



DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY

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OMBUDSPERSON
OFFICE

A N N U A L
R E P O R T

Prepared For :

Dr. Frank Harvey
Provost and Vice President
Academic

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Academic

Commitment to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

The Ombudsperson Office is committed to equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. These pillars speak to the cornerstone of Dalhousie University's expressed intention to create a safe community and a campus climate that promotes and challenges equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility on its campuses.

Acknowledgement and exploration of our privilege and biases position us to actively seek to ensure that students feel safe, supported, recognized for who they are, and that their diversity is appreciated.

Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We are all Treaty people.

We recognize that African Nova Scotians are a distinct people whose histories, legacies and contributions have enriched that part of Mi'kma'ki known as Nova Scotia for over 400 years.

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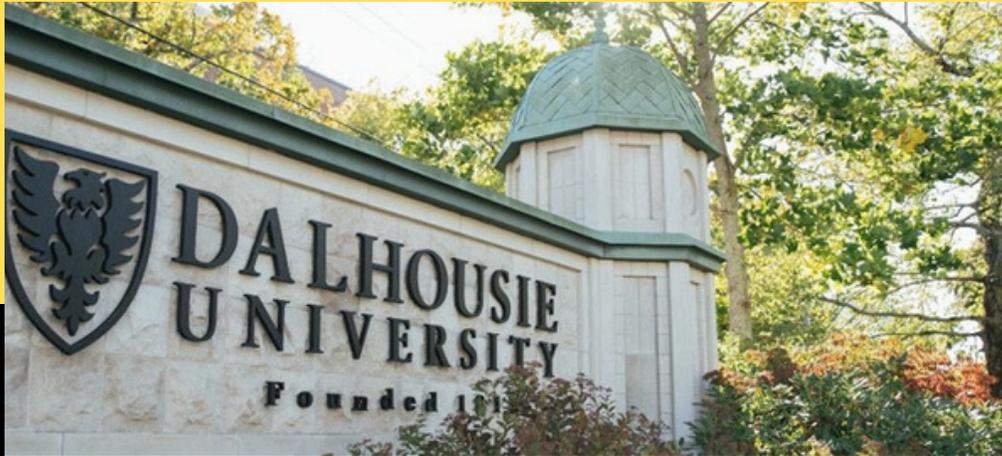
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Thank You

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Contact Information



FROM THE OMBUDSPERSON

The 2022-2023 academic year was the first full year I occupied the role of Ombudsperson. This year I sought to begin establishing the Ombudsperson Office as a hub of support and a resource for student concerns. In October, the office hosted an Open House to re-introduce the office to campus given the pivots due to the pandemic.

This academic year students, faculty, and staff also experienced a strike. In acknowledging the strike, I am mindful that may have impacted the number of complaints/concerns brought forward by visitors. The context in which concerns are presented is impactful to the experiences of visitors and requires consideration.

The Ombudsperson Office represents a commitment to embracing

complaints/concerns and speaks to the University community being open to understanding the experiences of students and learning from them. The Ombudsperson Office seeks to provide exceptional support as well as support the understanding of rights and responsibilities.

As I continue to grow and learn from visitors, I acknowledge complaints/concerns give voice to experiences, and engage students in university processes/policies. There is learning in complaints/concerns if only we are open to receiving that learning.

Carla Britten

CARLA BRITTEN
OMBUDSPERSON

ABOUT THE OFFICE



The Ombudsperson Office recognizes that within Dalhousie there are different levels of power and privilege that impact and influence how we work with one another. The Ombudsperson is committed to educating the community and will endeavor to find ways to collaborate and challenge inequalities.

The Ombudsperson Office does not advocate for individual students/groups, or the university involved in a disagreement but provides confidential, independent, and impartial support to help resolve any university-related concerns. The office works with students, faculty, and staff to ensure just, fair, and equitable treatment of every student. The approach of the office is not to assign blame to one party and support the reasonable resolution of complaints.

If a person believes the service and support they received was challenging to access, disrespectful, inaccessible, or unresponsive to their needs, their reaction may leave them disappointed and frustrated. In bringing forward a complaint, individuals are seeking a resolution, a means to right a wrong, accountability, and to prevent similar situations from occurring. When post-secondary institutions, like Dalhousie, value complaints and offer support to assist students who wish to make a complaint, such as an Ombudsperson, they are recognizing the importance of feedback. In learning from complaints, a

campus climate of respect and accountability can thrive.

What does an Ombudsperson do?

- Provide general resource information and make appropriate referrals
- Identify and explain relevant university processes/policies
- Work with a student(s) to explore and strategize options for problem-solving
- Empower students to deal directly and effectively with their concerns
- Facilitate discussions and make inquiries for clarification to seek resolution
- Give sound and practical advice
- Listen and provide an objective perspective

The Ombudsperson Office is dedicated to upholding the standards of practice of the Association of Canadian College and University Ombudspersons which include:

- Independence
- Impartiality
- Confidentiality
- Accessibility

These standards of practice involve creating a safe space for students to share so they can be encouraged to problem solve to resolve their complaints and concerns.

How to Reach the Ombudsperson Office?

ombuds@dal.ca

902-494-2665

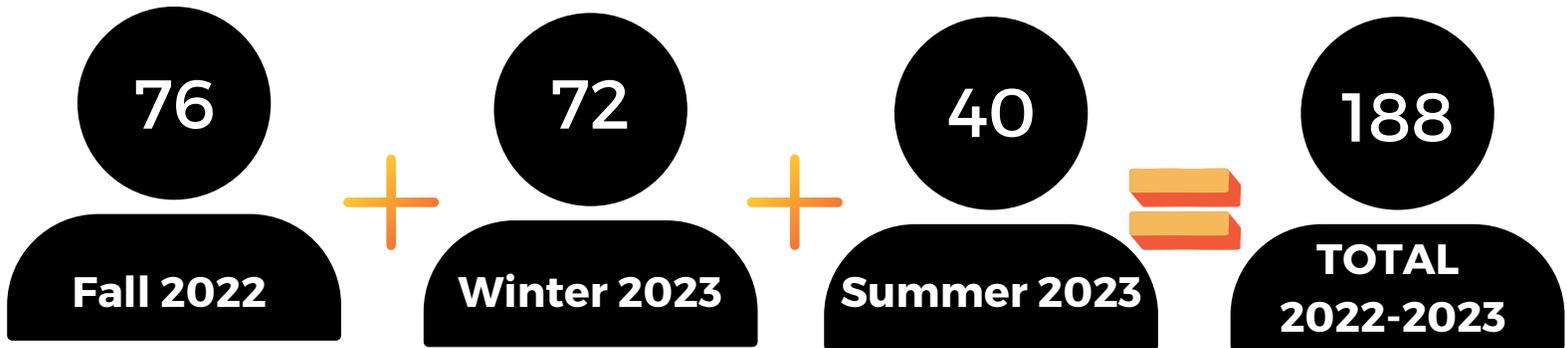
Student Union Building, Room 452

OFFICE EXPERIENCE: NUMBERS & STATISTICS

The following numbers and statistics outline the experience at the Ombudsperson Office in 2022-2023 academic year.

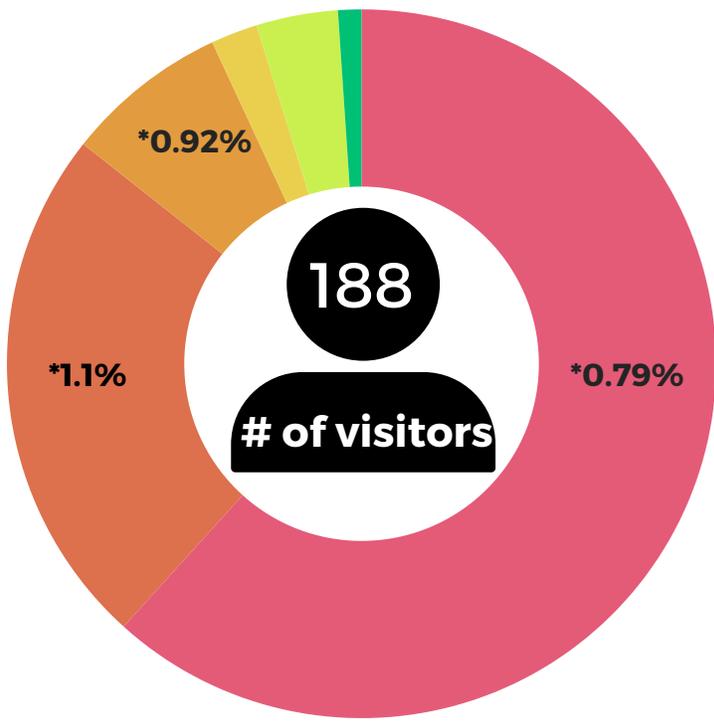
Numbers and statistics are representative of September 1st, 2022 to August 30th, 2023.

