



Student Ombuds Services
Third Annual Summary Report
July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013

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Student Ombuds

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Executive Summary

Student Ombuds Services Third Annual Report July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013



The Office of Student Ombuds Services (SOS) has worked with Cal Poly students since 2010. This summary will reflect on the activities from July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013. The work of SOS is generally accomplished by guiding students to evaluate concerns, to take responsibility for their part in the matter, to explore options, to connect them with the appropriate resources and people, and to create pathways for dialog to promote fairness and minimize future conflicts.

Student Ombuds Services provides a confidential, informal, impartial, and independent resource for students to seek guidance regarding a wide range of conflicts and issues. As a confidential resource, the Ombuds does not serve as a Campus Security Authority for purposes of the Clery Act nor does the Ombuds report issues for Title IX. The office is an alternative to existing “formal” processes as it is not a university “office of notice.” The office adheres to the International Ombudsman Association Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics.

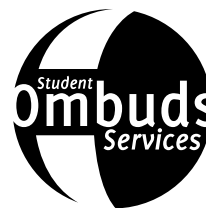
Extensive SOS marketing has permeated the campus. The success of these marketing efforts is reflected in the steady growth in campus awareness and utilization of SOS. Below are the year to year comparisons that demonstrate an increase in nearly all categories regarding contacts with the Ombuds Office. The dramatic increase of more than 100% between years one and two was likely attributed to a greater awareness on campus about the office and services. The growth pattern persists at nearly 30% in almost all categories between years two and three. Such increased use affirms the Ombuds Office as a valued campus student resource that helps support overall university academic success goals. Cited below are the percent changes between 2011/12 and 2012/13.

Comparisons	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	Change
Total number of Cases	64	157	203	+ 29%
Total number of Issues	70	186	245	+ 32%
Total number Undergraduates	57	124	163	+ 31%
Total number Graduate Students	9	11	15	+ 36%
Total number Parents	no record	22	18	- 18%
Total Contacts	96	213	269	+ 26%

Recommendations (based on cases brought to the Ombuds)

1. The university should consider developing a consistent and regular mechanism to inform and remind faculty of the Code of Ethics regarding respectful and confidential interactions/behaviors with students. See faculty handbook <http://www.academic-personnel.calpoly.edu/content/handbook/university>.
2. The university should consider developing a consistent and regular mechanism to inform and remind faculty of policies pertaining to grading, student attendance and retention of student evaluation materials [e.g. Academic Resolutions AS-592-03/IC (excusable absences) and AS-247-87/SA&FBC (retention of exams and student access)].
3. The university should consider revisiting and updating the policy regarding office hours, (AS-91-80/PPC) to ensure student access and university wide consistency (e.g. finals week, on-line, student access when not enrolled in current course)
4. The university should consider establishing a policy (or reminding faculty if such a policy exists) that emphasizes the importance of maintaining the official start and ending time of scheduled classes. (e.g. student are not obligated to attend class early or remain beyond the scheduled time)
5. The university should consider establishing a policy addressing registration time conflicts. (If two classes are in conflict and both instructors are willing to accommodate the student, can the registration system allow the conflict?)
6. The university should consider developing a university-wide policy for consistently administering waitlists and adding students to classes.

Third Annual Report



I. Introduction

The Office of Student Ombuds Services (SOS) has worked with Cal Poly students since 2010. This report will reflect on the activities from July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013. By reviewing the work of the past, SOS will be in a stronger position to help more students in the future. The work of SOS is generally accomplished by guiding students to evaluate concerns, to take responsibility for their part in the matter, to explore options, to connect them with the appropriate resources and people, and to create pathways for dialog to promote fairness and minimize future conflicts.

Mandate

The Student Ombuds Services office provides a confidential, impartial, independent and informal environment to the extent possible based on the laws and policies governing the office. The Student Ombuds Services office is a place where Cal Poly students can seek guidance regarding a wide range of conflicts and issues.

