

Annual Report on Complaints

South Texas College Office of Student Rights and
Responsibilities – Ombudsman Annual Report

The Office of the Ombuds Services is required to submit an Annual Report on the performance of the Ombuds functions at South Texas College. The 2016-2017 Annual Report provides details of the number of cases, and highlights the most significant cases of the year.

Summary

The Ombudsperson (Ombuds) provides guidance to the South Texas College community regarding College policy, procedures and processes to assist and counsel students in resolving disputes and conflicts in a way that facilitates individual responsibility, contributes to their maturation, and promotes the development of self-advocacy skills. The primary role of the ombudsperson is to serve as a go between or intermediary between parties.

There are a variety of different types of Ombuds programs; they include the Classical Ombudsman Program, the Organizational Ombudsman Program, and the Advocacy Ombudsman Program. There are many different models currently in use worldwide. These offices and their function can vary significantly depending on the specific organization or the constituents who utilize the office. Programs often adapt to fit the needs of the organization; there are some common elements that exist in all Ombuds programs.

The Classical Ombudsman Program is often created by Legislative or Executive authorization, the Organizational Ombudsman Program, is usually found in corporate and academic settings, and the Advocacy Ombudsman Program, is most often used in long-term care settings or programs involving patients or persons with disabilities.

The Classical Ombuds Program model includes the Legislative Ombuds and the Executive Ombuds. The Legislative Ombuds is established by the legislature and is part of the legislative branch that receives complaints from the general public or internally. The Executive Ombuds may be located in either the public or private sector, this office receives complaints from the general public or internally. The Organizational Ombuds Program model includes the College and University Ombuds Programs and Corporate Ombuds Programs. The College and University Ombuds Programs and Corporate Ombuds Program models are typically used to facilitate fair and equitable resolutions of concerns that arise within the organization. The Advocacy Ombuds Program model includes Long-term Care. The Long-term Care Ombuds is typically used to advocate on behalf of a population that is designated in their office charter.

Students contact the Ombuds to inquire about situations they are experiencing while attending South Texas College. In 2015-2016 about 3% of the contacts the Office of the Ombuds received were to ask a question or find information; while in 2016-2017 about 19% of the contacts the Office of the Ombuds received were to ask a question or find information. An Ombuds meets with the student, gets an idea of what the concerns are and then explains what policies and procedures, and processes that are relevant and discuss possible options. A key service provided for these cases is conflict skills assessment; a process whereby the student is provided tips and strategies to help them resolve issues on their own.

It is important to point out that in many of these instances students rarely request to move into a more formal process. These cases are closed out and in most instances the student does not pursue the issues any further.

In 2015-2016 about 49% of the contacts the Office of the Ombuds received the student indicated that they had a complaint against a faculty or staff member, while in 2016-2017 about 10% indicated that they had a complaint against a faculty or staff member. In these cases, students were referred to the online reporting portal, where reports are received by Human Resources.

The list below reflects the number of cases the Ombudsperson saw each year since fall of 2005.

Year	Total Cases/ Contacts
2005-2006	75
2006-2007	182
2007-2008	127
2008-2009	161
2009-2010	193
2010-2011	192
2011-2012	295
2012-2013	235
2013-2014	186
2014-2015	566
2015-2016	445
2016-2017	690

Placing the College on Notice

In accordance with the International Ombudsman Association Code of Ethics, the Ombudsperson is an informal resource, does not participate in any formal adjudicative or administrative procedure related to concerns brought to their attention.

Under Section 3.2, 3.4, and 3.7, the Ombudsperson reserves the right and authority to redact personally identifiable information to protect the rights and confidentiality of those using the office.

Additionally, in accordance with the International Ombudsman Association Standards of Practice, Section 3.8, the Ombudsperson does not accept **NOTICE** for the college. However, the Ombudsperson reserves the right and authority to place the college on **NOTICE** when deemed appropriate.

Size of Caseload

When comparing the caseload size of the Ombuds to other Colleges and Universities, we found that The University of Texas for example had a total of 361 cases for the 2015-2016 academic year.