VISITOR NUMBERS BY SEMESTER



↑ % Between November 2021 and August 2022, Ombudsperson Office had 100 visitors. While not a full academic year, the Ombudsperson Office had an 88% increase in visitors in 2022-2023.

WHO IS VISITING THE OMBUDSPERSON OFFICE



- 61.7%** Undergraduate
- 23.9%** Graduate
- 7.5%** DENT/LAW/MEDI
- 2.1%** Parents & Supporters
- 3.7%** Alumni
- 1.1%** Incoming

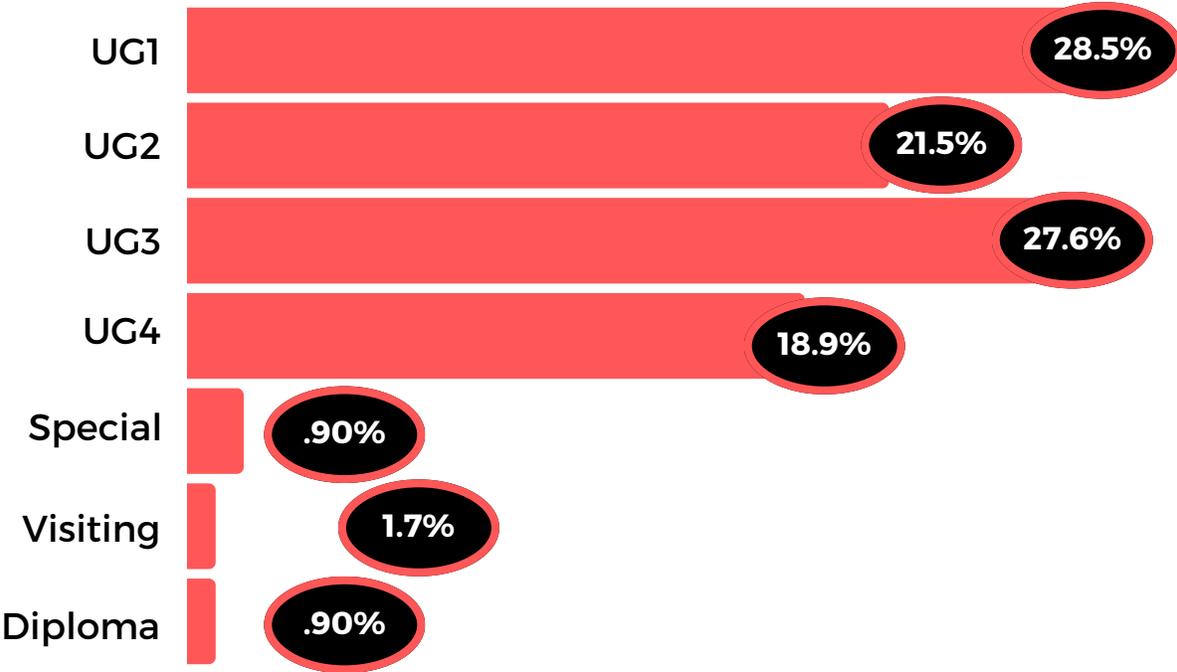
Enrolment Numbers

61.7% of visitors to Ombudsperson Office were undergraduate students, accounting for 0.79% of enrolled students.

23.9% of visitors to Ombudsperson Office were graduate students, representing largest proportion of student visitors at 1.1%.

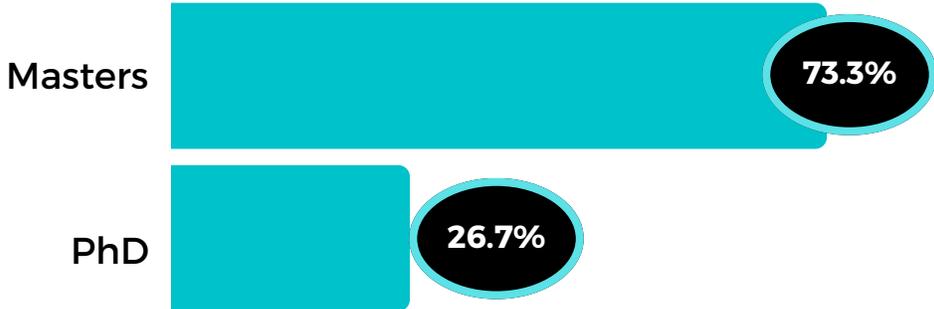
*Proportion of visitors in relation to enrolment numbers for students in undergraduate, graduate, and DENT/LAW/MEDI programs

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS



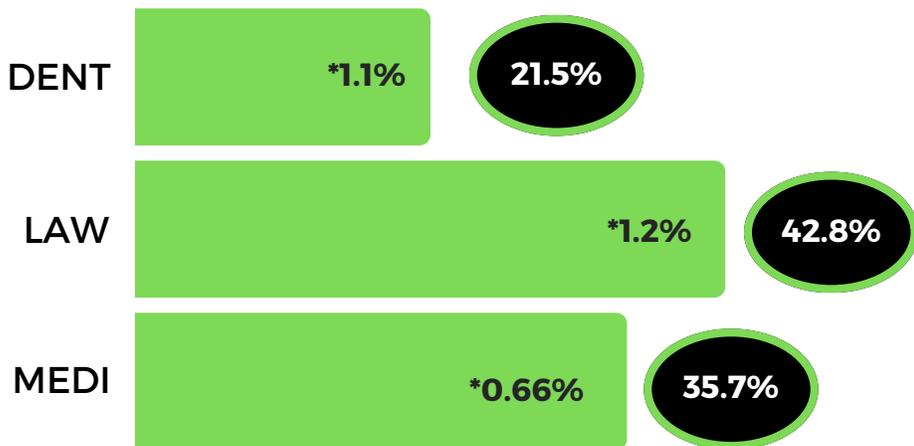
Undergraduate students studying in their 1st year accounted for 28.5% of undergraduate student visitors who connected with the Ombudsperson Office.

GRADUATE STUDENTS



Graduate students completing their Master's degree accounted for 73.3% of graduate student visitors to connect with the Ombudsperson Office.

DENT/LAW/MEDI STUDENTS



Enrolment Numbers

Students in LAW accounted for largest group of student visitors from DENT/LAW/MEDI to connect with the Ombudsperson Office. Based on enrolment, students in LAW represented the largest proportion of student visitors at 1.2%.

