

Office of the Ombudsman
University of California, Riverside

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Brief Comparative Review
Of Changes in Caseload and Constituency:
Effectiveness of Outreach Efforts

Period 1: October, 2007-July, 2008

Period 2: August, 2008-May, 2009

Summary

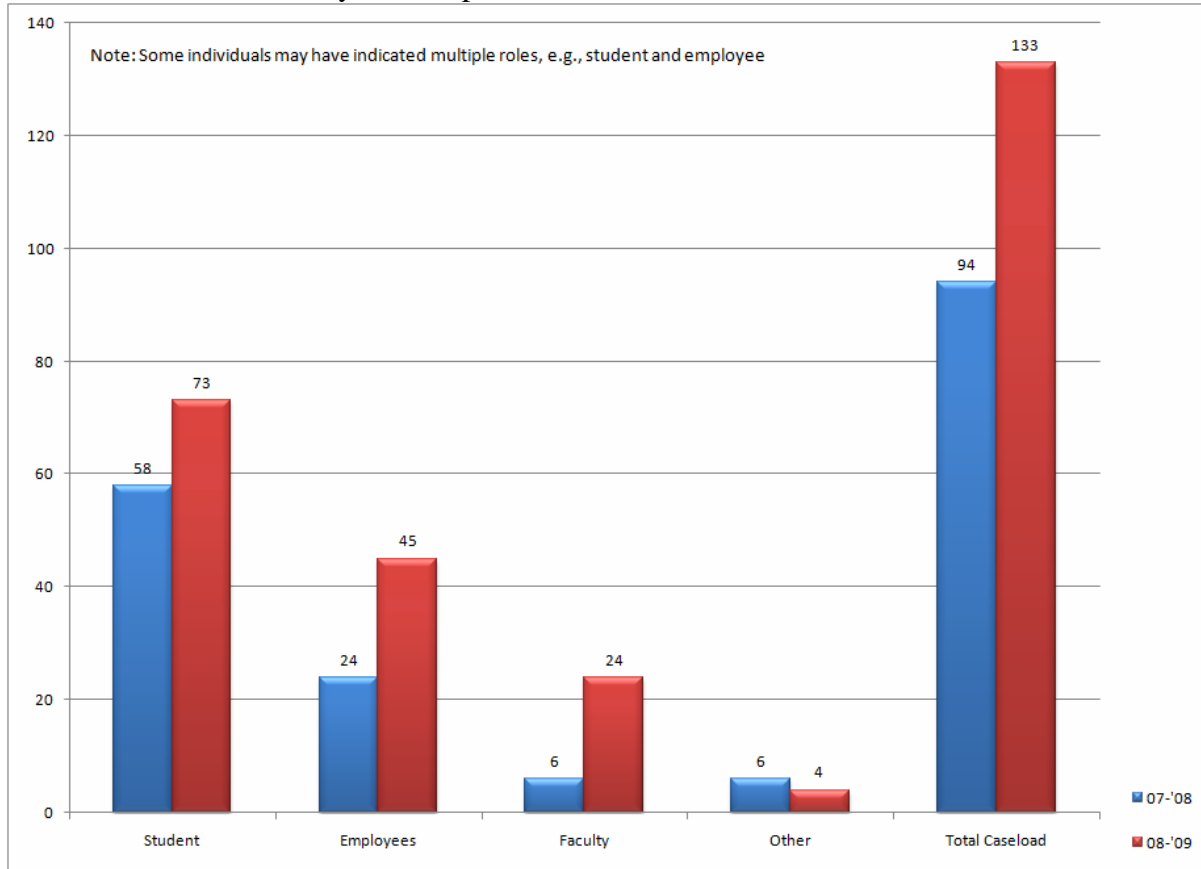
This Brief Comparative Review (“Review”) seeks to provide information on the changes in caseload and constituency make-up of visitors to the Office of the Ombudsman at UCR (“Office”). The comparison is between two consecutive nine-month periods, specifically from October, 2007-July, 2008, and August, 2008-May, 2009.

During the period of August, 2008-May, 2009, the Office observed a considerable rise in visitors with concerns, complaints, and need for assistance. There was a 41% increase during this latter period.

