

Academic Ombud Services Annual Report

November 12, 2018

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Academic Ombud

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On behalf of the Office of Academic Ombud Services, it is a pleasure to provide the Academic Ombud Report for the 2018 academic year. As charged in Senate Rule 6.2.0, the Academic Ombud is “*charged with consideration of the student grievances in connection with academic affairs*”. We serve as a resource for students, faculty, staff and administrators. The Ombud’s Office also processes academic offense findings and appeals submitted to the University Appeals Board for both academic offense and non-academic offense cases.

This report contains information on the activities of the Ombud’s Office for the 2018 academic year, as well as an analysis of caseload and contact trends over the past five years. I would like to acknowledge the excellent work of Laura Ansel in coordinating the activity of Ombud Office. When Laura joined the office in 2013, she set up a database that has allowed us to analyze and track the caseload of the Ombud Office. Laura has prepared the statistical report, which is included with this report. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance of two previous Ombuds, Michael Healy and Sonja Feist-Price. Their advice and assistance, along with Laura’s efficiency and knowledge of Ombud operations were extremely helpful in my transition to this position last year. I have thoroughly enjoyed the work during my first year as Ombud. Laura and I have had the opportunity to meet with and assist students, faculty, and staff from all across campus. I also wish to acknowledge the efforts many Deans, Associate Deans and Chairs in many different colleges on behalf of students and faculty. As well, I also wish to acknowledge many other offices we work with, including the CoC, DRC, Counseling Center, and the Legal Office.

Similar to reports by the previous Ombud, Mr. Michael Healy, the Statistical Report at the end of this document contains an analysis of the cases and contacts. The first set of numbers are the total number of matters handled the Office during 2018. Questions or referrals are matters that generally take less than 30 minutes to resolve. They are received by phone, email or by walk-ins. They encompass both academic offenses and other matters. The vast majority of these contacts are handled by Laura Ansel. In 2018, there were 2594 questions or referrals, an increase of 11.6% over 2017. Data are also provided in this report for the previous five years, when Ms. Ansel started collecting data. Since 2013, there has been a large increase in the numbers of questions or referrals, showing a 196% increase between academic years 2013 and 2018.

In contrast, the number of academic cases over this period has not varied as significantly. Cases are defined as matters that require a more significant amount of time or an appointment with the Ombud. In 2018, we processed 393 cases, a reduction of 13.6% from

the 455 cases processed in 2017. These cases could take from a couple of hours for the Ombud and Ms. Ansel to over forty hours in one instance. Over the 5 year period cases have ranged from 370 in 2015 to 497 in 2014. The cases are further broken down into non-academic offense issues and academic offense cases. For 2018 there was a 20.9% decrease in non-academic offense issues, and a slight increase in academic offense cases of 3.7%. The numbers are shown in the graphic included below as well as in the Statistical Report. The data show that while the number of cases has remained fairly consistent over the 5 year period, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of questions and referrals and total contacts. If this trend continues, it may be necessary to consider increasing the resources and staff in the Academic Ombud Services Office.