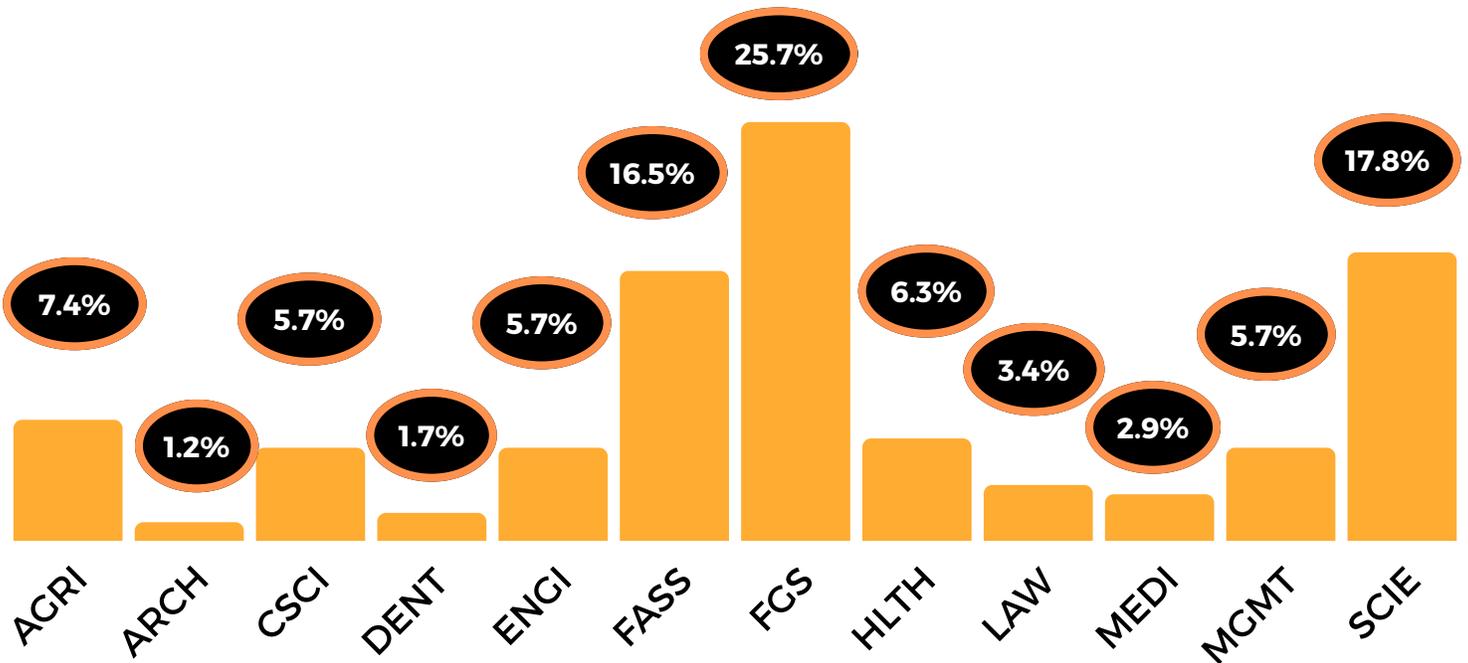
*Proportion of visitors in relation to number of students enrolled in DENT, LAW, and MEDI

Of the 175 student visitors, 39 students were international students accounting for 22.3% of all visitors to the Ombudsperson Office.

Based on enrolment, proportion of international student visitors represented 0.80% of international students and 0.18% of the entire student population.

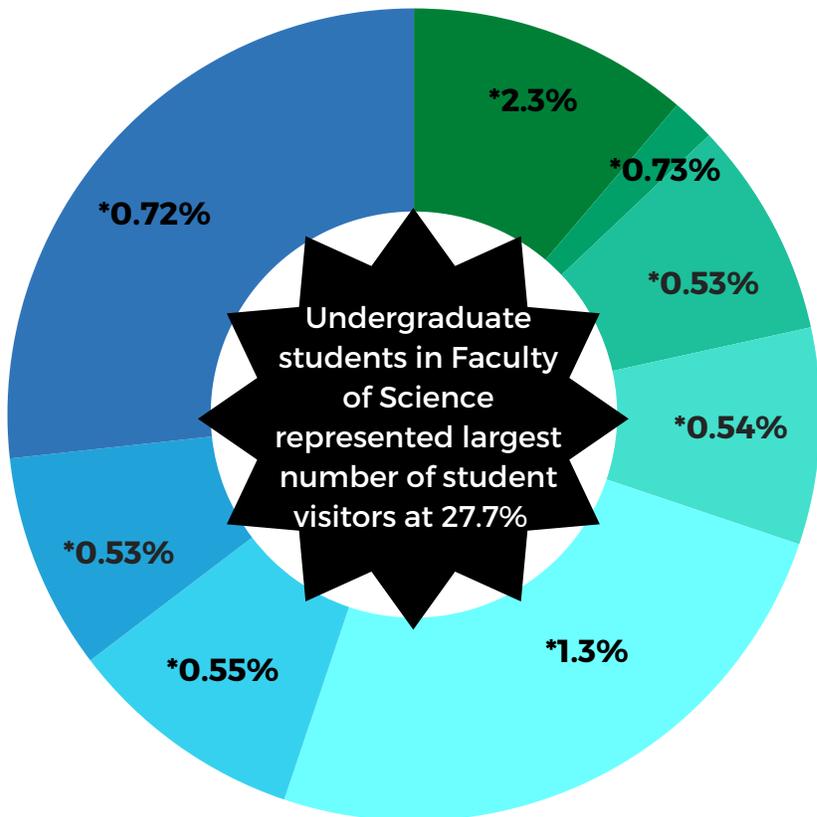


STUDENT VISITOR BREAKDOWN BY FACULTY



Student visitors from the Faculty of Graduate Studies represented the largest faculty to connect to the Ombudsperson Office accounting for at 25.7% of all visitors.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS BY FACULTY



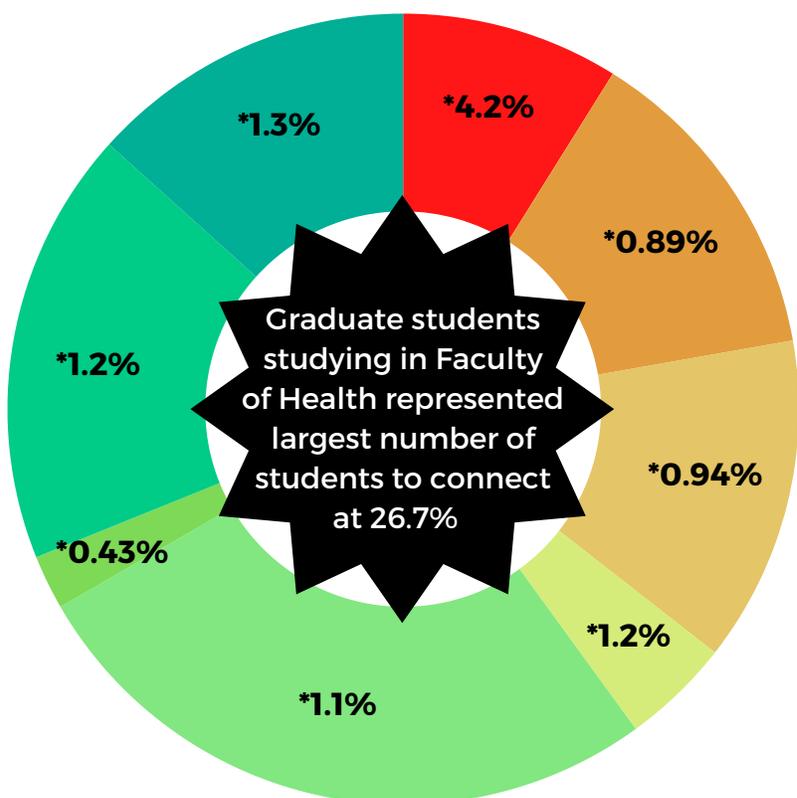
- 11.6% Agriculture
- 23.2% Arts & Social Sciences
- 1.8% Architecture
- 9.8% Health
- 8.1% Computer Science
- 8.9% Management
- 8.9% Engineering
- 27.7% Science

Enrolment Numbers

Based on student enrolment within each faculty, undergraduate students in the Faculty of Agriculture represented the largest proportion of undergraduate student visitors at 2.3%

*Proportion of visitors in relation to number of undergraduate students enrolled in each faculty

GRADUATE STUDENTS BY FACULTY



- 8.9% Architecture & Planning
- 17.8% Management & Planning
- 13.3% Computer Science
- 13.3% Science
- 13.4% Engineering
- 4.4% Arts & Social Science
- 26.7% Health
- 2.2% Medicine

Enrolment Numbers

Based on student enrolment, graduate students studying in the Faculty of Architecture & Planning represented the largest proportion of graduate student visitors at 4.2%.

*Proportion of visitors in relation to number of graduate students studying in each faculty



Students in DENT/LAW/MEDI had a separate category to distinguish the unique nature of their programs.

As outlined above, students in LAW accounted for the largest number of students to connect with the Ombudsperson Office as well as represented the largest proportion of students to connect based on enrolment numbers.



NATURE OF INQUIRY

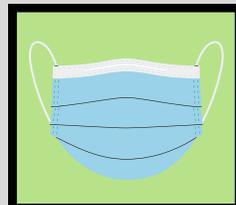
Concerns/complaints from visitors to the Ombudsperson Office were categorized depending on the nature of their inquiry and were designated into broad categories to provide an overview to encapsulate the nature of the concern/complaint. Categories included: academic, equity, admissions, facilities, finances, interpersonal, covid protocols, accessibility, and non-academic.

For concerns/complaints that were academic and involved interpersonal conflict, sub-categories were created to outline the specific nature of the concern/complaint.

