



**OFFICE OF THE OMBUDS**  
 CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA  
**ANNUAL REPORT FY 2013-14**  
 July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014

**STATEMENT OF MISSION**

Consistent with an adopted 2010-12 Council Goal to “ensure success of the organizational approach to strengthening community connections and resolving issues of discrimination and mistreatment”, the Town Manager established the Ombuds Office in July 2012.

The Ombuds mission is to partner with Human Resources Development Department (HRDD) and departmental managers to support the organizational R E S P E C T Values and other initiatives to improve employee wellness in the work environment, including, but not limited to:

- Job satisfaction, employee morale, and how we demonstrate value for our employees;
- Equal knowledge of and access to the resources people need to do their best job; and
- Support for an environment where all thrive.

**EMPLOYEE CONTACT**

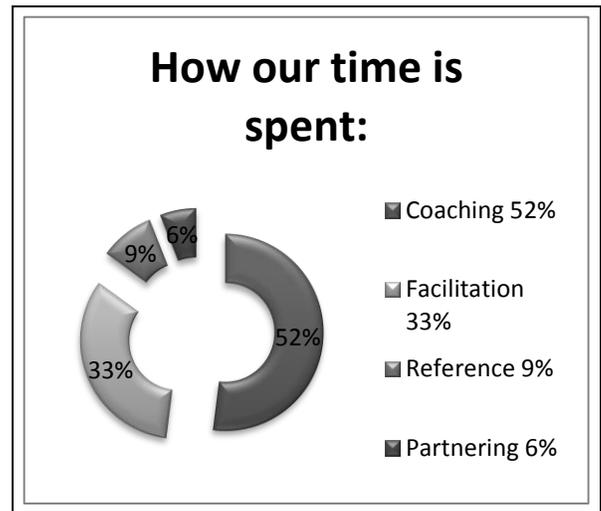
We have met with 62% of our employee population since our creation in July 2012.

NATURE OF OUR CONTACT WITH EMPLOYEES	
37%	Employees have concerns about interpersonal interactions with co-workers; supervisors, and/or department heads
28%	Employees wanted to talk about and explore options for personal issues that are affecting their ability to do their job
23%	Divisions within departments invited the Ombuds to facilitate a group discussion around an issue that was affecting the entire division.
12%	Informational meetings where employees asked questions about other resources available to assist them.

**Top 5 Reasons Visitors Offered For Contacting Office:**

1. Confidential and off-the-record conversation with someone familiar with organizational policies.
2. A neutral sounding board to help identify and evaluate options.
3. A safe haven free of reprisal for raising both individual and organizational concerns.
4. Options for resolution that does not involve formal channels.
5. Information and/or clarity on policies and procedures.

**OMBUDS OFFICE ACTIVITY**



*\*Partnering = we have worked with the HRDD, the School of Government; the Organizational Effectiveness Coordinator (OEC); and other community agencies on Customer Service Training, New Employee Orientation, and How to conduct difficult conversations.*

## LESSONS LEARNED

- 45% of our visitors shared that they had no power and felt that they could not change their circumstances.
- 33% of our visitors wanted additional information about how the Class & Compensation study, the Employee Performance Management and Development system, and the proposed changes in the Substance Abuse and Personnel Ordinance would affect their jobs.
- 11% of our visitors wanted advice on how to have a conversation with their supervisor about their job.
- 9% of our visitors wanted to get information to the Manager's Office and thought it best to deliver it via the Ombuds Office.
- 2% of our visitors wanted to file a grievance but thought they would start with the Ombuds office.

## NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Continue work with the senior management team to help develop strategies to improve communications, employee engagement, and to clarify linkages between individual jobs and our Vision, Values, and Mission.
- ✓ Collaborate with the HRDD, OEC, and Department Heads to identify & address training needs for employee development.
- ✓ Increase visibility of the office in the community to help improve citizen interactions with the Town and its agents.
- ✓ Partner with HRDD and the Manager's Office to ensure that proposed changes to the Personnel Ordinance reflect our goals of valuing, managing, and developing talent.
- ✓ Help design, implement, and facilitate equity training that sustains a climate in which respectful discussions of differences are encouraged. This training will be instrumental in creating opportunities for positive interactions and mutual problem solving.

## HOW THE OMBUDS OFFICE REPORTS INFORMATION

In accordance with the guiding principles of the International Ombuds Association (IOA), the Chapel Hill Office follows a practice of confidentiality and reports trending information that does not identify individuals or their work areas. Trending information is used to help identify employee concerns, and offers suggestions for ways to address those concerns in a manner that is systemic and consistent with the principles of a learning organization.

Members of the Ombuds office meet with the Town Manager and Deputy Town Manager monthly to discuss and strategize around organizational trends.

A quarterly report detailing the nature of the quarter's contacts and proposed next steps is delivered to the Town Council through the Manager's Office; published in the Town Talk Newsletter; an electronic version is available on the Ombuds webpage; and paper copies are printed and distributed throughout the organization.

For FY 2014-15, the quarterly reports will be available:

September 2014

December 2014

March 2015

Jim Huegerich, Senior Ombuds  
Faith M. Thompson, Ombuds  
308 West Rosemary Street, Suite 202  
919.265.0806  
[ombuds@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:ombuds@townofchapelhill.org)