The University of Iowa has a total student body population of about 33,334 students. For the academic year of 15-16 the Student Ombuds had 160 cases.

North Carolina State University has a total student body population of about 32,000. For the academic year 15-16 the ombudsperson saw 650 cases.

Grand Valley State University has a total student body population of about 25,500. For the academic year 16-17 the ombudsperson saw 166 cases.

Explanation of Services & Presentations Provides

The Office of the Ombuds provides a number of services designed to help students, faculty and staff resolve their issues in a peaceful manner that will result in a mutually beneficial outcome. These services include:

Services Provided

- **Informal Notice or Inquiry/ Consultations**

Referrals (complaint, grade appeal) when students simply wish to have a sounding board for their concerns or to have policy, procedure or process explained or clarified. The Ombudsperson also provides conflict coaching, a process whereby the student is provided tips and strategies to help them resolve issues on their own.

- **Shuttle Diplomacy**

This process includes the use of shuttle diplomacy; communication between individual parties is conducted by carrying messages back and forth. This technique is used when parties have vastly different daily schedules or when anger and tension levels are so high that it would not be appropriate to have the parties meet face to face.

- **Conflict Management Coaching**

This is a specialized one-on-one process that helps clients optimize the way they engage in their interpersonal disputes. The CINERGY® model of conflict management integrates executive coaching, conflict management and neuroscience principles. Conflict Coaching is a dynamic seven stage process that is specifically designed to help clients improve their conflict management skills and abilities according to each person's individual and specific goals.

- **Mediation**

A form of alternative dispute resolution or ADR is a way to resolve disputes between two parties. A trained, a third party, the mediator, facilitates the meeting of the parties and assists them in communicating, negotiating, and reaching an agreement. Under Texas State law, Texas Alternative Dispute Resolution Act, Chapter 154 Alternative Dispute Resolution Procedures, mediators are required to complete a 40 hour basic mediation training course.

The term mediation refers to any instance when a neutral third party helps others reach agreement. The process is private and confidential, and in some case may be enforced by law. Participation in mediation is voluntary and should never be forced.

- **Group Facilitation and Strategic Planning**

This process is designed to assist student organizations and other groups run productive and impartial meetings. Group facilitation and strategic planning serves the needs of a group of individuals who have a common purpose but may be having issues with decision making, solving a problem, or simply the exchange ideas and information.

- **Talking Circles/ Restorative Justice**

This process is a traditional instrument for dealing with the things that interfere with the normal everyday concerns of a person or their community whether the concern is trivial or serious in nature. The talking circle has many applications including, resolving conflicts, misconceptions, disagreements or deeper problems.

Trainings and Presentations

- **Faculty and Staff Conflict Resolution Training**

Participants learn to manage the differences that impair teamwork, quality, decision-making, job motivation, and cooperation. This training is designed for any employees who work interdependently with others. It is considered a life skill and a core workplace competency that can also be used to enhance personal relationships. Completion of training may qualify the individual to receive CEU Credit.

- **Conflict Resolution**

This presentation provides participants information to help them begin to resolve conflicts on their own. The participants learn basic conflict management skills, including dealing with angry and aggressive people.

- **Cyber Bullying**

Increasingly students are becoming more and more vulnerable to cyberbullying through email, cell phones, pager text messages, instant messaging, and chat rooms. They are finding these hurtful tactics and messages that are intended to place harm on their social media accounts. It is important to note that cyberbullying, like any other form of bullying hurts relationships, and is about power, and control. This type of bullying enables bullies to hide behind the anonymity of the Internet provides. This presentation looks at how cyberbullying effects individuals in our community and offers ways to combat this behavior.

- **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment covers unwanted and offensive sexual advances or of sexually offensive remarks or acts. These acts can be perpetrated by someone in a supervisory position or when acquiescence to such behavior is a condition of continued employment, promotion, or satisfactory evaluation. This presentation looks at the types of sexual harassment and offers advised and information on how to combat this behavior and when and where to report it.