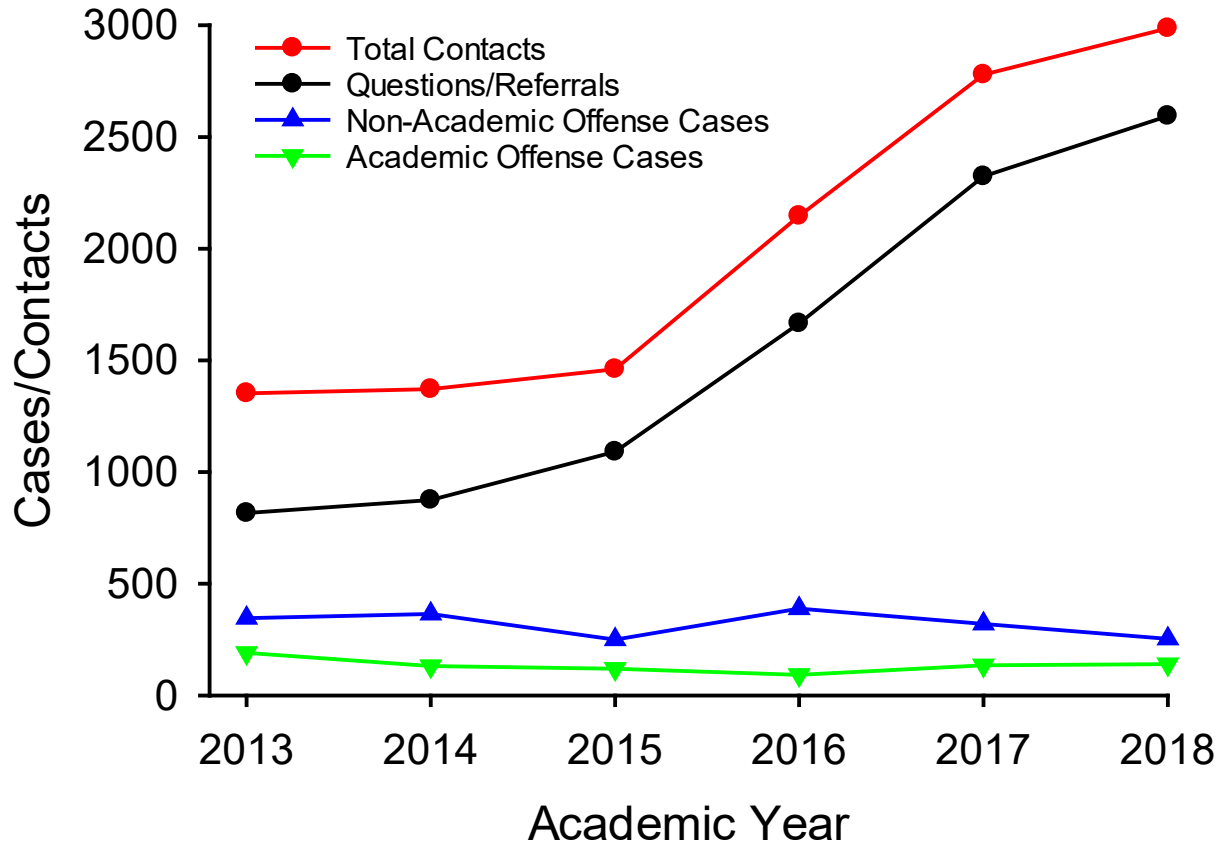
Further information is provided on the cases and questions and referrals in pages 2 and 3 of the statistical report. For cases, the three largest categories are grades, general policies and progress/promotion. For questions and referrals, the largest number queries concern grades or policies. While the largest number come from students, a significant number come from faculty. We routinely assist faculty with a wide range of issues ranging from simple questions regarding syllabi, Senate Rules, etc., to more complex questions. These often include questions regarding academic offenses and how to process them.

Page 2 contains a further breakdown of the 140 academic offense cases. Fifty four were for cheating and 86 were for plagiarism. Of those, 33 contacted the Ombud. Twenty one chose not to appeal while 12 chose to appeal. The report also breaks down the academic offenses with respect to student level and whether it was a first, second or third offense. The final breakdown of academic offenses is by originating colleges. Page three provides data on cases referred to the University Appeals Board. Of the thirty two cases sent to the Appeals Board, 12 were for academic offenses, 18 for student academic rights and 2 for suspension or dismissal. In sum, 8 of the appeals were upheld for a success rate of 25% overall for 2018.

During my first year as Ombud, I have also focused on increasing outreach and education by the Ombud Office and have redesigned the Start of Term Notice that is sent out each semester. The reason for increasing outreach is to make the campus community more aware of services offered by and functions of Academic Ombud Services. I have made presentations about Academic Ombud Services to student groups, teaching assistants, colleges and departments and the SEC ADLP Fellows. Both Laura and I have also participated in UK 101 classes for the ethics lecture. I am available for presentations on Ombud Services tailored to specific groups, students, faculty, administrators, etc. Two goals for presentations to groups of faculty are to provide an overview of how we operate and to provide information on how to process academic offenses. We consistently find that faculty make a number of mistakes in processing academic offenses. In addition to presentations, we are available to answer questions regarding Senate Rules and Procedures.

The final comment I will make is that Academic Ombud Services at the University of Kentucky is now in its 49th year, and has served the University of Kentucky Community since 1970. As always, Laura and I welcome your comments and suggestions and are available to assist you in resolving academic issues.