The Office adheres to the International Ombudsman Association Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics. (see <http://www.ombudsassociation.org/about-us/mission-vision-and-values/iaa-best-practices-standards-practice>) The key elements of these standards and codes are the following:

Confidential: SOS holds all communications with those seeking assistance in strict confidence, and does not disclose one's identity and confidential communications unless given permission to do so. The only exception to this privilege of confidentiality is where there appears to be imminent risk of serious harm to self or others. No permanent records are maintained other than general issue and demographic data for reporting trends.

Informal: SOS operates informally. All communications are "off the record." The Ombuds does not make any judgments or participate in any internal or external formal processes.

Impartial: SOS operates impartially. The Ombuds does not take sides in any issue. The Ombuds does not advocate on behalf of the student or the university but rather promotes fair and equitable processes and procedures.

Independent: SOS operates independently of administrative structures. The office reports to the University President.

Role of the Ombuds

Cal Poly's certified Ombuds is a resource person who **confidentially** listens to students' concerns off the record and helps them to explore different solutions. As a confidential resource, the Ombuds does not serve as a Campus Security Authority for purposes of the Clery Act nor does the Ombuds report issues for Title IX. However, the Ombuds can mediate between parties

providing both sides are willing participants. The office serves as an alternative to existing “formal” processes as it is not a university “office of notice.” SOS offers an early warning mechanism that identifies trends and systemic concerns. Student Ombuds Services is a resource that humanizes the institution by providing a safe and informal opportunity for students to be heard.

Process

Students voluntarily seek guidance from Student Ombuds Services. The office holds daily walk-in hours from 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon and also schedules appointments that best meet students’ needs. Students may visit, call, or email the office; although students are informed that email is not a secure form of confidential communication and are encouraged to stop by the office or call for consultation.

University Outreach

2013 culminates three years of Student Ombuds Services. Students are becoming more familiar with the office through a variety of marketing efforts including: quarterly campus-wide emails, portal and Cal Poly Report announcements, Mustang Daily ads, the Ombuds website, brochures, logo signage, campus dining marketing, and an Ombuds video. Approximately 50 outreach efforts were made to nearly 3300 students via campus presentations to students, student organizations and large lecture classes. The success of these marketing efforts is reflected in the steady growth in campus awareness and utilization of SOS.

II. Service Statistics

The year to year comparisons below demonstrate an increase in nearly all categories regarding contacts with the Ombuds Office. The dramatic increase of more than 100% between years one and two was likely attributed to a greater awareness on campus about the office and services. The growth pattern persists at nearly 30% in almost all categories between years two and three. Such increased use validates the Ombuds Office as a valued campus student resource that helps support overall university academic success goals. Cited below are the percent change between 2011/12 and 2012/13.

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The tables that follow illustrate in more detail the individuals served, number of cases, and types of issues discussed. The data show an increase in nearly all categories. The definitions below describe the different types of contacts. General inquiries are described as phone calls, emails, or a face to face visit in which inquiries are made about the office or in which a referral is made but

a case is not recorded. *Please note that inconsistencies or incomplete tables are due to missing data, as all information is voluntarily noted by students on intake forms.*