- **Diversity Awareness Profile (DAP)**

The Diversity Awareness Profile, commonly known as DAP, is a self-assessment tool designed to help individuals improve working relationships by increasing their awareness of their behavior toward people and how it affects them and how individual's behavior affects others.

- **Intercultural Conflict Style (ICS) Inventory**

The Intercultural Conflict Style (ICS) Inventory assessment is designed to identify core approaches for resolving conflict across cultural and ethnic differences. With the Intercultural Conflict Style (ICS) Certification program, participants learn the five intercultural conflict skill sets identified by Dr. Hammer that are most effective in bridging conflict style differences across cultural communities.

- **Student Academy**

The Student Academy consists of 12 presentations on various Human Relations and Conflict Resolution skills to aid students as they navigate their college years. The Student Academy is divided into 2 parts, where students may receive a certificate of completion after participating in each session. The Student Academy is meant to be informative, interactive and to create lasting friendships.

Contact Categories

Informal Notice or Inquiry/Consultations:

This process is similar to the appreciative inquiry in that it creates energy and pace, improves morale and transforms working relationships. Students are provided a forum to discuss their concerns and provided with options to help resolve their issues. This process does not always result in the party entering into a formal process.

Mediation/Facilitation:

Are processes designed to help parties in a disagreement to hear one another, to minimize the harm that can come from a disagreement and to maximize any area of agreement. Mediation is a structured process in which an impartial person, the mediator, facilitates communication between the parties to promote reconciliation, settlement, or an understanding between them. Facilitation is a process that is used to add content, process, and structure to meet the needs of an individual, group or team.

Conflict Coaching:

Conflict Coaching is a specialized one-on-one process that helps clients optimize the way they engage in their interpersonal disputes. The Conflict Coach follows a set of strategies used to support peoples' ability to engage in, manage, or productively resolve conflict.

Title IX Pregnancy/Parenting Consultations:

Students are informed about their rights and responsibilities under Title IX in regards to pregnancy and parenting while in school. Students are also referred to the various services offered that are available both on campus and in the community.

Title IX Victim Advocacy Support:

This is a service provided for students who are victims/survivors of crime both on campus and in the community, where they are provided with information about their rights, the services offered on campus, and services offered in the community.

Complaint:

A student complaint is an informal process used to express dissatisfaction with a procedure or policy, address an issue, communicate the actions of an individual, or otherwise make your opinion known. This process does not always result in the party entering into a formal process.

2016-2017 Office Activities

In 2016-2017, The Office of the Ombuds gave many presentations to various departments and student groups across campus. In addition to these presentations, which are designed to give the campus community information about our office, the Office of the Ombuds information booths and each campus on a monthly basis. The Office of the Ombuds also provided Part 1 & 2 of the Student Academy at the Pecan Campus during both the Fall and Spring semesters.

In addition, the Ombuds attended several training and certification courses, including Internal Investigation training, the Annual NaBITA (National Behavioral Intervention Team Association) Conference, aTIXa Civil Rights Investigator Level I training and 504 Coordinator Certification training, 17th Annual Sexual Assault Conference, and Restorative Justice-Talking Circles Foundational training.

Also, the Ombuds served as members of the Human Trafficking Coalition and the Victims of Family Violence Task Force. The Ombuds also participated on various Hiring Committees throughout the year for South Texas College.

There were 690 total contacts for the academic year Fall 16 to SS III 17.

Breakdown by term:

201710	285
201720	294
201730	19
201740	92

Breakdown by term & Gender:

	Male	Female	Other
201710	52	231	2
201720	46	247	1
201730	14	5	0
201740	82	10	0

Breakdown by campus:

Pecan	315
Starr	15
Mid-Valley	90
Nursing Allied Health	71
Technology	32
Internet	152
High School	13
La Joya Teaching Center	1
Pharr Center	1

Breakdown by campus & Gender:

	Male	Female	Other
Pecan	57	256	2
Starr	3	12	0
Mid-Valley	6	84	0
Nursing Allied Health	6	65	0
Technology	20	12	0
Internet	17	135	0
High School	3	9	1
La Joya Teaching Center	0	1	0
Pharr Center	1	0	0

