“The role I have right now, it is not something that has been given to me by someone. It is something that I have chosen for myself.”
Malala Yousafzai

Over the past year, our office has met with a number of clients who are challenged by recent changes, both here on campus and nationally. As I have reflected on those discussions, I find myself returning to the quote above from Malala Yousafzai. As an office, we focus on empowering students, faculty and staff to reflect on how they can be successful in pursuing their roles at the university, even when circumstances may feel stressful and overwhelming.

Our approach is responsive to an emerging need within the university community. Over the last year, we have seen a 20% increase in clients that builds upon a remarkable 81% increase over the past three years. We are proud of our work, and look forward to assisting students, faculty, and staff in the upcoming year as they find their paths to success in the roles that they have chosen here at the University of Washington.
OUR TEAM
Who We Are

CHUCK SLOANE
University Ombud

STRENGTHS: Helping faculty, staff, and students gain clarity as they face complex challenges and develop creative and pragmatic goals.

WEAKNESSES: Multi-tasking and maple bars.

EMMA WILLIAMS
Associate Ombud

STRENGTHS: Assisting students and staff, assessing campus trends, identifying emerging needs, and facilitating conversations about Ombud practices.

WEAKNESSES: Envisioning report layouts and eclairs.

JANE WARNER-DUKURAY
Assistant to the Ombud

STRENGTHS: Providing a calm, reassuring, and organizing presence that helps us prioritize the needs and schedules of our clients.

WEAKNESSES: Annual Report "photo sessions"... and anything pie!
WHAT WE DO
Empowering Individuals and Teams

The one common thread amongst our diverse cases is that they are complex enough to have prevented smart and passionate people from finding a path to resolution. We approach each situation from a place of listening and collaboration and only implement the interventions that make sense given the client’s established goals. This can include a variety of approaches with individuals, groups, or systems to find solutions, raise concerns and resolve issues.

- **Individuals**: Helping individuals clarify their goals and develop next steps
- **Groups**: Facilitating meetings of 2+ people to create dialogue and resolve issues
- **Systems**: Providing input to leaders on trends that are emerging
- **Trainings**: Providing information on conflict resolution to students + workgroups
Christian and Jocelyn had started their careers as friendly colleagues back in the 1990’s. Over time, their work relationship became more competitive and ultimately antagonistic. Their Chair encouraged them to visit the Ombud Office after a negative interaction during a department meeting. We met with each faculty member individually and then facilitated two joint meetings. During those mediated conversations, Jocelyn and Christian were given a space to discuss their history and clear up accumulated misunderstandings.

They agreed that their conflict, especially as senior faculty members, wasn’t helping their department, which already had other challenges. By the end of our process, they had developed a better sense of each other’s perspective and had tangible plans to improve their communication moving forward. Christian and Jocelyn also shared a commitment to revisit our office if their work relationship encountered new challenges in the future.
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS
88 cases in 2016

Victor was concerned about an interview process he had just completed for an on-campus job. He worried that he hadn’t connected well with the younger students on the interview panel, and that he would not get the job as a result. Our office worked with Victor to identify options for raising his concerns about the interview process and also talked about how to do so without compromising his primary goal of getting the job.

Adrian was upset by a recent class discussion about changes to the healthcare system. During the discussion, another student said the new President’s administration didn’t care about poor people. Adrian responded by outlining the President’s priorities as she understood them. The other student told Adrian she was “racist.” The Ombud Office worked with the professor and the Dean’s Office to help resolve Adrian’s concerns and enable her to continue to engage in the class.

David was frustrated by a recent grade in one of his classes. He believed the expectations for the class were so ambiguous that it hadn’t been clear how to check or improve his grade as the course progressed. David had met with the professor but didn’t feel like he had been able to raise his concerns effectively. The Ombud Office worked with David to clarify his concerns, and to identify ways to re-engage with the professor. The Ombud Office also outlined other options if he chose to raise his concerns more formally.

We have changed names and identifying details in order to protect the confidentiality of our clients.
Jennifer came to our office disappointed with her manager and frustrated with the tedium of her position. There were compelling reasons for Jennifer to stay in the role for the time being, but she was upset that her manager didn’t seem to have much interest in her work and was either unwilling or incapable of being a mentor for her. In our meetings with Jennifer, we helped her clarify her goals for this phase of her career and establish a plan that addressed her needs.

By thoughtfully expanding her network to include involvement in a professional organization, meeting with colleagues who did similar work in other areas of the university, and reaching out to a former supervisor who would enjoy serving as a mentor, Jennifer expanded her career without changing her job.

What We Are Hearing

- Professional development
- Job security
- Communications with supervisor
- Work environment
- Difficulties with colleagues
- Leadership changes
- Retirement

32% Increase

In 2016, we handled 232 staff cases which represents a 32% increase from the previous year.
Ana had been a PhD student in her lab for six years, and was ready to publish work she was using in her dissertation. As lead on the research, she had expected to be made first author on the paper, but her advisor told her that she hadn’t completed enough work to be first author. Our office met with both Ana and her advisor, and then convened a mediation where they were able to identify deliverables that would be sufficient for Ana to be listed as first author.

Xiao was working on a project with another student in his department. He was leading the research, and the other student was compiling the data. There had been delays in receiving the data, and Xiao was becoming really concerned about making the project deadlines, but didn’t know how to raise his concerns. Our office worked with him to prepare for a conversation with the other student, and to consider a back-up plan if that conversation was unsuccessful.

In her first six months in the lab, Claire had met only once with her advisor, and was receiving no ongoing feedback. Suddenly, Claire was called into a meeting with her advisor, who informed her that she was failing to meet expectations in the lab, and as a result, the advisor was no longer willing to support her. Our office connected Claire with offices and processes where she could raise her concerns about the advisor’s behavior and also begin the process of finding a new advisor who would provide more reliable support.

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WHO WE SERVE
Breakdown of Clients by Role

FACULTY: 149
STAFF: 232
GRADUATE: 65
UNDERGRADUATE: 88

588 total cases*

+21% Increase in faculty clients in 2016
+32% Increase in staff clients in 2016
+25% Increase in graduate student clients in 2016

*This total accounts for 54 cases classified as ‘Other’ which included parents, alumni, and patients.
OFFICE LOCATIONS
THROUGHOUT THE PUGET SOUND

Seattle: 425 cases
UWMC & Harborview: 71 cases
Bothell: 51 cases
Tacoma: 32 cases

+20% Increase in total cases in 2016
+24% Increase in total cases on Seattle campus in 2016
+100% Increase in total cases at UWMC in 2016
THANK YOU

Your support of our team, our clients, and our office’s unique role at the university enabled us to assist in the resolution of nearly 600 complex situations over the past year.

We are often asked “how do you do this every day?” The answer is simple: Our clients don’t come to us with complaints, they arrive looking for real solutions to improve their work or academic life. This optimism and passion, even in the face of difficult circumstances, makes our work not only possible but also very rewarding.

Thank you!

Chuck  Emma  Jan