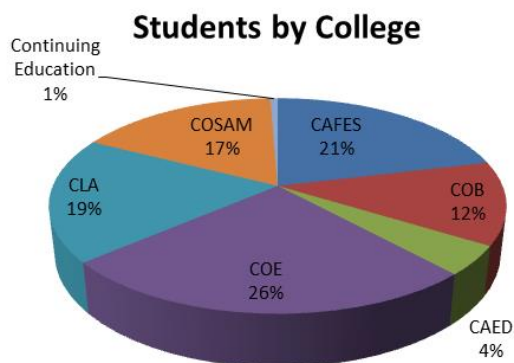
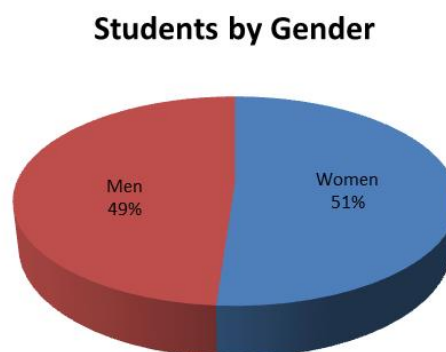
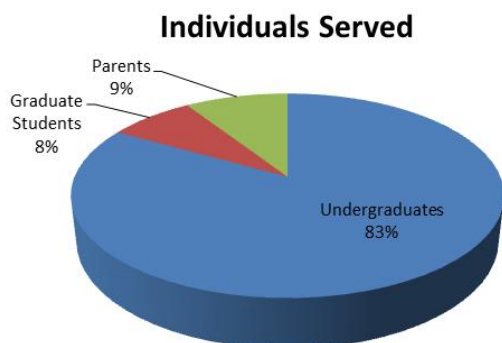
Total Contacts - refers to all contacts made with the Office of Student Ombuds Services including phone calls, emails, face to face visits, and repeat visits regarding the same or different issues.

Cases - are when issues are discussed and options are explored and offered.

Follow-ups - are repeat discussions with a visitor regarding the same issue. The Follow-up is tabulated as a contact and not as an additional case.

Individuals Served

Consistent with previous years, the vast majority of individuals served were undergraduates. Among parents, fewer accessed the office in 2012/13. Women and men used the services in nearly equal numbers. And most of the cases were drawn from students in two professional colleges – Engineering and CAFES, followed by the College of Liberal Arts. However, these college trends may simply be a reflection of their size.



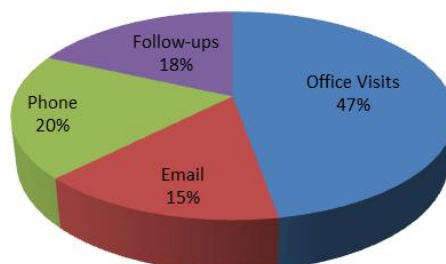
Individuals Served	2012/13 Totals
Undergraduates	163
Graduate Students	15
Parents	18
Women	91
Men	87
CAFES	34
COB	20
CAED	7
COE	41
CLA	30
COSAM	27
Continuing Education	1
Total Cases	203

Patterns of Office Use

Contacts: Among the 269 student contacts, nearly half were actual visits to the office. Almost one quarter sought consultation over the phone. While only 15% of the contacts were made electronically as it is not a secure form of communication. And follow-up communication regarding cases comprised 18% of the contacts.

Contacts	2012/13 Totals
Office Visits	127
Email	41
Phone	52
Follow-ups	49
Totals	269

Patterns of Use



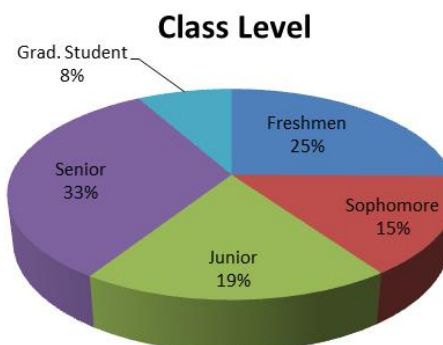
III. Summary of Student Characteristics

Ethnicity: Students voluntarily complete intake forms and are selective in their responses. Many choose not to disclose their ethnic identity. Similarly, when consulting with students over the telephone, ethnicity is not collected due to the sensitive nature of the question. Mirroring the ethnic composition of the university, the majority of users were White followed by Latinos.

Ethnicity	African Amer.	Amer. Indian	Asian	White	Filipino	Latin@	Middle Eastern	Pacific Islander	South Eastern	Other
Totals	1	1	14	79	2	44	5	1		

Class Level: For the students who disclosed their class level, most were Seniors. Freshmen students used the services next in frequency.