CONCERN/COMPLAINT CLASSIFICATION



ACADEMIC
48.5%



COVID PROTOCOLS
0.60%



FINANCES
6.9%



ACCESSIBILITY
4.2%



EQUITY
5.8%



INTER-PERSONAL
21.8%



ADMISSIONS
1.0%

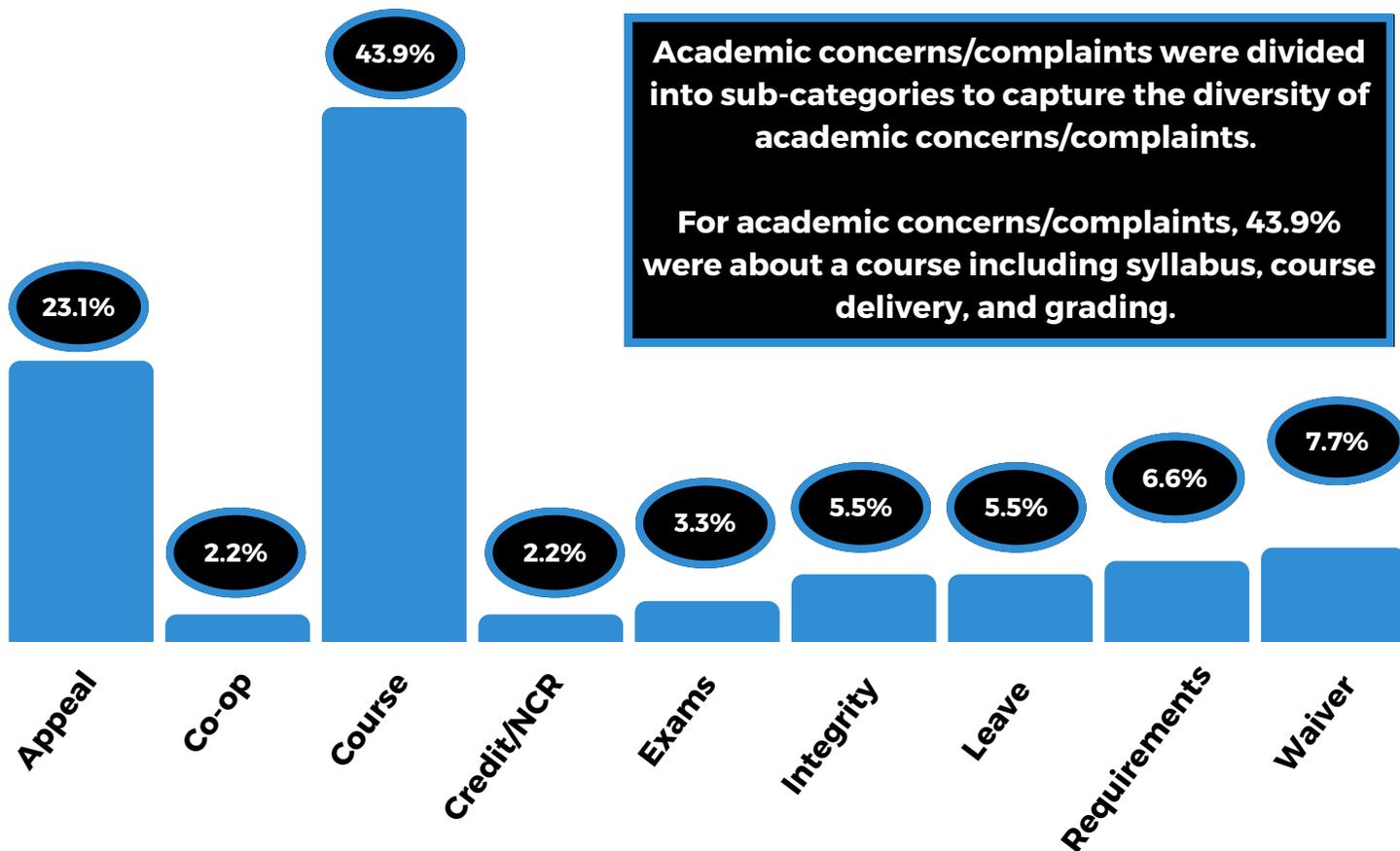


FACILITIES
0.60%



NON ACADEMIC
10.6%

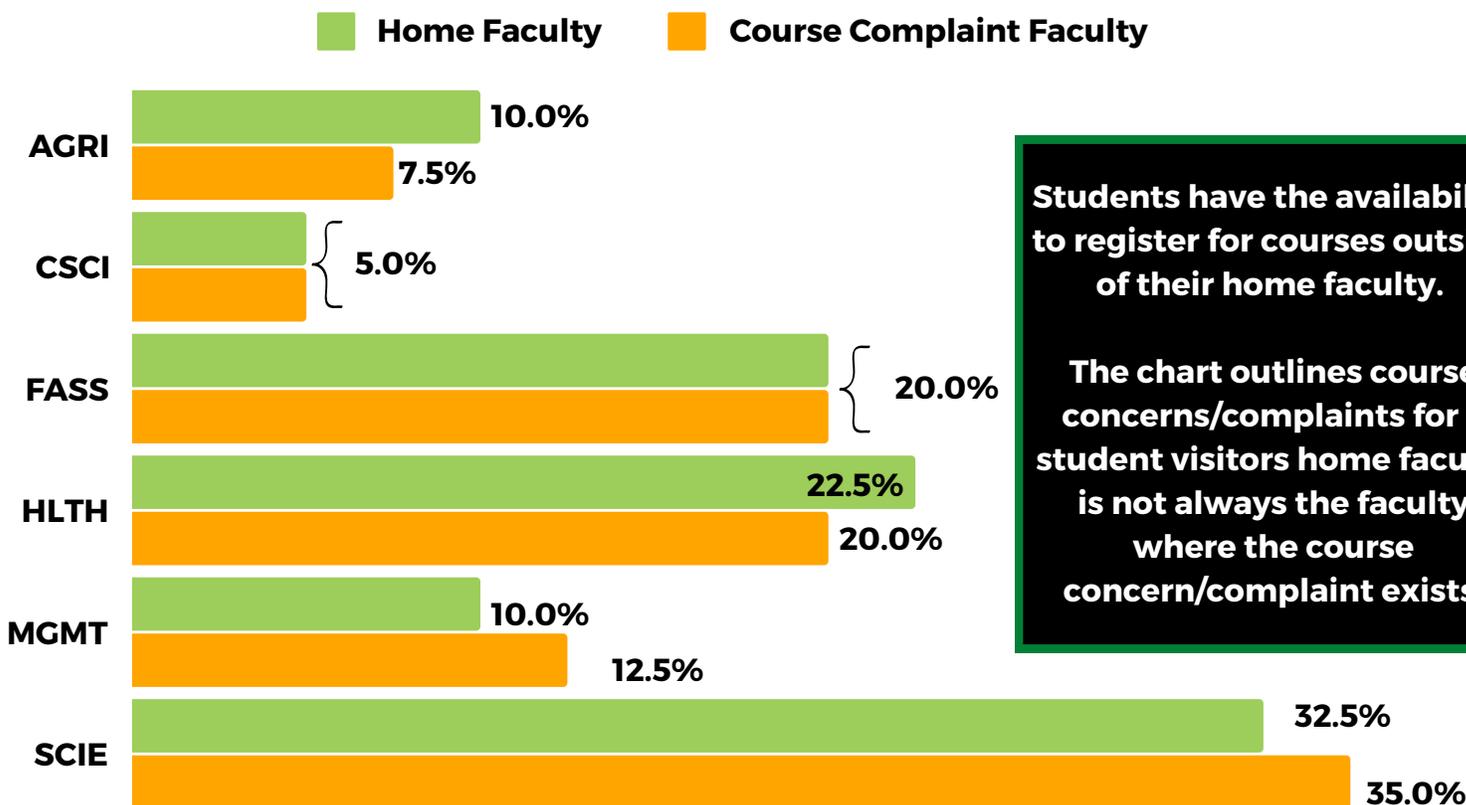
ACADEMIC CONCERNS/COMPLAINTS



Academic concerns/complaints were divided into sub-categories to capture the diversity of academic concerns/complaints.

For academic concerns/complaints, 43.9% were about a course including syllabus, course delivery, and grading.