Party Involved:

Faculty/ Instruction	569
Staff	15
Another Student	51
Specific Department	32
Policy/ Procedure	0
Safety/ Security	0
Service Related	1
Facility	0
Non-Student	12
Unknown	10

Multiple Mentions

- There were 59 faculty members who were mentioned 2 times.
- There were 38 faculty members who were mentioned 3 times.
- There were 16 faculty members who were mentioned 4 times.
- There were 5 faculty members who were mentioned 5 times.
- There was 1 faculty members who were mentioned 6 times.
- There was 1 faculty members who were mentioned 7 times.
- There was 1 faculty members who were mentioned 8 times.
- There were 3 departments who were mentioned 2 times.
- There was 1 department that was mentioned 4 times.
- There was 1 department that was mentioned 7 times.

Requested Service:

Informal Notice/Consultation	131
*Referrals	150
Conflict Coaching	2
Title IX: Requesting Pregnancy Accommodations	442
Title IX: Victim Advocacy Support	44
Complaint	71

Breakdown by enrollment status:

Has taken <30 hours	269
Has taken >80 hours	91
Has taken 30 hours – 80 hours	305
Transfer Student	1
Returning after one term	0
Continuing Education	1
Dual Enrollment	19
Community Member	2
Frequently Complaining Student	2

Breakdown by enrollment status & gender:

	Male	Female	Other
Has taken <30 hours	47	222	0
Has taken >80 hours	20	71	0
Has taken 30 hrs – 80 hrs	40	263	2
Transfer Student	0	1	0
Returning after one term	0	0	0
Continuing Education	0	1	1
Dual Enrollment	4	14	1
Community Member	1	1	0
Frequently Complaining Student	2	0	0

Informal Notice or Inquiry/ Consultation

131

An Informal Notice/Consultation is a process by which a student informs the Office of the Ombuds/Ombudsperson about a situation that they are a party to and that they are concerned about.

A representative from the Office of the Ombuds meets with the student face to face, gets an idea of what the concerns are and then explains what policies and procedures are relevant and discuss possible options.

These contacts do not result in the student entering into a formal process. In some cases the student simply wants to let an individual at the college know, i.e. to place the college on notice. Because the Office of the Ombuds/Ombudsperson is a neutral, it cannot accept notice on behalf of the college. Students are advised of this and provided information about what steps they should take, including Collaborative Problem Solving Groups, Facilitated Dialogue or Shuttle Diplomacy, Mediation, or when appropriate filing a complaint.

Should the Office of the Ombuds notice a pattern or trend in their contact data they may place the College and individual department heads on notice. This is done by the Office of the Ombuds compiling an Individual Reference & Interaction Summary, in the past we have called the summary an Inquiry Report. However, do to confusion with the word report, and an assumption that a formal investigation had taken place and the individual referenced in that document was found guilty the document has been renamed Individual Reference & Interaction Summary or IRIS and the Office of the Ombuds is no longer providing supervisory staff with recommendations on how to proceed with the information or how issues can be resolved.

The summaries will continue to be forwarded to individual department heads, including the Director of Human Resources and the Employee relations Office and potentially the Title IX Coordinator when appropriate. This is in accordance with Section 1, subsection 1.3 and 1.4 of the Standards of Practice of the International Ombudsman Association.

Additionally, students who prefer not to follow formal college procedure or processes have advised that:

- There is a fear retaliation
- The college/ administration will not do anything
- They do not believe anything will change
- No one will believe them if they come forward
- No wanting to get people in trouble
- Not wanting anyone (fellow students) to know
- Planned to drop the course anyway
- Not enough proof or documentation (concerns about intrusive questioning)

Request for Mediation/ Facilitation /Conflict Coaching **152**

These students requested or were referred to alternative dispute resolution services, which included conversations with the students, faculty and staff members face to face to resolve their issues.

Referrals **148**

This process includes an outside party in the role of intermediary between or among the principal parties to a dispute, and may not include direct principal-to-principal contact.

