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ANNUAL REPORT FY26  
OFFICE OF THE UNIVERSITY OMBUDS  
UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA

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OMBUDS

July 13th, 2026

Dear UWG faculty, staff, and students,

It is my pleasure to present this annual report from the University of West Georgia Office of the Ombuds for Fiscal Year 2026. The data presented in this report covers work completed from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026.

On the following pages, you will find a summary of some of the major activities of the office in the past year, along with data related to issues of concern on campus. Data is presented based on the issue categories established by the International Ombuds Association.

As always, I remain available for consultations for all UWG faculty, staff, and students. The Ombuds Office follows the Standards of Practice of the International Ombuds Association—confidentiality, impartiality, informality, and independence—and offers the campus community an off-the-record thought partner for anyone seeking to discuss university-related conflicts or concerns and consider potential paths forward.

In addition to benefiting individuals who visit the office through conflict coaching, policy guidance, facilitated conversations, shuttle diplomacy, referrals, and more, the office also benefits the greater university community by offering feedback on patterns of concerns to leadership.

Thank you to everyone who has placed their trust in the Ombuds Office over the past year. As always, I remain available to help all members of the campus community as we work together to achieve our mission. Go West, Go Wolves.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julia L. Farmer".

Julia L. Farmer

Director of Ombuds Services



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## Year in Review

### Noteworthy Numbers:

- Individual consultations with the office in FY 2026 rose 38% year-over-year.
- The number of unique cases represented by these consultations rose 58%.
- Student-related cases nearly doubled year-over-year, growing by 95%.
- Cross-unit collaborations grew by 36%.



### Cross-Unit Collaborations:

- University System of Georgia Office of Teaching and Learning Excellence
- Institute for Faculty Excellence
- Ingram Library
- Housing and Residence Life
- Counseling Center
- Center for Student Involvement and Inclusion
- Health Services
- Admissions
- Newnan Center
- Tanner Health School of Nursing
- Academic Transitions Programs
- Honors College
- Momentum Summit

### Typical Collaborations

The Ombuds Office collaborates with other units in a variety of ways. Typical examples include offering in-person workshops and trainings, hosting team-building sessions, tabling at campus events, facilitating online group learning opportunities, and presenting at conferences and research symposia hosted by campus units.

## Workshops, Trainings, and Professional Development Opportunities Conducted in FY26

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*In FY 2026, 376 members of the UWG and USG communities participated in learning opportunities offered by the UWG Ombuds Office.*

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- Decision-Making 101
- Conflict Resolution (seven sessions)
- Communicating with Students
- Delivering Constructive Feedback (two sessions)
- Book discussion group: *Supervising Conflict*
- Book discussion group: *Thanks for the Feedback*
- Book discussion group: *The Caring University*
- Communication and Conflict in Mentoring Relationships
- Building Bridges and Fostering Connection: Insights from the Ombuds Reading Group
- Group norms development (two sessions)
- The Art of Negotiation

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*The UWG Ombuds Office also contributed beyond UWG with service to the USG, the International Ombuds Association, and the ABA.*

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## Other Campus Outreach Activities

- Presentation to Student Government Association
- Presentation to Orientation leaders
- Presentation at Ingram Library Research event
- Club Hopping
- 10 Admissions Orientation sessions
- UWG Benefits Fair
- Suicide Prevention week—four tabling sessions
- New Faculty Orientation
- First Day Fuel
- Admitted Students Day



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## Casework by the Numbers

| Area                            | Student Visitors | Employee Visitors |
|---------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| CHASS                           | 4                | 13                |
| CMCS                            | 8                | 0                 |
| COE                             | 9                | 3                 |
| Library                         | n/a              | 3                 |
| Nursing                         | 1                | 5                 |
| RCOB                            | 14               | 1                 |
| SCFM                            | 2                | 2                 |
| University College              | 0                | 3                 |
| Academic Affairs--Other         | n/a              | 8                 |
| Administrative Services         | n/a              | 13                |
| Advancement                     | n/a              | 2                 |
| Business and Financial Services | n/a              | 5                 |
| President's Division            | n/a              | 4                 |
| Strategic Enrollment Management | n/a              | 9                 |
| Student Affairs                 | n/a              | 5                 |
| Unknown/Other                   | 3                | 2                 |

Student visitors are categorized by the area where their major or intended major is housed. Employees are categorized by division in which they work. In many cases, concerns brought to the Ombuds Office are related to areas outside of where the person is housed.