Case and Contact Trends Academic Ombud Services 2013 to 2018



Academic Ombud Services Statistical Report
Joseph McGillis 2017/18

All Matters

	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	
Number of Cases	393	455	481	370	497	
Number of Questions or Referrals	2594	2324	1666	1091	875	
	2987	2779	2147	1461	1372	Total

Types of Cases	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	
Non-Academic Offense Issues	253	320	389	250	365	
Academic Offense Determinations	140	135	92	120	132	
	393	455	481	370	497	Total

Description of Cases (not including Academic Offenses)		Classification of Source	
Attendance	7	Student	150
Exam/Class Requirements	8	Faculty	66
Grades	54	Staff	12
Instruction	13	Parent	16
Personal Problems	8	Other	9
Policies: Academic Offense Issues	27		253 Total
Policies: General	58		
Progress/Promotion	66		
Retroactive Withdrawals	2		
Speaker Requests	10		
	253	Total	

Description of Quick Questions & Referrals		Classification of Source	
Attendance	136	Student	1480
Exam/Class Requirements	67	Faculty	676
Grades	651	Staff	296
Instruction	104	Parent	98
Personal Problems	105	Other	44
Policies: Academic Offense Issues	365		2594 Total
Policies: General	667		
Progress/Promotion	489		
Retroactive Withdrawals	10		
	2594	Total	

Determinations and Appeals of Academic Offenses

Types of Academic Offense Determinations

Cheating	54	
Plagiarism	86	
	140	Total

Contact with the Ombud

No Contact with the Ombud	107	
Contacted the Ombud: No appeal	21	
Contacted the Ombud: Referred to UAB	12	
	140	Total

Classification of the Student	First/Minor	First/Major	Second	Third	Total
Freshman	28	4	1		33
Sophomore	15	3			18
Junior	30	4	2		36
Senior	27	3	6	1	37
Graduate Student	9	2	1	1	13
Professional Student	3				3
	112	15	10	2	140 Total

Origin of Offense Determination

College of Agriculture, Food and Environment	7	
College of Arts & Sciences	55	
Gatton College of Business & Economics	7	
College of Communication & Information	15	
College of Dentistry	3	
College of Design	1	
College of Education	11	
College of Engineering	19	
College of Health Sciences	3	
College of Nursing	4	
Patterson School of Diplomacy	1	
College of Public Health	14	
	140	Total

Summary of Cases Referred by the Ombud to the University Appeals Board

Total Number of Appeals

Academic Offense Appeals	12	(3 Upheld / 9 Denied)
Student Academic Rights	18	(4 Upheld / 10 Denied / 4 Uncontested)
Retroactive Withdrawal Appeals	0	
Other Appeals (Suspension & Dismissal)	2	(1 Upheld / 1 Denied)
	32	Total

Academic Offense Appeals Referred to the University Appeals Board

	Upheld	Denied	Total	
Plagiarism: Appealed severity of sanction		1	1	
Plagiarism: Appealed determination	1	2	3	
Plagiarism: Appealed severity of sanction and determination		2	2	
Cheating: Appealed severity of sanction		1	1	
Cheating: Appealed determination	1	3	4	
Cheating: Appealed severity of sanction and determination	1		1	
			12	Total

Allegation of Violation of Student Academic Rights Referred to the University Appeals Board

	Uncontested	Upheld	Denied	Total	
Appeals referred and determined to have merit	n/a	4	4	8	
Appeals referred and determined to lack merit	4		6	10	
				18	Total

Retroactive Withdrawal Appeals Referred to the University Appeals Board

	Upheld	Denied	Total	
Appeal referred and determined to have merit	0	0	0	
			0	Total

Appeal of Dismissal/Suspension Referred to the University Appeals Board

	Upheld	Denied	Total	
Appeal referred and determined to have merit	1	1	2	
			2	Total

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Academic Ombud

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Academic Ombud Coordinator

<http://www.uky.edu/ombud/>



Academic Ombud Services

• *confidential* • *impartial*
• *informal* • *independent*

What is UK Academic Ombud Services?

established 1970

UK Academic Ombud Services is a Resource for Students and Faculty established by the University Senate

It's Charter, functions and procedures are defined in the University Senate Rules

What Does UK Academic Ombud Services Do?

We help people solve problems.