Mediation **2**

This process is a form of alternative dispute resolution, and is a way of resolving disputes between two or more parties with concrete effects. The mediator may assists parties to reach an agreement, have a broader understanding of different perspectives, and to clarify issues that may have never come to light.

Conflict Coaching **2**

Conflict Coaching is a specialized one-on-one process that helps clients optimize the way they engage in their interpersonal disputes.

Title IX: Title IX Pregnancy/Parenting Consultations **442**

There were 442 instances where students requested pregnancy/delivery accommodations under Title IX.

Division	Total	Department
SAEM	2	Admissions and Records
	1	Counseling and Student Disability Services
LASS	5	Developmental Reading
	3	Integrated Reading and Writing

11	College Success
47	CRIM/ PSYC/ SOCI/ ANTH/SW
33	World Languages/ASL/HUMA/SPAN
2	Kinesiology/Physical Education
4	Philosophy
31	Government
15	History
20	Visual Arts/Music
30	English
11	Child Development
9	Education

NAH

15	LVN
42	ADN
1	MAT
4	OTA
2	PHRA
1	RADT
1	HITT

BUSINESS/ TECHNOLOGY

8	Administrative Office Careers
14	Business Administration
7	Automotive Technology and Diesel
2	Economics
3	Culinary Arts

MATH/ SCIENCE

28	Math
22	Developmental Math
39	Biology
8	Physics/Chemistry/Engineering
8	Computer Science
1	Computer Maintenance
4	Information Technology

BACHELORS PROGRAMS 8

Title IX: Victim Advocacy Support

44

There were 44 students who received victims advocacy support services under Title IX.

Complaints

71

A student complaint is an informal process used to express dissatisfaction with a procedure or policy, address an issue, communicate the actions of an individual, or otherwise make your opinion known. This process does not always result in the party entering into a formal process.

SAEM

Admissions and Records	1
Business Office/ Cashiers	1
Counseling/ Advising/ Retention	5
Assessment Center (Testing)	1
Student (Conduct Related)	2

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

LASS

English	11
Integrated Reading and Writing	1
Developmental Reading	1
Developmental English	1
History	2
Visual Arts/ Music	1
World Lang/ASL/HUMA/SPAN	3

NAH

ADN	4
Emergency Medical Tech	3
Radiologic Technology	1

MATH/SCIENCE

Math	6
Developmental Math	4
Computer Science	1
Biology	4
Physics/ Chemistry/ Engineering	3
Computer Maintenance	4

BUSINESS/ TECHNOLOGY

Information Technology	2
Business Administration	3
Automotive Technology and Diesel	3
Culinary Arts	1

BACHELOR PROGRAMS

Technology Management	1
Organizational Leadership	1

International Ombudsman Association Uniform Reporting Categories

The International Ombudsman Association uniform reporting categories help to create an apples to apples comparison from the data collection from year to year and from Ombuds office to office.

Issues that have been brought to the attention of the Office of the Ombuds (including complaints and grade appeals) are related to 7 of the 9 categories as defined by the International Ombudsman Association's uniform Reporting Categories list (Appendix C), they are:

- Section 2. Evaluative Relationships
- Section 3. Peer and Colleague Relationships
- Section 5. Legal, Regulatory, Financial and Compliance
- Section 6. Safety, Health, and Physical Environment
- Section 7. Services/Administrative Issues
- Section 8. Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related
- Section 9. Values, Ethics, and Standards

Section 2. Evaluative Relationships consist of questions, concerns, issues or inquiries arising between people in evaluative relationships such as supervisor-employee or faculty-student.

Section 3. Peer and Colleague Relationships consist of questions, concerns, issues or inquiries involving peers or colleagues who do not have a supervisory-employee or student-professor relationship such as two staff members within the same department or conflict involving members of a student organization.

Section 5. Legal, Regulatory, Financial and Compliance consist of questions, concerns, issues or inquiries that may create a legal risk for the institution or its members if not addressed, including issues related to waste, fraud, or abuse.