Class Level 2012/13	Totals
Freshmen	40
Sophomore	24
Junior	30
Senior	52
Graduate Student	13



IV. Nature of Student Issues

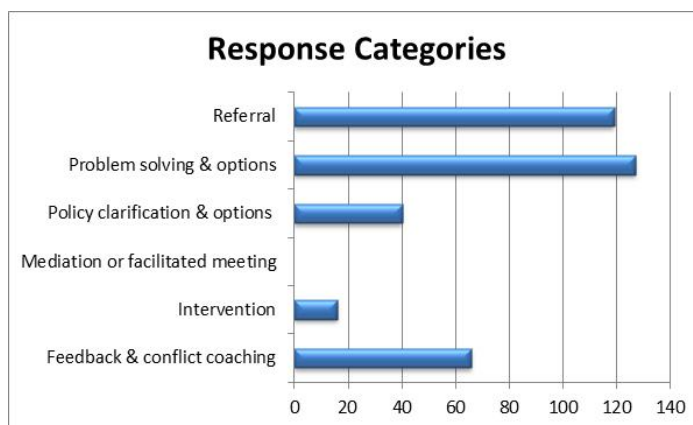
Listed below are the types of issues brought to the Ombuds Office. Consistent with the previous years, the most common issue raised by students involved professor-student interactions. As the number of cases increased, the “professor” issue showed a 70% increase from year two to year three. Two other recurrent issues had to do with advising and grade disputes. Two additional issues, Housing on and off campus and Legal Services, warrant mentioning as their numbers grew noticeably since 2011/12. Moreover, the total number of issues may not equal totals in the aggregate summaries as some cases include multiple issues.

Academic	Totals 2011/12	Totals 2012/13	% Change
a. Advising	28	37	+32%
b. Academic Dishonesty		9	
c. AP/DQ	11	12	
d. Course Content	1	3	
e. Grades	29	29	0
f. Other Students	1	5	
g. Professor	27	46	+70%
h. Study Skills	7		
i. Time Management	5		
j. Other Issue	1	4	
Administration			
a. Accounting / Fees		3	
b. Admissions / Residency	2	5	
c. Financial Aid	5	6	
d. Housing on / off	8	14	+75%
e. Police / Parking	9	7	
f. Policy clarification	3		
g. Registration / Evaluation	15	12	-20%
h. Technology	3	2	
i. Other Issue		4	
Student Services			
a. Athletics	1	1	

b. ASI / Rec Sports			
c. Career Services		2	
d. Clubs	3	2	
e. Dining Services		5	
f. Health/ Counsel	3	3	
g. Legal Service Referral	2	14	+600%
h. Student Employment		6	
i. Student Life Issue	12	2	-83%
j. Other Issue	2		
University Environment			
a. Accommodations		2	
b. Bullying Issues	1	1	
c. Discrimination Issues	2	1	
d. Disrespect / Hostile	1	3	
e. Ethical Issues			
f. Facilities	1	1	
g. Harassment Issues	1		
h. Assault Issues	1	4	
Total Issues	185	245	+32%

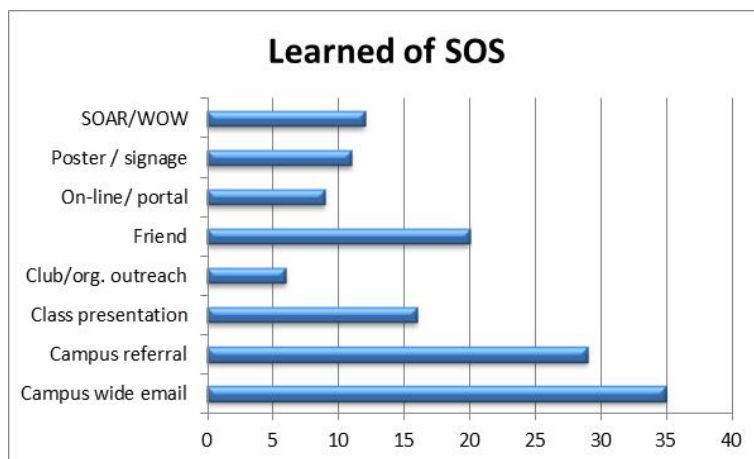
Response Categories: The Ombuds case response is tailored to the uniqueness of each situation and to the student's needs. All possible resolutions are consistent with the university's values and ideals. Problem solving and the identification of options dominated case responses followed by campus referrals. Feedback and conflict coaching and policy clarification are growing responses as well.