COURSE CONCERNS/COMPLAINTS: COMPARISON OF HOME FACULTY AND COURSE COMPLAINT FACULTY



Students have the availability to register for courses outside of their home faculty.

The chart outlines course concerns/complaints for a student visitors home faculty is not always the faculty where the course concern/complaint exists.

10.0% of course complaints were shared by visitors whose home faculty is AGRI but 7.5% of overall course concerns/complaints concerned a course offered in AGRI.

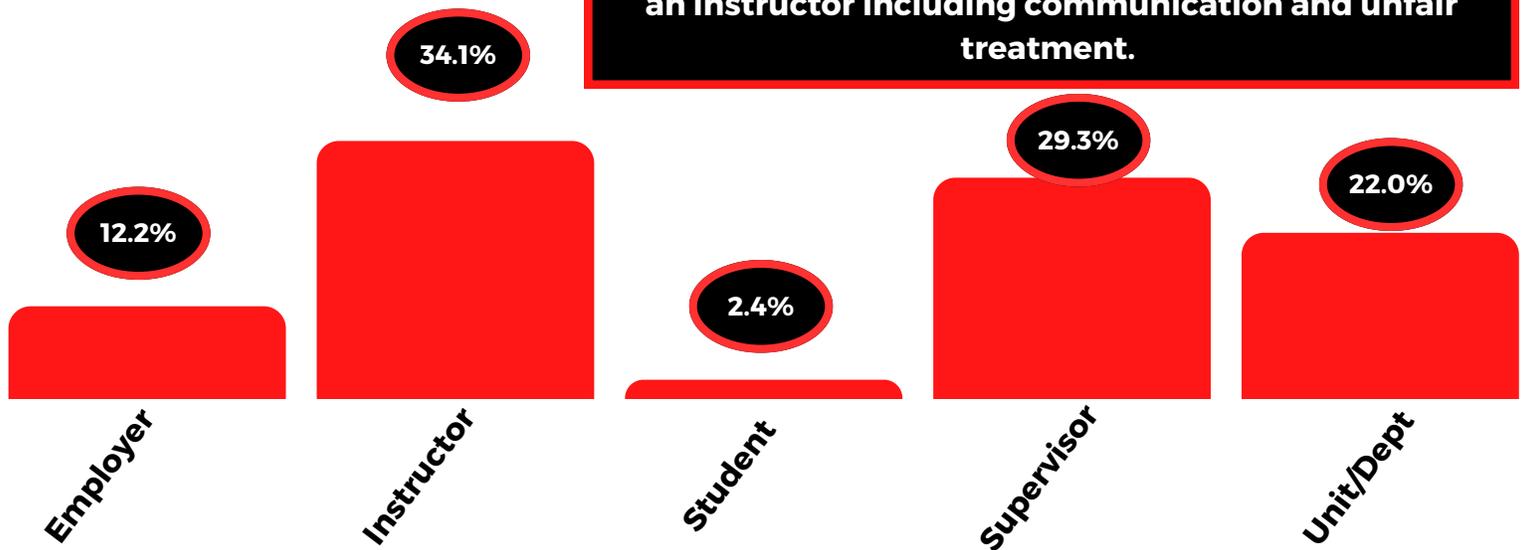
22.5% of course complaints were shared by visitors whose home faculty is HLTH but 20.0% of overall course concerns/complaints concerned a course offered in HLTH.

10.0% of course complaints were shared by visitors whose home faculty is MGMT but 12.5% of overall course complaints concerned a course offered in MGMT.

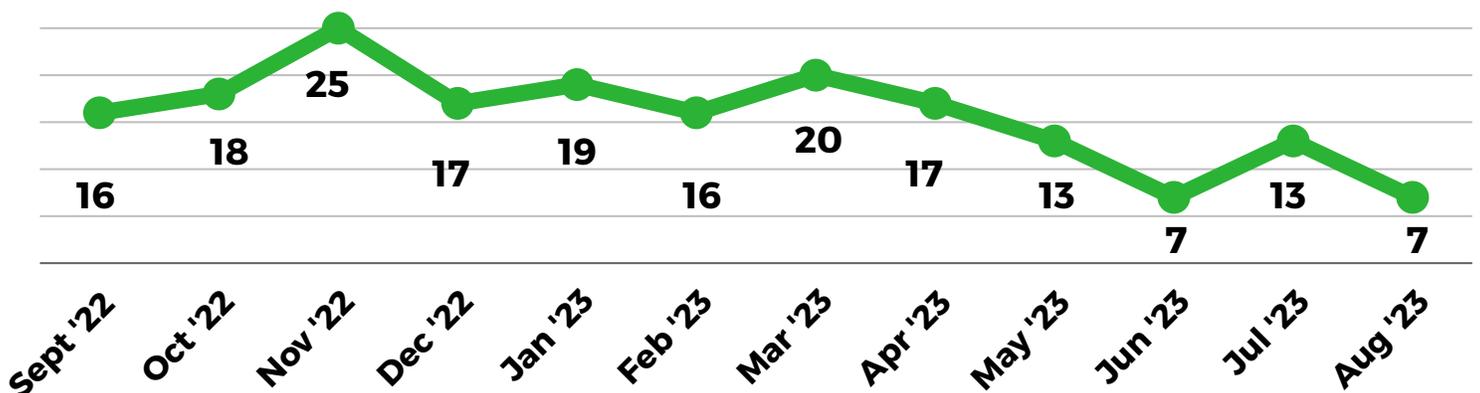
32.5% of course complaints were shared by visitors whose home faculty is SCIE but 35.0% of overall course complaints concerned a course offered in SCIE.

INTERPERSONAL CONCERNS/COMPLAINTS

For interpersonal concerns/complaints, 34.1% involved an instructor including communication and unfair treatment.



MONTHLY VISITOR NUMBERS



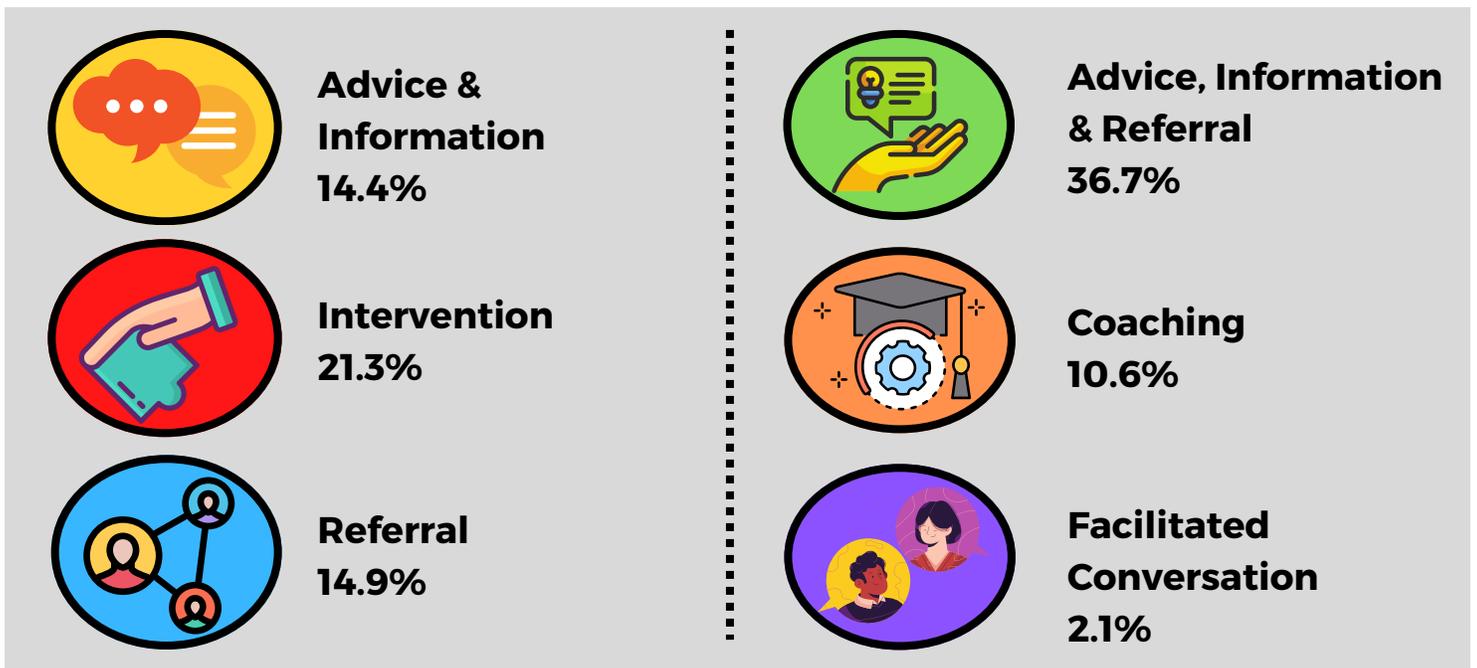
November 2022 was the most active month at the Ombudsperson Office accounting for 13.3% of appointments in the 2022-2023 academic year. Follow-up appointments and meetings were not included in appointment numbers.