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UK Academic Ombud Services Standards of Practice

(established by the International Ombudsman Association)

Confidential: *“Ombud shall not violate the rights of students or other parties involved in cases brought to the Ombud through the disclosure of any information communicated in confidence.” SR6.2.1.6**

Impartial: *Advocates for fair processes & their equitable application.*

Informal: *Provides a safe, neutral setting to ask questions, discuss problems and seek assistance with academic-related conflicts and disputes.*

Independent: *The Ombud is appointed by and reports directly to the University Provost. The Academic Ombud Office functions independently of all colleges and instructional programs and works across traditional lines of authority and responsibility to facilitate resolution of the most complex problems.*

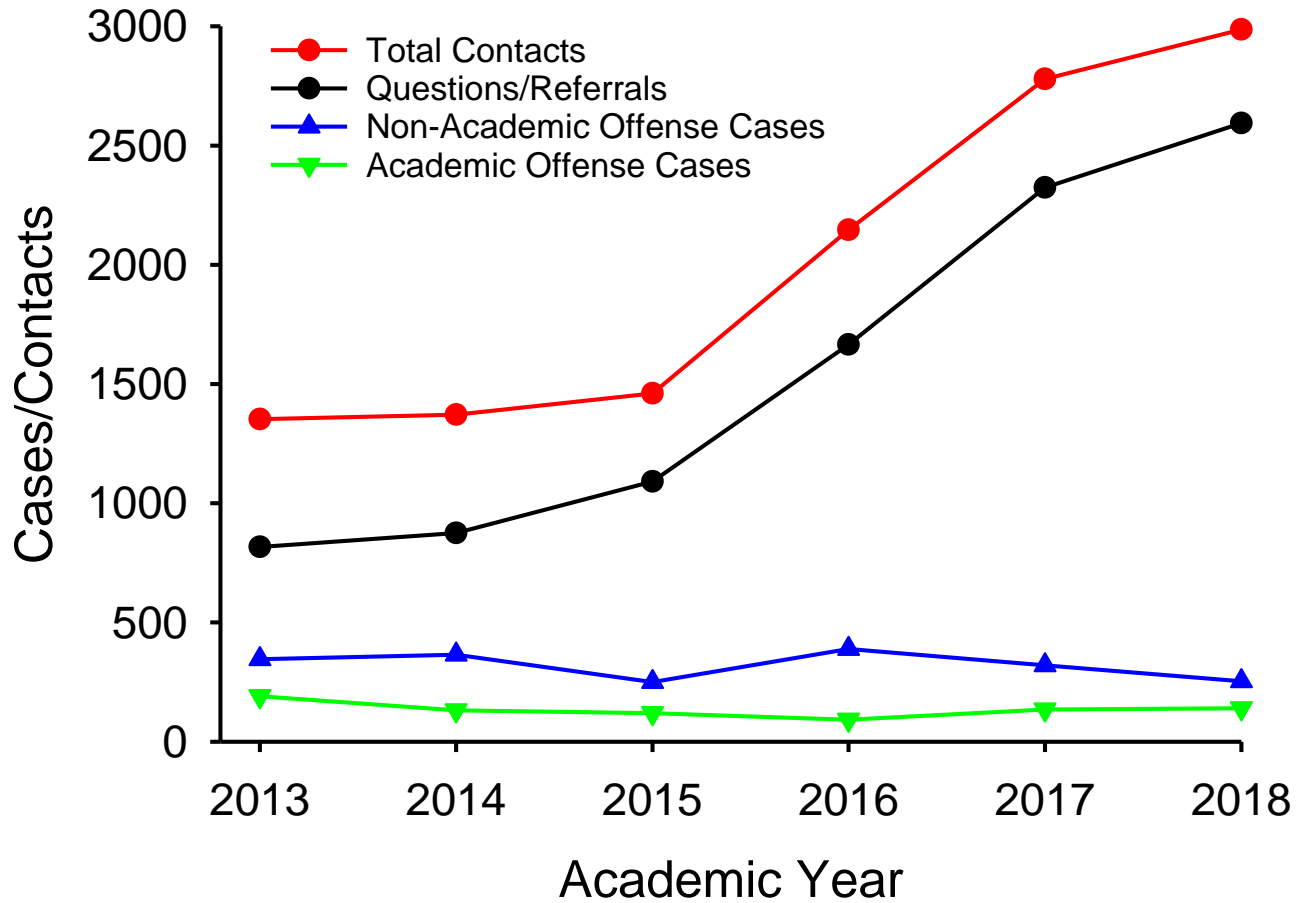
* *Certain limits exist, we must report issues such as Title IX violations (sexual harassment), criminal activity, concern for harm to self or others.*



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Other Ombud Activities

Outreach and Education – 10 Presentations

- Teaching Assistants
- Student Groups
- Faculty Groups (departments, colleges)
- SEC ADLP Program

Redesigned Start of Semester Notice

Suggestions and Comments Always Welcome!



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