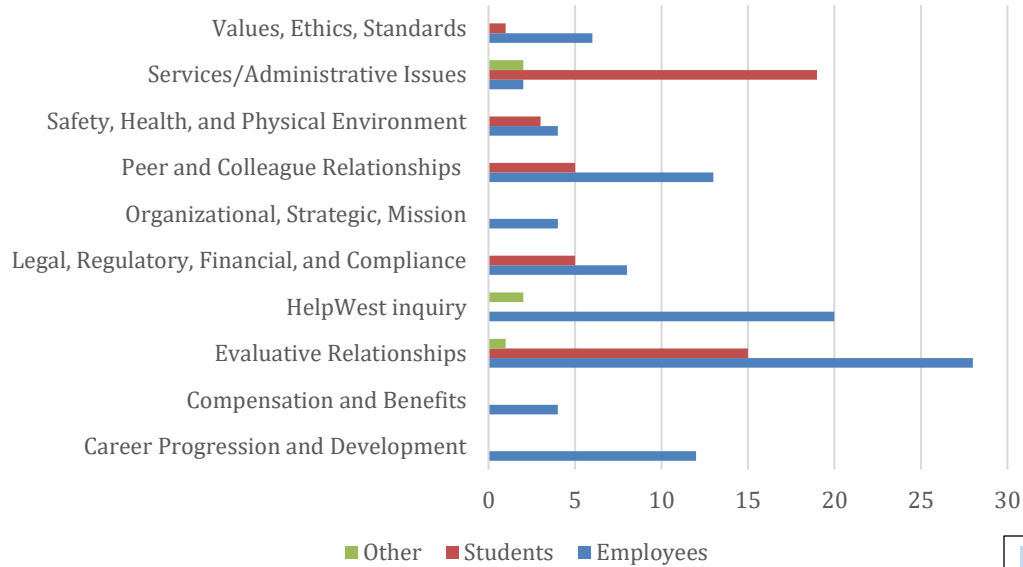
**Employee and student visitors: 119**

**Other visitors: 5**

**Total visitors: 124**

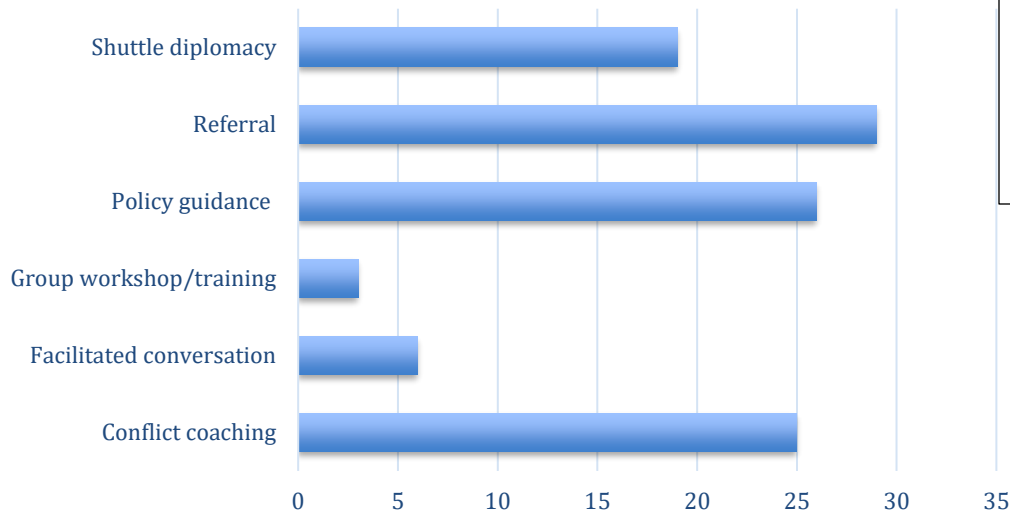
**Unique cases: 110**

## Issues Presented in Cases



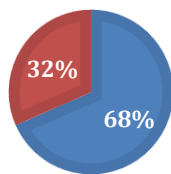
Note: Cases can include more than one issue type and more than one type of assistance. Types of assistance are counted only once per case.

## Major Types of Case-Related Assistance Provided



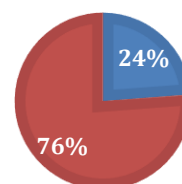
## Employee visitors by type

■ Staff ■ Faculty



## Student visitors by type

■ Graduate ■ Undergraduate



## Observations

As always, the past year brought a wide range of issues and concerns to the Ombuds Office. As evidenced by the chart on page six, employees and students had differing broad patterns of concerns.

Both faculty and staff were especially likely to wish to discuss evaluative relationships with the Ombuds Office. Within that broad category, however, there were some notable differences. Faculty tended to be much more likely to consult with the office about challenges they were facing in supervising others, while staff members tended to be more likely to consult about challenges in their relationship with their own supervisor. Concerns presented by staff about supervisory relationships ran the gamut from issues around respect/treatment and feedback to challenges with communication, concerns about possible retaliation, and equity of treatment. Faculty also tended to be more likely than staff to come to the office with concerns about performance appraisals.

In addition, around 20% of faculty visitors to the office discussed concerns around career progression and development, while 13% of staff visitors had similar concerns. Within that broad category, staff concerns were more likely to cluster around the possibility of resignation, while faculty members expressed concerns about the security of their position.

Within the broad of Peer and Colleague Relationships, staff were more likely to seek assistance navigating such issues than were faculty. Around 20% of staff cases involved consultations about such relationships, while 12% of faculty cases involved these sorts of consultations. Common areas of concern for both groups included quality of communication and respect/treatment.

On the student side, the chart on page six reveals Services and Administrative Issues to be the biggest area of concern, followed closely by Evaluative Relationships. The most frequent areas of concern under Services and Administrative Issues tended to be financial and billing-related issues. The main subcategories of concern within this area included the quality of services (how well services were provided, accuracy and thoroughness of information) and responsiveness/timeliness. Administrative decisions and the interpretation/application of rules also were relatively frequent areas of concern for students.

Graduate students were more likely than undergraduates to bring concerns around peer relationships to the Ombuds Office. These consultations mainly stemmed from difficulties in assigned group work in class. Undergraduates, meanwhile, were more likely than graduates to bring concerns about grading to the Ombuds Office. And when undergraduates did come to the office with concerns about peer relationships, the conflicts in question tended to take place outside of the classroom context rather than within it.



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## HelpWest Data

The HelpWest Employee Benevolence Fund provides monetary assistance to regular faculty and staff who are experiencing financial hardship due to circumstances beyond their control. Due to its confidential nature, the Ombuds Office serves as the point of intake for requests. Anonymized requests are then approved by the HelpWest Steering Committee.

In FY 2026, assistance was provided as follows:

Strategic Enrollment Management—3

Administrative Services—5

Academic Affairs— 4

Business and Financial Services—1

President's Division—1

**TOTAL EMPLOYEES ASSISTED: 14**

**TOTAL FUNDING DISTRIBUTED: \$6,280.48**

