

Trends in Faculty & Staff Concerns: The View from the Ombuds Office



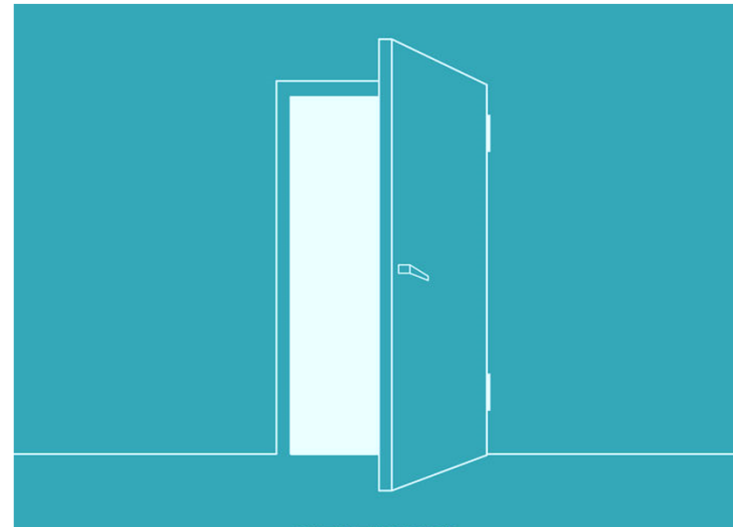
Presented to the Faculty Senate
by Diane J. Levin, J.D., Ombuds for Faculty and Staff
November 17, 2021



Ombuds for Faculty and Staff

A confidential resource for Northeastern employees since 2011

- Provides a safe space to informally raise and address concerns off the record
- Available as a first resort or last resort – at any point in the life cycle of an issue





Ombuds Office Practice Standards

- Confidentiality
- Independence
- Neutrality
- Informality

Ombuds Office Data Tracking

Purpose:

- Understand how visitors use the Ombuds Office
- Identify patterns in concerns relating to University practices, policies, and climate
- Provide feedback to the University about systemic trends

**To protect visitor privacy,
only non-identifying information is collected**



Ombuds Office Data Tracking, continued

What information is tracked:

- Number of visitors
- Visitor affiliation (faculty, staff, other)
- Referral source
- Types of concerns visitors raise
- Services provided by the Ombuds Office



Visitor Numbers Overall

Fiscal Year	Faculty	Staff	Anonymous/ Other	Total Visitors
2018	88	115	4	207
2019	80	167	24	271
2020	93	202	26	321
2021	102	284	21	410
2022 (7/1 – 10/31/21)	46	91	5	142
GRAND TOTALS	409	862	80	1,351



VISITOR CONCERNS BY FISCAL YEAR (through 10/31/21)

FISCAL YEAR	NUMBER OF VISITORS	TOTAL CONCERNS RAISED BY VISITORS
2018	207	335
2019	271	477
2020	321	653
2021	410	920
2022	142	333
TOTALS	1,351	2,718



A Look Back: Major Themes in FY 2021

- Organizational climate and employee morale
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion issues in hierarchical and peer relationships
- COVID-related safety and health concerns
- Perceived misalignment between Northeastern values and practices



Top Concerns of Faculty Visitors in FY 2022

Organizational Climate

- Responsibility of leadership to address climate, morale
- Impact of communication and messaging on trust and confidence

Values and Culture

- Degree of alignment between NU values and practices
- One Northeastern and non-tenured faculty experience

Hierarchical Relationships

- Fear of retaliation for raising concerns or questions
- Experiencing intimidating behavior or microaggressions in interpersonal interactions



Top Staff Concerns in FY 2022

Hierarchical Relationships

- Bullying or retaliatory behavior
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion concerns

Organizational Climate

- Staff retention and morale
- Impact of communication / messaging on trust and confidence

Values and Culture

- Degree of alignment between NU values and practices
- Impact of policies and policy changes



Ombuds Contact Information

Diane J. Levin, J.D.

Office: 617.373.3362

Mobile: 351.207.0220

Email: Ombuds@northeastern.edu

Appointment Hours:

Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday

8:00 am – 5:00 pm ET



NORTHEASTERN •