students with greater procedural protection than other processes. The three-person SBSA hearing panel includes a student member and the decisions are reported to the university senate and available publicly. The ability to appeal to the SBSA should be accessible to any student facing disciplinary action who wishes to question the outcome and/or process of a lower-level decision.

Recommendation:

That the Code allows appeals to the SBSA for any disciplinary decision or process alleged to be unfair unjust or unreasonable.

Academic Accommodations

Definition of Retroactive Accommodation

Retroactive accommodation is defined in the [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities Policy](#) (the "Policy") as a request for accommodation that is made "after the fact . . . as a result of the discovery or diagnosis of a disability."

In some cases, however, students are aware of their disability but not necessarily of their right to request accommodation. This is sometimes the case even where students have explained their situation to a university official but have not been referred to Student Accessibility Services ("SAS").

Recommendation:

That the Policy include other circumstances in which a student may request retroactive accommodation such as when a student does not become aware of their right to ask for accommodation until after a course has been completed or where there are difficulties with the implementation of approved accommodations.



Retroactive Accommodation Process

According to the Policy, SAS is responsible for assessing the duty to accommodate and developing an accommodation plan; however, the Policy is silent on whether this duty applies to retroactive accommodation requests, including those by former students. In some cases, those seeking retroactive accommodation have been advised to make their request to the Equity and Inclusion office or the student's faculty office.

Recommendation:

That the Policy make clear all aspects of the process or processes related to retroactive accommodation requests and, if more than one process exists, that the Policy include the criteria used to determine the appropriate process.

Jurisdiction

The Policy states that it applies to students in "shared institutional programs e.g. Mohawk College and Conestoga combined programs where they are registered as a McMaster student." For McMaster students in these joint programs, however, the Policy is unclear on which institution administers the Policy. One student in a joint program reported that they were required to request accommodation through both the university and the college accessibility offices which created an additional burden on a student who was experiencing disability-related challenges. In another case, a student reported that they were told to request retroactive accommodation from the college but when they did so, their request was denied on the basis that the college did not allow for retroactive accommodation, even though it is explicitly mentioned in McMaster's Policy.

Recommendation:

That the Policy clarifies the process for McMaster students in joint programs, including whether their accommodation requests are to be handled by SAS, and, if not, how the university will ensure these students receive equitable treatment.

Academic Integrity

Penalties

Several students expressed concern that if they were to appeal an instructor or adjudicator decision under the [Academic Integrity Policy](#) (the "Policy"), they could receive a harsher penalty than the one imposed at the previous level. As a result, a student who believes a decision is unfair may, nonetheless, choose to forego their right to appeal rather than risk a worse outcome.

Recommendation:

That the Policy makes it clear that a student will not receive a harsher penalty if they appeal a decision and are unsuccessful.



Graduate Student Issues

Regulations

Several cases in the past year have centred on disputes involving the [School of Graduate Studies Regulations](#) (the “Regulations”). Any decision based on the Regulations that could potentially have negative consequences for a graduate student attracts the duty to provide procedural fairness: a student should have a reasonable opportunity to present their case, and the decision-maker has a duty to listen fairly to both sides before rendering a decision. Where the impact on the student is significant, the decision should be in writing and include reasons. Even though a decision may be appealed, the right to procedural fairness exists at every level of decision-making.

Recommendation:

That the Regulations explicitly include the duty of decision-makers to provide procedural fairness.

Activities of the Office

This has been a busy year for the office: we acquired and developed a new database and oversaw the renovations of the office space and newly added reception area. We attended several workshops and training sessions relevant to our work.

Presentations and Outreach

We participated in the MSU and Graduate Resources Fairs and presented at the Student Representative Assembly and the Graduate Student Association.

Committee Work

I regularly attended several committees and policy working groups. These included Senate, the Associate Deans Group, Privacy Community of Practice, Sexual Violence Prevention Response Task Force, and President’s Advisory Committee on Building an Inclusive Community.

Professional Associations

I am the president of the Association of Canadian College and University Ombudspersons (ACCUO), an executive board member of the Forum of Canadian Ombudsman (FCO), and a member of the European Network of Ombuds in Higher Education (ENOHE). I was co-chair of the joint FCO-ACCUO conference in Ottawa (October 2022) and a presenter at the ENOHE conference in Athens, Greece (June 2022).

“Dear Carolyn,
Thank you for listening to my situation and for providing your support. I think you are doing a wonderful job at McMaster University. I owe you a hug... I owe you this degree when I finish next term.”