SUPPORT PROVIDED

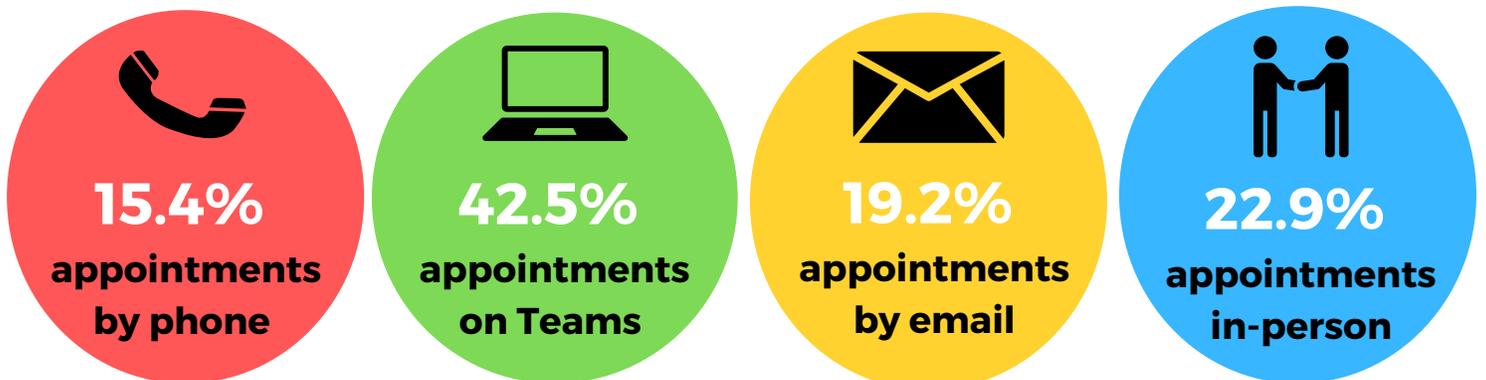
The support provided by the Ombudsperson Office varied depending on the nature of the concern/complaint and the approach to problem-solving the visitor wanted to take.

The main type of support provided to visitors included advice, information, and referral at 36.7% of all appointments.

While not quantified as an approach to support, listening and allowing students to share is the common thread for all visitors.



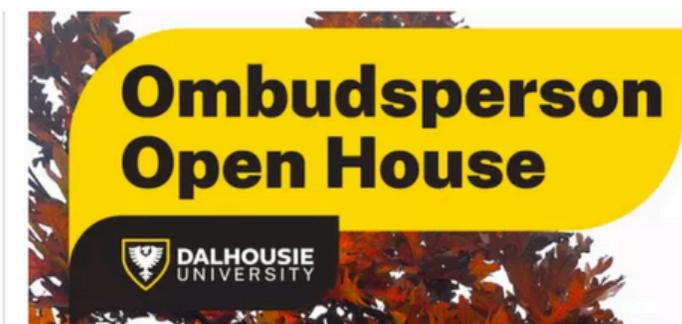
APPOINTMENT TYPE



How a visitor sought to connect varied by each visitor and their preference. The Ombudsperson Office strives to be accessible and connect with students in a variety of ways. Appointments by teams was the main way visitors connected accounting for 42.5% of all appointments. Follow-up appointments/meetings may have had different modes of connecting but that information is not currently captured.

PRESENTATIONS/WORKSHOPS

Ombudsperson Office delivered information sessions monthly (excluding October) for students, staff, instructors, and administrators to connect and promote the Ombudsperson Office. These sessions saw a decline in attendance throughout the year and will be discontinued but will still be available upon request.



In the Fall semester, the Ombudsperson Office hosted an Open House for students, and staff/faculty to learn about the office and make further connections with campus partners.

Ombudsperson Office offered presentations on conflict management and fairness and bias in both the Fall and Winter semesters (once per semester). Feedback provided excellent insight and suggestions for future offerings. A presentation on fairness and bias for students was offered but there was no attendance. The advertisement and outreach for this session will be re-evaluated.

**What a concrete presentation!
Excellent! The BEST in my 30 almost
years at Dalhousie!**

-Participant (Conflict)

**I learned so much! I often say things
"it wouldn't be fair to others if I did
it for you" to students and I will stop
doing this.**

- Participant (Fairness & Bias)

The Ombudsperson Office, in collaboration with Hazel Ling (Social Worker), developed, piloted, and advertised a workshop on Managing Difficult Classroom Behaviour. The workshop provides participants with an understanding of the differences between dangerous, disruptive, and difficult behaviour and how they can best manage it. The workshop design is three hours and provides a mix of content and interactive discussion/group work to allow participants to explore the differences between dangerous, disruptive, and difficult behaviour and how they can best manage it.



Generating knowledge of the workshop was key and we were invited to attend a joint Assistant Dean Academic Council and Student Affairs meeting where we gave a "trailer" of the workshop. Since the initial "trailer" session, we were asked to present the "trailer" with three different teams. To date, we have hosted the full workshop six times in both Halifax and Truro. Our plan is to offer it once a semester with consideration to specific requests.

BUILDING CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

- Financial Services
- Records Management
- Registrar's Office
- Student Conduct Office
- Human Resources
- Centre for Learning and Teaching
- Student Accessibility Centre
- International Centre
- Faculty Associate/Assitant Deans and Student Affairs Offices

Consultations are a pivotal component to the work at the Ombudsperson Office. It is important to highlight consultations and acknowledge the willingness of others to follow-up and share their expertise and knowledge.

Participation in campus events is a priority for the Ombudsperson Office to increase awareness of the office and make connections with students.

Additionally, being involved facilitates connections with campus services/supports to learn, and stay current with changes and upcoming projects/work.



- Reconciliation Education Certificate
- Clifton Strengths Finder
- Unconscious Bias Certificate
- Accommodate Software Introduction
- Effectively Setting Boundaries
- Cleaning Up Shared Drive
- Role of Curriculum in Combating Racism Panel Discussion

Professional Development is a key priority to ensure up to date knowledge. Learning assures growth and the opportunity to better serve students.

TRENDS

Your friendly attitude and clear communication are really appreciated.
-Visitor

A connection to the Ombudsperson's Office offers visitors a safe space to voice complaints/concerns. Feeling valued and heard better positions visitors to advocate for themselves and utilize resources to problem solve.

Not all complaints/concerns brought to the Ombudsperson's Office involved a problem-solving approach. Some provided an avenue for visitors to share experiences and participate in the inner workings of the university.

Complaints/concerns while opportunities to support problem solving also present an opportunity to understand experiences which impact recommendations.

The examination of trends provides valuable information to the Ombudsperson resulting in well-informed recommendations to the University and Dalhousie Student Union. The sharing of concerns/complaints by visitors ideally situates the Ombudsperson to identify trends with the potential to impact policies, processes, and practices at the University.

Student Engagement and Participation in Providing Feedback

The Ombudsperson observed that student visitors didn't fully understand their rights and responsibilities as related to the sharing of feedback for academic and interpersonal complaints/concerns.

Through communications, a trend emerged of students not engaging or sharing their experiences and not providing feedback through the appropriate processes available.

Students can connect with their instructors and/or department chairs to share informal feedback to discuss their course experiences. This informal approach can facilitate better communication between students and instructors and is a constructive approach available to students. A more formalized process for students to provide anonymous feedback is through the Student Learning Experience Questionnaire (SLEQ). The Student Feedback on Learning Experiences Policy addresses that student voices are important to understanding learning experiences. However, a trend experienced at the Ombudsperson Office was a lack of understanding from students on why providing feedback through the SLEQ matters, how it is used, and who reviews the evaluations.