Section 6. Safety, Health, and Physical Environment consist of questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about Safety, Health and Infrastructure-related issues.

Section 7. Services/Administrative Issues consist of questions, concerns, issues or inquiries about services or administrative offices including from external parties.

Section 8. Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related consist of questions, concerns, issues or inquiries that relate to the whole or some part of an organization.

Section 9. Values, Ethics, and Standards consist of 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.

Issues under Section 2. Evaluative Relationships consist of or included the following:

- **Priorities, Values, Beliefs**, differences about what should be considered important, or most important, often rooted in ethical or moral beliefs.
- **Respect and Treatment**, demonstrations of inappropriate regard for people, not listening, rudeness, crudeness, etc.

- **Trust and Integrity**, suspicion that others are not being honest, whether or to what extent one wishes to be honest, etc.
- **Communication**, quality and/or quantity of communication.
- **Bullying, Mobbing**, abusive, threatening, and/or coercive behaviors.
- **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.
- **Retaliation**, punitive behaviors for previous actions or comments, whistleblower.
- **Assignments and Schedules**, appropriateness or fairness of tasks, expected volume of work.
- **Feedback**, feedback or recognition given, or responses to feedback received.
- **Consultation**, requests for help in dealing with issues between two or more individuals they supervise or teach or with other unusual situations in evaluative relationships.
- **Performance Appraisal and Grading**, job or academic performance in formal or informal evaluation.
- **Departmental Climate**, prevailing behaviors, norms, or attitudes within a department for which supervisors or faculty have responsibility.
- **Supervisory Effectiveness**, management of department or classroom, failure to address issues.
- **Insubordination**, refusal to do what is asked.
- **Equity of Treatment**, favoritism, one or more individuals receive preferential treatment.

Issues under Section 3. Peer and Colleague Relationships consist of or included the following:

- **Priorities, Values, Beliefs**, differences about what should be considered important, or most important, often rooted in ethical or moral beliefs.
- **Respect and Treatment**, demonstrations of inappropriate regard for people, not listening, rudeness, crudeness, etc.
- **Trust/Integrity**, suspicion that others are not being honest.
- **Reputation**, impact of rumors and/or gossip about professional or personal matters.
- **Communication**, quality and/or quantity of communication.

- **Bullying, Mobbing**, abusive, threatening, and/or coercive behaviors.
- **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.
- **Retaliation**, punitive behaviors for previous actions or comments, whistleblower.
- **Physical Violence**, actual or threats of bodily harm to another.

Issues under Section 5. Legal, Regulatory, Financial and Compliance consist of or included the following:

- **Harassment**, unwelcome physical, verbal, written, e-mail, audio, video, psychological or sexual conduct that creates a hostile or intimidating environment.
- **Disability, Temporary or Permanent, Reasonable Accommodation**, extra time on exams, provision of assistive technology, interpreters, or Braille materials including questions or policies for people with disabilities.
- **Criminal Activity**, threats or crimes planned, observed, or experienced, fraud.
- **Harassment**, unwelcome physical, verbal, written, e-mail, audio, video psychological or sexual conduct that creates a hostile or intimidating environment.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Accessibility**, removal of physical barriers, providing ramps, elevators, etc.
- **Property Damage**, personal property damage, liabilities.

Issues under Section 6. Safety, Health, and Physical Environment consist of or included the following:

- **Ergonomics**, proper set-up of workstation affecting physical functioning.
- **Safety**, physical safety, injury, medical evacuation, meeting federal and state requirements for training and equipment.
- **Physical Working/Living Conditions**, temperature, odors, noise, available space, lighting, etc.

- **Environmental Policies**, policies not being followed, being unfair ineffective, cumbersome.
- **Work Related Stress and Work–Life Balance**, Post-Traumatic Stress, Critical Incident Response, internal/external stress, e.g. divorce, shooting, caring for sick, injured.