- Undergraduate Student



With gratitude

Open communication with faculty and staff is essential to resolving student concerns in a timely way thereby easing unnecessary stress and anxiety for those involved. I would like to thank all our colleagues for their dialogue and willingness to discuss possible resolutions to concerns brought to the Office. My sincere gratitude to the Ombuds Advisory Committee for their guidance and support. I would also like to thank the Assistant Ombuds, Meghan Rego, for her many contributions to the Office. And a special thanks to all the students who placed their trust in us and shared their stories.

Summary of Recommendations

Course Management

Final Assessment Marks Recommendation:

That the Policy include a requirement that the grades for all components of a course be released without students having to make a specific request.

Midterms Outside Scheduled Class Hours Recommendation:

That courses that have assessments outside regular class time make this information available on Mosaic so that conflicts are identified for students before finalizing their course selection.

Unfair Grading Scheme Recommendation:

That the Policy specifically references this grading scheme, and either prohibits it or limits it to non-required courses where the information is available to students prior to registering for the course.

Timeliness

Explicit Timelines Recommendation:

That for every policy involving students that is being revised or developed, specific attention be paid to ensuring that each aspect of the process includes specific timelines that support the goal of the expeditious resolution of the process.

Uniform Language Recommendation:

That for every policy that is being revised or developed, specific attention be paid to the use of consistent and clear language when referring to timelines.

Academic Integrity

Penalties Recommendation:

That the Policy makes it clear that a student will not receive a harsher penalty if they appeal a decision and are unsuccessful.

Decision-Making Authority

Delegation Recommendations:

- 1) That every policy involving students indicates the decision-maker (or decision-makers) by job title for every stage in a process, including in circumstances where a review of a decision is permitted.
- 2) That where a policy authorizes a decision-maker to delegate their decision-making authority, it also includes a statement of to whom decision-making authority may be delegated, and limit delegation to those at the same level as the named decision-maker or higher.
- 3) That in cases involving delegated authority, the student who is the subject of a decision be informed to whom the matter has been delegated.

User-friendly Policies

Flowcharts Recommendation:

That every policy involving students that is being revised or developed include a flowchart to provide students with a visual representation of the process.

Forms Recommendation:

That all forms required to initiate a process be made available to students in an accessible way that does not require having to make a request to an administrator.

Graduate Student Issues

Regulations Recommendation:

That the Regulations explicitly include the duty of decision-makers to provide procedural fairness.

Student Conduct

Interim Measures Recommendations:

That the Interim Measures section of the Code include the following:

- 1) greater clarity on the circumstances under which Interim Measures may be imposed, such as where a serious threat of violent behaviour exists.
- 2) a statement that the Interim Measures are not intended to be punitive and, therefore, must be directly related to the allegations and as minimally restrictive as possible to achieve the goal of harm prevention.
- 3) a statement indicating the maximum period for which Interim Measures may be in place, and a requirement that the expiration date of the Interim Measures be communicated to the student when they are informed that Interim Measures are being imposed.
- 4) a protocol for circumstances where the maximum period for Interim Measures has been exceeded. For example, if there is a need to extend the Interim Measures beyond the period specified in the Code, the student should be informed of the new timeline and given the right to an expeditious review by an appropriate decision-maker outside the Code process.

Jurisdiction Recommendation:

That the Code clarify whether and/or how it applies to incidents that are alleged to have occurred when an individual is not enrolled at the university at the time of the alleged incident(s) but is eligible to continue in their program should they choose to register in the future.

Student Employees Recommendations:

- 1) That the Code clarifies the criteria used to determine jurisdiction when students who are also employees are facing allegations of misconduct.
- 2) That the Code specifies a decision-maker regarding issues of jurisdiction involving students who are also employees.

Code Appeals Recommendation:

That the Code allows appeals to the SBSA for any disciplinary decision or process alleged to be unfair unjust or unreasonable.

Academic Accommodations

Definition of Retroactive Accommodation Recommendation:

That the Policy include other circumstances in which a student may request retroactive accommodation such as when a student does not become aware of their right to ask for accommodation until after a course has been completed or where there are difficulties with the implementation of approved accommodations.

Retroactive Accommodation Process Recommendation:

That the Policy make clear all aspects of the process or processes related to retroactive accommodation requests and, if more than one process exists, that the Policy include the criteria used to determine the appropriate process.

Jurisdiction Recommendation:

That the Policy clarifies the process for McMaster students in joint programs, including whether their accommodation requests are to be handled by SAS, and, if not, how the university will ensure these students receive equitable treatment.

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