A study by Davison & Price (2009) found that students reviewed the website Rate My Professor (RMP) as a credible resource for students to choose and understand an instructor. Forums such as Rate My Professor are places students go for information, but feedback is not contextualized. The value of RMP is in its accessibility to students not in the

content/feedback shared.

Considering the intersection between Student Feedback on Learning Experiences Policy which includes the SLEQ and the pending implementation of the Holistic Evaluation of Teaching Policy, there is an emerging opportunity to increase institutional transparency for students as well as encourage their involvement. The ability for students to share and voice their learning experiences is essential to providing instructors with the insight to better understand the student perspective (Said & Vu, 2021). Whether through informal dialogue with instructors, or anonymously through the SLEQ, students can contribute as part of the University.

By acknowledging the value of student feedback as part of the evaluation process and sharing constructive feedback, there exists an opportunity to support institutional transparency.

Visitor Example: A visitor expressed frustration and disappointment about course material and with the instructor. The visitor utilized reviews from "rate my professor" to reinforce their experience and share concerns of unfairness. Rate My Professor was shared as evidence of

I am really glad to have had the chance to connect and talk to you. Thank you once again for your guidance and support. It is really appreciated.

-Visitor

academic and interpersonal concerns.

Leave of Absence Requests for Undergraduate Students

The experience with undergraduate students requesting a leave of absence emerged this year. At present, there does not exist a University-wide process for undergraduate students to request a leave. However, within the university, some faculties have a process for students to make such requests (Faculty of Graduate Studies, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Medicine, and Faculty of Health).

There is an approach to registration at the university that enables a student to not register for two consecutive terms without penalty. Following these terms, students would need to register. If a student does not register they are required to re-apply to the University.

With the absence of an approach and process, for domestic or international students, there are challenges with inconsistency and transparency for a student to know their rights and responsibilities. The result is a gap in student support, as well as support for staff, instructors, and administrators.

The consideration for undergraduate international students requesting a leave of absence has particular relevance to their student lives. Considering immigration policies including study permits, post-graduate work permits, and permanent residency requests, the experience for undergraduate

international students can have far-reaching implications and need particular consideration.

The Department of Immigration, Refugees, Citizenship Canada (IRCC) provides guidance and direction on authorized leaves from study and specifies the circumstances for which leave is permitted, such as medical reasons or pregnancy, family emergency, death or illness of a family member, and any other type of leave the school authorizes. At present, there is no direction on the types of leave permitted by Dalhousie for undergraduate international students except for students studying in the Faculty of Health.

It is incumbent for Dalhousie University to complete and submit compliance reports to the IRCC, including authorized leaves. There is no current process, however, to manage such requests. With the adoption of the new international student billing framework at Dalhousie, there is an opportunity to be proactive rather than reactive and to consider implications for undergraduate international students who require a leave.

While the experience for international students requires specific considerations given the complexity of immigration policies, a consistent and transparent process concerning leaves for domestic students also needs to be considered.

Implications of leave, for both domestic and international students, can affect degree trajectory, finances, and scholarships/awards. For undergraduate

international students, it can impact their ability to study at Dalhousie and remain in Canada.

Visitor Example: An undergraduate student visitor sought guidance on requesting a leave of absence. The visitor was not aware if it was possible to request a leave and wanted to pursue it. Following several consultations with various offices and individuals, I was able to share who the student should reach out to make their request. There was nothing formalized to guide the student through the appropriate process.

Addressing and Acknowledging Rights

In the 2021-22 annual report, a systemic trend in providing information/resources to students and gatekeeping processes was identified. At the time no recommendation(s) were brought forward but a recognition that a trend such as this requires further attention and understanding.

Throughout this year this trend continued to be observed in complaints/concerns shared by visitors when outreaching on resources and options available to problem solve. Fairness does not mean a person receives the outcome they want

Thank you for being there for me. Your willingness to genuinely listen meant a great deal to me, and I am grateful for your time and attention.
- Visitor

but it does require processes should be transparent and consistent. Fair processes should allow someone to have a forum to be heard (procedural fairness) and ensure decisions are made without bias and align with policies and procedures (substantive fairness) as well as consider individual/party circumstances where individuals are treated with respect (relational fairness).

When students seek guidance and direction, honesty is imperative. Honesty means providing clarity with processes/policies and drawing awareness to rights and potential options. Sharing information with a student allows them to make informed decisions and supports autonomy. In withholding options or managing what is shared, it can have the effect of gatekeeping. Gatekeeping is further impacted by power dynamics which may influence the information shared and support offered. It is essential when a student is seeking advice to be attentive to their inquiry and not to minimize or portray processes as no-win situations which may curtail student rights and imply a process is predetermined, unfair, and locked in.

Honesty does not mean giving false hope but affirming processes are fair, impartial, and unbiased. If gatekeeping of options occurs, even if unintentional, we are doing a disservice to the rights of students and to the processes which the University upholds.

Visitor Example: When connecting with a student visitor on available options to

them they shared they were told they had the right to appeal but appealing would not be successful. The information on how to appeal was not shared with the student. Student identified feeling crushed that they could not appeal although there was an option to appeal.

Final Thoughts

The Ombudsperson Office recognizes trends and patterns as opportunities to enact change and utilize visitor complaints/concerns as a means to improve support and service.

The first pillar in the Third Century Promise addresses exceptional student experience, and the success of our students as the highest obligation and reason for Dalhousie's existence and purpose. The work of the Ombudsperson Office aligns with this pillar by providing support to students to navigate their rights and responsibilities as well as bringing forward recommendations to the Dalhousie community to consider student experience.

Trends and patterns guide the work of the Ombudsperson Office to make recommendations as well as focus on providing student service that recognizes student voice and experience.



**I want to thank you
for all your help in
this entire situation.
-Visitor**

RECOMMENDATIONS



Review of Prior Recommendations

In the 2021-2022 annual report, recommendations were provided with a focus on the syllabus policy and syllabi education.

For the 2022-2023 academic year, course complaints/concerns accounted for 43.9% of academic complaints. These complaints/concerns included the syllabus, concerns with communication, miscommunication, and course delivery (lectures, following up with grades, scheduling tests, etc.).

The strike during the Fall 2022 semester provides context to understanding academic complaints and was impactful to both students and instructors. The strike required changes and pivots to course delivery which affected students and thus the complaints/concerns brought forward. The strike brought forward and highlighted that clarity is still needed in terms of the syllabus policy and syllabus education.

While an update on the syllabus policy will not be conducted for a few years, the previous recommendations are still relevant to both students and instructors. The previous recommendations recognize that anomalous experiences, like the strike, can impact student experience and are still valid for consideration. Course complaints this year (as noted)

accounted for the majority of academic complaints/concerns brought forward by visitors and still require attention.

Active steps will be taken when disseminating and sharing the 2022-2023 annual report to review the prior recommendations to maintain their efficacy. These recommendations need to continue to be considered as they remain valid for our students and instructors.

Considerations to 2022-2023 Recommendations

Recommendations have been formulated based on the trends that emerged from visitor complaints/concerns throughout the 2022-2023 academic year. In sharing recommendations, the intent is to acknowledge the trends observed and provide recommendations for consideration to the University community. More importantly, recommendations present an opportunity to identify gaps, areas of consideration, and to learn from visitor experiences.

Recommendations are not simply about identifying problems but opening a dialogue to allow for collaboration and conversation. The implementation of recommendations falls out of the purview of the Ombudsperson Office but it is the hope of the Ombudsperson Office that recommendations will generate discussion and consideration toward the

trends in visitor experiences.

The recommendations proposed in this annual report focus on the trends and patterns highlighted. The recommendations recognize the intersections of support and service which exists within the University and the importance of collaboration. While recommendations have been formalized in this report, the Ombudsperson Office recognizes that the method and approach to the potential implementation of recommendations will vary and pivot based on discussion and collaboration.

Recommendation #1: Student Engagement and Participation in Providing Feedback

This recommendation aligns with the complaints/concerns shared this year by student visitors to the Ombudsperson Office relating to academic and interpersonal course experiences. Student visitors reported a lack of engagement with both informal and formal processes in expressing their feedback. Utilizing the website Rate My Professor was referenced on multiple occasions as a means to reinforce their own complaints/concerns.

When focusing on student engagement, inclusion, and accessibility we can consider the opportunities and challenges to engage the students to participate in providing feedback. This may include finding ways for students to learn about informal and formal feedback processes, how information is used, and who uses

the information.