Issues under Section 7. Services/Administrative Issues consist of or included the following:

- **Quality of Services**, how well services were provided, accuracy or thoroughness of information, competence, etc.
- **Responsiveness and Timeliness**, time involved in getting a response or return call or about the time for a complete response to be provided.
- **Administrative Decisions and Interpretation and 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 for financial aid, etc.
- **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.

Issues under Section 8. Organizational, Strategic, and Mission Related consist of or included the following:

- **Communication**, content, style, timing, effects and amount of organizational and leader's communication, quality of communication about strategic issues.
- **Change Management**, making, responding or adapting to organizational changes, quality of leadership in facilitating organizational change.
- **Organizational Climate**, issues related to organizational morale and/or capacity for functioning.
- **Leadership and Management**, quality/capacity of management and/or management/leadership decisions, suggested training, reassignments and reorganizations.
- **Communication**, content, style, timing, effects and amount of organizational and leader's communication, quality of communication about strategic issues.
- **Restructuring and Relocation**, issues related to broad scope planned or actual restructuring and/or relocation affecting the whole or major divisions of an organization, e.g. downsizing, off shoring, outsourcing.
- **Organizational Climate**, issues related to organizational morale and/or capacity for functioning.

Issues under Section 9. Values, Ethics, and Standards consist of or included the following:

- **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.
- **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.
- **Values and Culture**, questions, concerns or issues about the values or culture of the organization.

Recommendations from the Office of the Ombuds

Issues with instructors ranged from complaints about instructors ability to teach or their qualifications, confrontations in the classroom, lack of information in the syllabus, being unavailable outside the classroom, rudeness, posting grade in front of the classroom, allegations of sexual harassment or making students feel uncomfortable (looks or facial expressions, standing to close), language barriers, grading issues, and allegations of retaliation. There was also a trend of students reporting perceived unfair treatment when following the chain of command when looking for resolutions to complaints.

The Office of the Ombuds will continue to have a proactive approach to resolving conflict. This will include the following:

1. Continue to provide Student Academy each term
2. Implementation of Office Charter to define roles and responsibilities
3. Holding office hours at each campus to provide services to all South Texas College students
4. Seek and attend various professional development trainings and conferences

Institutional Recommendations:

1. Timely dissemination of correct and valuable information.
 - Add information to the syllabus when possible.
 - Pass out or read information at the beginning or end of class.
2. Revise and update the student complaint process
 - Create a website with clear information on how a student may file a complaint involving a college employee
 - Clarify the appeal process if one of the parties is not satisfied with the outcome
3. Provide mandatory training for all employees who will be handling complaints on how to properly conduct fair, neutral investigations.
 - Clarify the various roles in investigations; for example, the role of the investigator versus the role of the person(s) who decides the outcome
4. Review and update current policy on retaliation
 - Develop a separate, stand-alone policy regarding retaliation
5. Create an Office of Victims Assistance for all members of the South Texas College Community
 - Develop a confidential victim's assistance office that may work in conjunction with the Police Department, Title IX team, various college offices, and the outside community, in order to provide the best services possible for faculty, staff, and students who are victims/survivors of crime.

Appendices

A. **International Ombudsman Association Code of Ethics**

The IOA Code of Ethics provides a common set of professional ethical principles to which members adhere in their organizational Ombudsman practice.

Based on the traditions and values of Ombudsman practice, the Code of Ethics reflects a commitment to promote ethical conduct in the performance of the Ombudsman role and to maintain the integrity of the Ombudsman profession.

https://www.ombudsassociation.org/IOA_Main/media/SiteFiles/IOA_Standards_of_Practice_Oct09.pdf

B. **International Ombudsman Association Standards of Practice**

The IOA Standards of Practice are based upon and derived from the ethical principles stated in the IOA Code of Ethics.

https://www.ombudsassociation.org/IOA_Main/media/SiteFiles/Code_Ethics_1-07.pdf

C. **International Ombudsman Association Uniform Reporting Categories Chart V2**

Serves as a reference tool to help with classifying visitor's questions, concerns, issues or inquiries.

https://www.ombudsassociation.org/IOA_Main/media/SiteFiles/UTFRC-Desk-Reference-v2.pdf