Response Categories	Totals
Feedback & conflict coaching	66
Intervention	16
Mediation or facilitated meeting	
Policy clarification & options	40
Problem solving & options	127
Referral	119



Learned about SOS: A limited number of students shared how they learned about SOS. Campus-wide emails appear to be the most effective strategy for informing students of SOS. Campus referrals also played a key role in students accessing services. Henceforth, SOS will continue sending direct student email and provide ongoing outreach to campus departments.

How one learned of SOS	Totals
Campus wide email	35
Campus referral	29
Class presentation	16
Club/org. outreach	6
Friend	20
On-line/ portal	9
Poster / signage	11
Repeat user	
SOAR/WOW	12



V. Ombuds Professional Activities

The Ombuds office strongly believes in the importance of professional development. Such work refreshes and broadens the knowledge and skills that improve professional practice. This past year, professional development activities proved to be exceptionally productive and well worth the investment of time and resources.

The Ombuds participated in the “Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP)” Training for Trainers program by Jackson Kratz. The Ombuds was pleased to collaborate with Safer on this powerful leadership oriented training program.

The Ombuds also participated in a week long suicide intervention Training for Trainers - “Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training” (ASIST). The Ombuds worked in collaboration with the Counseling Center and offered two ASIST workshops on campus. Both workshops were attended at full capacity and reviewed quite favorably. Through the support of the CalMHSA (California Mental Health Services Authority) grant and the high interest of the campus community (current waitlist of 20 people) additional workshops will be offered in 2013/14.

The Board of Certification, a division of the International Ombudsman Association (IOA) invited the Cal Poly Ombuds to participate in a writing workshop. The workshop involved three days of reviewing and rewriting exam questions to restore a bank of questions for the Certified Organizational Ombudsman Practitioner (COOP) exam.

Attendance at the International Ombudsman Association annual meeting proved to be a crucial restorative opportunity. Connecting with university Ombuds, as well as government and corporate Ombuds, has been highly valuable for sustaining wider professional involvement and support. The interaction with other Ombuds was especially useful for comparing programs, processes and procedures, as well as allowing for debriefing on complex cases.

During the period of this report, the Ombuds also participated in the Freshmen Student Success Program, Inclusive Excellence Council, Multicultural Center Advisory Board, and the Student Affairs CARE Team.

At the same time, the Academic Senate approved Resolution AS-765-13 which clarified the role of Student Ombuds Services in the revised Fairness Board Description and Procedures. The language included states that SOS is an alternative and voluntary resource for seeking resolution through informal means. It further explains that students may consider this option prior to submitting an appeal to the Fairness Board.

Also, the Academic Senate approved Resolution AS-768-13 regarding Final Examination Overload Conflicts. It states that “faculty should make a reasonable effort to offer an alternative final examination time to students with more than two final examinations on the same day.” Also, students are expected to notify faculty of such conflicts by the seventh week of instruction.

VI. Recommendations (based on cases brought to the Ombuds)

1. The university should consider developing a consistent and regular mechanism to inform and remind faculty of the Code of Ethics regarding respectful and confidential interactions/behaviors with students. See faculty handbook <http://www.academic-personnel.calpoly.edu/content/handbook/university>.
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VII. Conclusion

I am grateful to Kelly Sebastian for her excellent administrative support and the many campus departments, faculty, staff, and administrators who have worked with me tirelessly in search of fair and equitable resolutions for students.

And most importantly, I want to thank the many students who have trusted me and who are doing their part to create a better learning environment at Cal Poly. I appreciate their sincerity and resilience.

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