Student engagement and awareness in providing constructive feedback benefits not only students but instructors and administrators in understanding student learning experiences.

Recommendation #2: Leave of Absence Requests for Undergraduate Students

In acknowledging there are informal practices for leave of absence as well as intersections of service and support in which leaves of absence can impact a student, it opens up an opportunity to examine and address a facet of student life that can have benefits and challenges.

A leave of absence framework is a complex undertaking for both domestic and international undergraduate students. Consideration of the implications of a leave of absence (scholarships/awards, access to University services, etc.) require clarity for students and administrators. For International students, justification to the IRCC is essential to taking a leave and continuing their study permit in Canada.

While there exists mechanisms for short term absences to support students such as the student declaration of absence or through the Student Accommodation Policy, long term absences are informal and unstructured (not register for two consecutive semesters).

The development of a leave of absence

framework recognizes the intricacy of circumstances for undergraduate students and the implications. A framework could provide an intentional process to direct students through the correct channels and with the appropriate supports/resources to take a leave which may also impact student retention. As an added consideration, the development of a leave of absence framework can provide structure and direction for administrators and faculties with a focus on consistency and transparency.

Systemic Consideration: Addressing and Acknowledging Rights

While there is no specific recommendation in terms of addressing and acknowledging student rights, the Ombudsperson Office recognizes this as a systemic issue it requires attention and consideration.

As such, the Ombudsperson Office will endeavour to address gatekeeping and reinforce students' rights and access through the Ombudsperson Office tool kit, presentations/workshops, and through the dissemination of this annual report. By drawing attention to these experiences for visitors we can begin to create a dialogue on how to best ensure transparency in communication and ensure messages on rights and access are consistent.

While gatekeeping is often not intentional, the experience and interaction can impact students engaging

in their rights.

By understanding processes and policies relevant to a student's circumstances, they are better equipped to make informed decisions. Fairness does not require that a person receives the outcome they want, but acknowledges that transparency is imperative.

Final Thoughts

These recommendations represent an opportunity to give voice to the experiences shared by visitors to the Ombudsperson Office. When complaints/concerns are reviewed as opportunities to adapt and address visitor experiences, rather than focus on what may not have gone right, there is a real chance to affect positive change.

This annual report will be made available through the Ombudsperson website for the Dalhousie community. Presentations on the annual report will be held to share report information, recommendations, and to promote transparency.

I really just want to sincerely thank you for the time and support you gave me in this process; it helped me better understand my rights as a student in this complex situation, and, more importantly, validated my experience and the concerns I had.

-Visitor

STRATEGIC & OPERATIONAL PLANNING 2023-2024

**1**

**Annual Report
Dissemination and
Consultations**

2

**Dalhousie Student Union
(DSU) Collaboration**

3

Tool Kit Awareness

4

**Interim/Transition
Planning**

5

Visitor Evaluations

One

To disseminate and consult on the Ombudsperson Office annual report with faculties and support services. This intentional approach to sharing information can bring awareness to the work of the office and recommendations as well as expand on collaborations and connections.

Two

Seek opportunities to collaborate with the DSU and leadership to support fairness in policies/processes and in providing student support.

Three

Create opportunities to bring awareness of the toolkit through tabling events, presentations, and email.

Four

In recognition of the Ombudsperson Office as a single-person office, develop an interim/transition plan to ensure support for students continues and is seamless.

Five

Develop an evaluation for visitors to the Ombudsperson Office to share their feedback and experience to improve service and support.

Thank You

On behalf of myself and the Ombudsperson Office, I would like to extend a gracious thank you to the Ombudsperson Advisory Committee members for their insight, advice, support, and expertise: Rick Ezekiel, Bob Mann, Patricia Laws, Isabelle French, Lisa DeLong, Aparna Mohan, Sydney Keyamo, and Mariam Knakriah.

I would like to thank Dalhousie students and visitors for engaging within the University in sharing their experiences and seeking to understand problem-solving approaches.

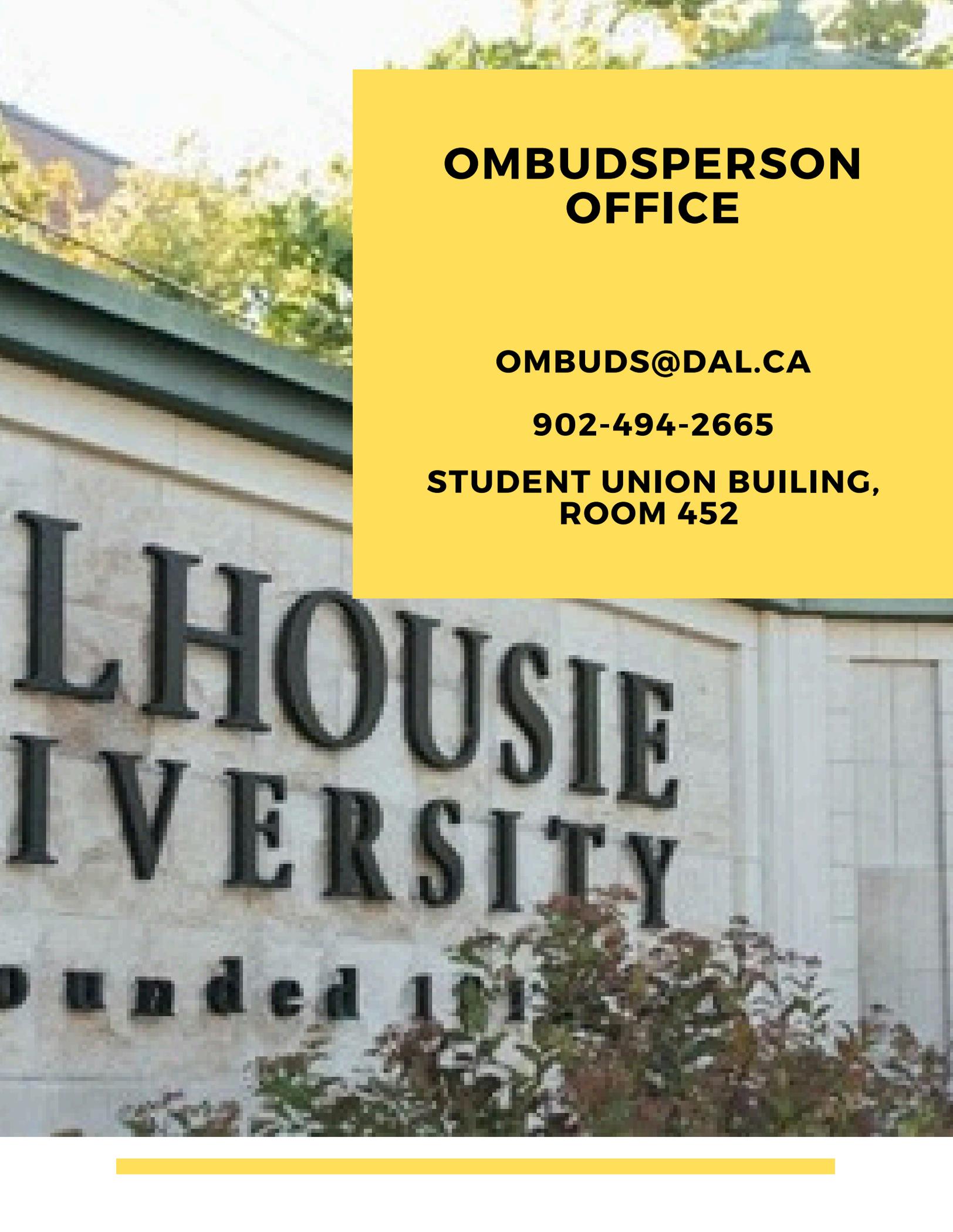
While the list would fill this page, I am grateful to the many Student Affairs Offices, Academic Faculties and Departments, University Administrators, Legal Counsel, Human Rights and Equity, Centre for Learning and Teaching, and Dalhousie Student Advocacy Services for sharing their wisdom, their time, and being open to collaborating and communicating.

I would be remiss without extending a genuine thank you to both Jennifer Murray and Jacqui Langille for their ongoing support and championing the Ombudsperson Office and myself.

Finally, I would like to thank both Dr. Kim Brooks and Dr. Frank Harvey for their support in encouraging collaboration, independence, and supporting the office as a hub of support for student rights and responsibilities.



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