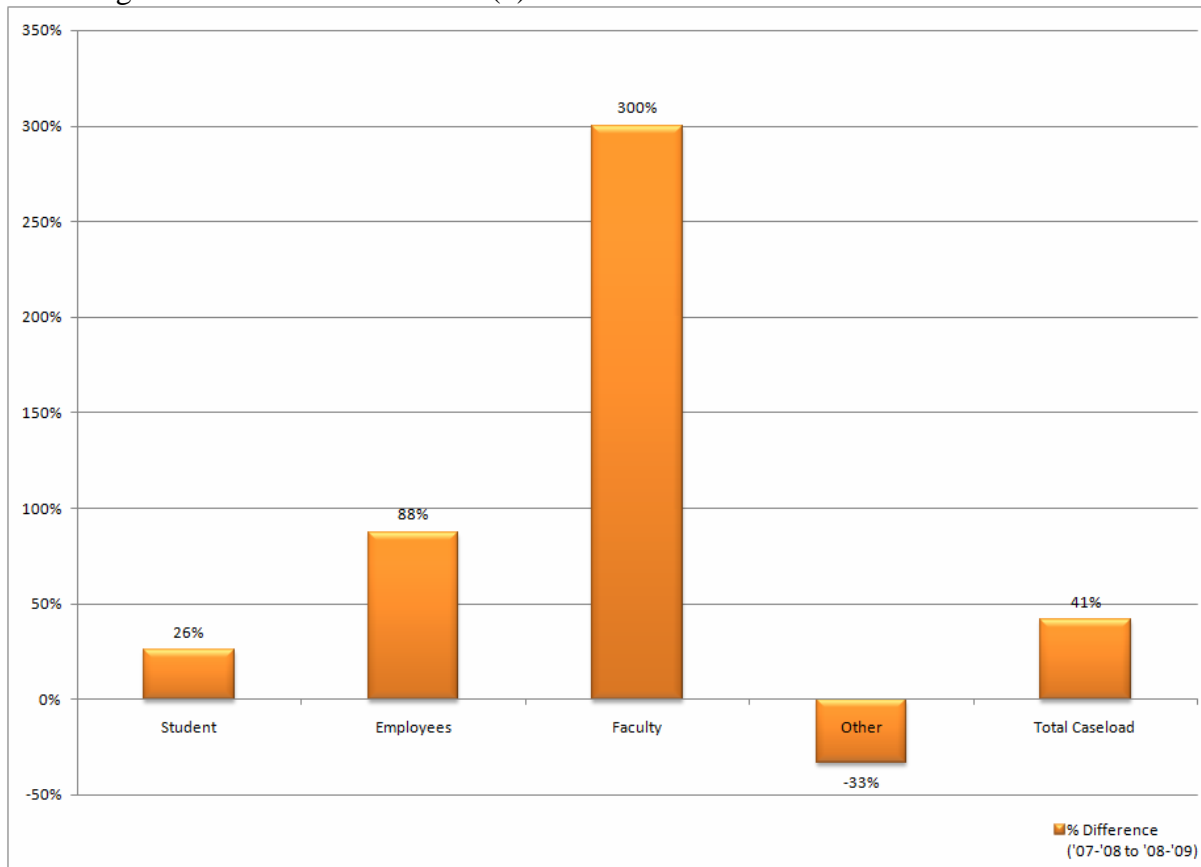
The increase in caseload is indicative of successful outreach efforts by the Office, specifically towards members of the community who were not previously well-informed regarding their access to the services the Office provides. Examples of some such outreach efforts include regular presentations at New Staff Orientations, discussion sessions at the Chairs’ Lunch Bunch, discussion sessions at faculty retreats, letters to Chairs, teaching and training in “Conflict Resolution” for new supervisors, improvement of the Office’s website, and appropriate posting and dissemination of the Office Charter, brochures and other informational materials about the Office’s functions. There is a positive trend towards greater use of the Office by faculty, administrators, and staff. Therefore, it has been able to reach out to, and assist, more members of the community experiencing distress, uncertainty, and added pressures resulting from the economic crisis.

Additionally, the Logic Model is incorporated into this Review, which articulates the relationships between the Office’s work and the overall success and wellbeing of the University community. It is a reminder that upholding the values of fairness and equity through an independent, impartial, confidential and informal venue can lead to long-term progress and positive outcomes for the University and its community.

A. Caseload and Constituency Make-up



B. Percentage Differences Between Two(2) Periods



Office Objective

PRACTICE TO PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS & CHARTER: Exemplify excellence in ombudsmanship and consistently strive to advance and improve accessibility, effectiveness, services and efficiency by building on existing foundation and exploring new and innovative ideas.

Key Functions

ABILITY: Confidential and informal resolution of complaints as independent and impartial Office; Analysis of issues in complaints to explore institutional and external options and resources available for resolution; Accessible to faculty, administration, staff, students & others with University-related issues; Broader systemic monitor, feedback & change agent; Improve communication styles and relationships; Facilitate organizational efficiency and transparency; Ensure fairness and equity for all community members; Model essential characteristics of profession & contribute to field; Other functions as specified in Charter.

Activities

DELIVERY: Intake of complaints, questions, concerns, ensuring confidentiality; Shuttle diplomacy, negotiations; Individual & group facilitations, mediations, negotiation of resolutions; Informal inquiries (including independent initiation); Track issues & analysis of trends; Draft periodic or annual reports, presentations, papers, informational materials; Outreach to constituencies; Gather/present information on options & resources available; Develop educational programs & workshops; Interact with community; Remain informed regarding campus, local, state, national and global issues; Management and improvement of Office's internal systems; Implementation of appropriate technologies; Professional development & participation.

Outputs

RESULTS: Forum for dialogue; Settlements of disputes and greater usage of informal means of dispute resolution; New & creative systems of communication; Issuance of annual & periodic reports; Feedback and recommendations; Surveys; Informational resources, such as presentations, relevant news, articles, brochures, website, and other sources; Workshops, seminars, trainings, courses, conferences; New technological capabilities and new resources; Communication w/ all levels of org; Student internship & externship opportunities; Potential external funding to benefit UCR in dispute resolution; Mediation programs; Disseminated information regarding organizational policies/ protocols/compliance.

Immediate & Intermediate Outcomes

IMPACT: Greater informal resolutions; Underlying interests met / satisfaction; Better conflict management and communication; Organizational self-correction; Healthier approaches to conflict and impact on org culture; Improvement in relationships / reconciliation; Positive impact on productivity, retention of good individuals; Impact on absenteeism, health issues, and other negative aspects of conflict; Collaborative environment; Impact on organizational governance and compliance, ethical practice, transparency; Community empowerment with conflict resolution skills; More people helped through technological advancements; Less stress on formal complaint processes and resources; Reduction of costs in addressing complaints; Better quality of information; New partners and resources in dispute resolution; Greater pride & loyalty towards institution; Effective, trusted Office, critical during difficult periods for the organization and community.

Final Outcomes

COMMUNITY & UNIVERSITY SUCCESS: Learning and work environments that value respect, fairness and equity; Commitment to organizational progress and continuous self-improvement; Multi-faceted support structure to help students, faculty and staff reach their highest potentials.